THE PARADOX OF THE PERIPHERY

Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition c1928-1995

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During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries hundreds of Highland Scots traversed the Atlantic Ocean to escape social, political, and religious repression or simply in search of better opportunities in the New World. Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, became home to many of these emigrants. The vast numbers of Highland Scots who settled in this isolated area successfully maintained much of their Gaelic culture, such as the language, music, song and dance. Ironically, while the old ways were strictly adhered to in the peripheral enclave which was Cape Breton, rapid change was shaping the culture, particularly the music, in the homeland. Under the influence of James Scott Skinner the fiddle music tradition underwent irrevocable changes, separating from the dance, becoming dependent on literate sources, and moving onto the concert platform. As such, Cape Breton may be regarded as a marginal survival, maintaining the old traditions, specifically the 18th Highland fiddle music in a new geographic location, while at the original centre these old traditions were being replaced by the new.

With the arrival of the twentieth century, specifically the 1920s, the outside world began to impinge noticeably on Cape Breton. The recording industry, radio, television, travel opportunities, out-migration, the building of the Canso Causeway linking the island to the Nova Scotian mainland were all factors which were significant in stimulating a social and cultural awakening in Cape Breton. No longer merely a refuge for remnants of a Highland Scottish past, a new energy emerged within Cape Breton and began to reshape this heritage, creating that paradoxical situation wherein what was once peripheral becomes a new centre. In musical terms this process involved redefining the 18th century Highland fiddle tradition, which was strongly influenced by the bagpipes and the Gaelic language, into a new style which is distinctly Cape Breton. This new voice in Scottish music certainly owes much of its style and repertory to its Highland origins, and to its ongoing connection with the dance tradition. Nevertheless significant changes have occurred, not least the introduction of the piano as the requisite accompanying instrument, characterised by a technique developed indigenously. New tunes, composed locally or adopted from related traditions such as the Irish, have been integrated into the repertory and old techniques have been polished and developed upon. Certainly the opportunities afforded to the younger generation of fiddlers has allowed them to become much more eclectic in terms of style and repertory, causing much consternation among the old school who are concerned that the Gaelic heritage is in danger of being lost to new trends.

The evolution of the music of 18th century Highland Scotland into a distinct Cape Breton sound is the subject of this thesis. Based largely on fieldwork conducted there over the period 1992-1993 and 1995 it explores the problem currently creating anxiety within the tradition itself, that of the changing Cape Breton fiddler, and suggests that this phenomenon is not a recent development as is often implied but is one which has been significant since the 1920s.
Dedicated to the memory of Tic Butler
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On April 12, 1992, I left Shannon airport - me, a fiddle, and a DAT recorder. I knew was 'Heading for Halifax' and that a man with a grey beard would meet me there. What would happen for the next three months was anybody's guess! That was just over four years ago, and since then I've passed through Halifax airport many times, en route to Cape Breton - now my second home.

To mention everyone who helped me along the way would be a bit like including the Cape Breton telephone directory. Nevertheless, there are several individuals who must be named. Otherwise, I hope a big thank you will suffice.

The man with the grey beard was Denis Ryan, originally from Newport, Co. Tipperary. Denis and his wife, Muriel, housed me for a week, introduced me to some important contacts - now great friends - and drove me to Cape Breton, where they had arranged my family. Thanks Denis and Muriel for everything - especially for giving me to Tic and Emily. Tic and Emily Butler are my adoptive parents in Cape Breton, and are the best in the whole world. Thanks a million for giving me a home - I hope I didn't give you too many grey hairs when I didn't come home on the bus! Thanks indeed to the whole Butler family for welcoming me to the clan. Sadly, Tic passed away last summer. This thesis is dedicated to his memory.

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<td>Boston States, the</td>
<td>The local Cape Breton term for the Boston area of the U.S., where many Cape Bretoners emigrated throughout this century in search of work.</td>
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<td>Cape Breton Symphony</td>
<td>A group of four fiddlers plus a rhythm section, led by Scottish piano player, Bobby Brown.</td>
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<td>Ceilidh</td>
<td>From the Gaelic word, to visit. An informal gathering in the home (a house-party) featuring music and dance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flavour</td>
<td>The individual expression one puts on a tune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frolics</td>
<td>Wood frolics, barn-raising frolics, hay frolics etc. were an important part of Cape Breton community life until the early decades of this century. Neighbours would gather to undertake the task at hand, e.g. cutting the winter's firewood. Once completed, the music and dancing would begin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>High-Bass</td>
<td>Refers to the re-tuning of the fiddle. The most common re-tuning pattern involves raising both the G and D strings so that the fiddle sounds AEAE'. This, while referred to as high-bass, is also more accurately known as high-bass and counter/tenor.</td>
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<td>Jigging</td>
<td>A form of mouth-music, whereby the tunes are sung to nonsense syllables.</td>
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<td>Kitchen-Racket</td>
<td>Earlier term for a ceilidh.</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
<td>A snack, usually consisting of tea and cakes (squares), served at a ceilidh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make a Tune</td>
<td>To compose a tune.</td>
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Northside, the

The area of Cape Breton which includes Sydney Mines, Bras d'Or, Florence, George's River, North Sydney and environs. This area is particularly known for the Irish music played there.

Picnic

Early Cape Breton community events, held in most on an annual basis. These were family oriented affairs and involved various games and amusements along with music and dancing.

Spell Off

To give the fiddler at a dance, for example, a rest, other fiddlers would play for an occasional square-set ie. they would 'spell off' the main fiddler.

Team

Particularly before PA systems were introduced in the 1940s, two fiddlers would often play together at a dance in order to create more volume. Such pairs of fiddlers were known as teams.
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<td>DAT</td>
<td>Digital Audio Tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Public address system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. F.X.</td>
<td>Saint Francis Xavier University, Antigonish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.C.C.</td>
<td>University College, Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.C.C.B.</td>
<td>University College, Cape Breton</td>
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SECTION ONE

THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION
CHAPTER ONE
FROM THE OLD WORLD TO THE NEW

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the evolution of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition, a process which I believe can be reasonably considered to have started in the early decades of this century. The Scottish element in this tradition has already been expounded by scholars such as Kate Dunlay (1986a), Earl V. Spielman (1972), and Virginia Garrison (1985). The focus here will thus be on the Cape Breton contribution to that musical tradition. Central to this will be the exploration of the idea that while Cape Breton can certainly be credited with the preservation over several generations of a distinct 18th century Highland sound, the twentieth century witnessed the beginning of the development of a new musical sound, one which by 1995 is easily identifiable as Cape Breton.

Much of the information presented is based on personal fieldwork conducted in Cape Breton during 1992, 1993 and 1995 (See Appendix D). Arriving in Cape Breton with no preconceived notions about the tradition (actually with very little knowledge about the tradition, if the truth were to be told), I very quickly became aware of the current concerns among the musical community there. Predominant among these was an anxiety that the Cape Breton fiddler was changing. Not unexpectedly the finger was being pointed in the direction of the generation of fiddlers in their late teens/early twenties. As an Irish fiddler who has on occasion been labelled in that same category within my own tradition, this debate resonated strongly with me. Certainly I recognised that in the hands of a number of young Cape Breton fiddlers the music was undergoing significant experimentation. While fully aware of the dangers inherent in observing the present through the past I found it particularly interesting to note that many of the recent developments happening within the Cape Breton tradition had already been explored within the Irish tradition, particularly during the 1970s and '80s. That tension between tradition and innovation which has been a source of energy in Irish music for decades is only now becoming a significant
factor within the Cape Breton situation. As I became more familiar with the Cape Breton tradition I became convinced that the changing Cape Breton fiddler is not a phenomenon of the 1990s, but instead has its genesis as far back as the 1920s. From that period onwards other concerns, such as the strength and continuity of the tradition, which caused great alarm in the early '70s for instance, took priority over fears regarding the rate of change within the music tradition. The change which is today the focus of attention is the continuation of a process which has been in operation over several generations. Already the Highland Scottish fiddler has evolved into the Cape Breton fiddler. Now the Cape Breton fiddler continues to evolve.

While the focus of this thesis is that very process of evolution some brief background information is necessary in order to prove, essentially, that that sound which we now know as Cape Breton certainly does have its origins in the Scottish Highlands of the past.
1.1 'From Whence they Came' - Transplanting the People

Mo shoraidh bhuaim an diugh air chuairt
Thar chuain do bhràigh nan gleann,
Gu tir nam buadh, ge fada bhuaim i,
Tir nam fuar bheann ard.
'S e tigh'nn a thàmh do 'n ait 's as ur
A dh'fhag mo shuilean dall.
Nuair sheol mi 'n iar, a' triall bho m' thir,
A righ gur mi bha 'n call.

Greetings today to braes and glens
Across the sea from me,
The land I love although I've left it,
With its cold high hills;
'Twas coming here to this new land
That left my eyes so blind;
When west I sailed and left my home,
Oh king, what loss it was.

'Oran Do America' (Song to America) by Iain mac Dhomhnuill 'ie Iain (John 'the Hunter' MacDonald) (Fergusson 1977:45)

From the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, Scotland suffered a mass exodus of its people from the regions referred to as the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, separated from the Lowlands by a division which exists not only in tangible, geographical terms, but also in terms of personal traits and traditions. This exodus resulted initially in the transplanting of these people to various centres across the New World, primarily North Carolina, Prince Edward Island, Glengarry County, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. Later resettlement of these emigrants brought them to such diverse locales as New York city and other North American urban centres, Newfoundland, Australia and New Zealand. Generally the population movement from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland is considered in two principal phases. The first, from 1739-'75, was chiefly directed towards North Carolina, the second, from 1800-'45, towards Cape Breton Island. Some confusion exists with regards to specific emigration dates and numbers of emigrants. Those cited are based on Fergusson (1977:1-34). Campbell and MacLean in Beyond the Atlantic Roar use
similar, although not exactly corresponding dates (Campbell and MacLean 1974:7-34). Others claim that "unassisted immigration, chiefly Scottish, poured into Cape Breton between 1815 and 1838 in ever-increasing numbers" (Harvey in MacGillivray and Tennyson, 1980), while according to C.W. Vernon "after 1828 not as many vessels were coming in, and in the year 1843 the last vessel came and Gaelic immigration ended" (Fergusson 1977:87). However in the Census of Scotland 1841 we learn that

the greater part of the population of North Uist are employed in Agriculture and the manufacture of kelp; ... there has been no Emigration from this parish for the last six months, but for some years past about 300 souls have annually Emigrated from this Island to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and there will be about the same number going there from the different Districts of the Parish in the month of July next. (in Fergusson 1977:33)

In fact three ships with 1300 emigrants sailed from Loch Maddy, North Uist, on August 22, 1841, for Sydney, Cape Breton, and a few months later it was reported that the passengers had all settled in Cape Breton (Fergusson 1977:33).

At one level, this "epidemical fury of emigration", as it was described by Samuel Johnson, was a matter of choice, through an increase in awareness of the prospects available in the New World. On another level however, emigration was the direct consequence of a series of socio-economic catastrophes. A sequence of events such as the capture of Baleine, the Darien Expedition or Disaster as it came to be known, and the Glencoe Massacres contributed towards an escalating anti-English feeling in Scotland, which culminated in the Union of the Governments of England and Scotland in 1707, marking the end of Scotlands political independence. This anti-English attitude manifest itself in support for the Jacobite cause, realised in periodic uprisings from 1709 where an unsuccessful attempt was made to place James (The
Old Pretender) on the throne, through to 1745, in support of Bonnie Prince Charlie, until the final vanquishing at Culloden Moor on April 16th, 1746. This defeat essentially activated an inexorable pattern of developments which gradually debased the patriarchal clan system - the quintessence of Highland society - leading to its eventual breakdown, and the subsequent emigration of many of its members:

By the 1770's, the bonds of kinship, devotion and service, which had been the sinews of the tribal society, had been largely severed. The chain of circumstances that caused the lairds to raise the rent, insist upon enclosure of land, and introduce sheep, all made the clansmen feel that the chief had ceased to be their patron. (Meyer 1957:41-41)

The annexation of estates to the crown and deprivation of the rights of heritable jurisdiction had immediate ramifications which set landholding and agriculture in a new direction. Estates were administered by government commissioners; even when the majority of chiefs had recovered their lands, by 1784 they chose to act as landlords in absentia, thus severing what was left of clan alliances. The role of the tackman (the middle man between a chief and his clansmen) was abolished; subsequently many of these, dissatisfied with their reduced role in society, chose to emigrate themselves and to encourage others to do the same. For the tenants economic pressures resulted from dramatic increases in rents:

In Assynt rents rose from £555.0,5 in 1757 to £654.4.5 in 1766. In North Uist they went from £1200 in 1763 to £1800 in 1777. By 1785 Glenorchy rents had risen by 200 to 300 per cent, and in the Hebrides they had increased five-fold by 1811. (MacDonell 1982:7-8)

An economically biased decision to manipulate the Highlands for sheep farming led to drastic results. With the introduction of Cheviot sheep came a trend towards consolidating the traditional small-holdings into large sheep farms along with the rampant eviction of tenants - the notorious Highland Clearances. This regime led to much eviction:
the people were evicted from Strathglass, Glengarry, Knoydart, and Lochaber between 1784 and 1805. Following these evictions large numbers were sent away from Sutherland. And from the Isles: The island of Rum in 1826 and the island of Muck in 1828. From North Uist a large number were evicted in 1849 and from South Uist and Barra in 1851. All this was done so as to make room for cattle and sheep." (Fergusson 1977:86)

Replacement of the original Highland tenants with Lowland farmers added insult to injury. Prohibition of the national dress and regulations banning the use of firearms, and so the favoured pastime of hunting, added to the list of circumstances which drove many to seek refuge in the New World. Aspirations towards political and religious freedom were factors which enticed others across the ocean. According to Charles Dunn "the lure of real or fancied advantages in the New World did just as much as the disadvantages of the old to induce the Highlanders to leave Scotland" (C. Dunn 1991:17-18). Ross concedes this point to some extent - "broadly speaking, in the eighteenth century people go from the Highlands, in the nineteenth century they are sent" (Ross 1934:155-166). While "real or fancied advantaged" may not have done "just as much" they certainly were a factor in the decision of many who were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the home situation. Eye-witness accounts circulated by those who had served overseas with the British army, published information such as that available in Gaelic periodicals and hand-books such as Ceanluil an Fhir-Imrich do dh'America mu Thuath (Guide for the Emigrant to North America) by Rob MacDougall, and the propaganda widely spread by shipping company personnel, often on behalf of landlords determined to shift their tenants, did much to lure the Highlanders away from their native soil. The outer Hebrides and other west coastal areas had been fortunate enough to be able to curb their flow of emigration due to a successful kelp industry. The 1820's however witnessed the bursting of this "kelp bubble", when the British Government removed import restrictions on competing sources, and so emigration became a necessity once more.
1.2 'The Blood is Strong' - Settling Cape Breton

Cape Breton was the last substantial area on the Atlantic Coast of North America to be opened up by Scottish emigration (Fergusson 1977:30)

It has already been mentioned that in an overview of Scottish emigration two substantial moves occurred, the first centred on North Carolina and the second on Cape Breton. Settlement had occurred in Prince Edward Island as early as 1769, and in Pictou, Nova Scotia, from 1703. Pictou continued as a refuge point, and many of the victims of the Sutherland Clearances (1807-'17) moved there, while earlier (1801-3), Antigonish County saw an influx of immigrants following the clearing of the Chisholm Estate in Strathglass. It appears that in an overflow from ships such as the Alexander (1772) and the Hector (1773), the first Scottish settlers (excluding those who had settled briefly at Baleine much earlier) travelled across the Gut of Canso from the Nova Scotian mainland or from Prince Edward Island. These pioneers would have made their way along the west coast, settling in Judique and Mabou for instance. The first known settler of Inverness County is reputed to be Michael MacDonald, "Sea Captain and Poet of Uist," who arrived in 1775 from Prince Edward Island. The trend for moving around the Maritimes continued, so that the 1818 Census shows that 25 families had come from Prince Edward Island and 40 from Nova Scotia (Fergusson 1977:32). Likewise these early years saw arrivals from timber ships bound for the Miramichi, Pictou, or Quebec. Passengers often chose to alight at Ships Harbour (Port Hawkesbury) or Plaster of Paris Cove (Port Hastings) and move on to settle along the coast of Inverness County.

Although research is hindered by the fact that no records were maintained at the port of Sydney until the 1820's, it appears that the direct flood of emigration from the Highlands and Islands began in earnest as early as 1802 with the arrival in Sydney Harbour of a ship carrying some 300 emigrants (J.MacKinnon1989:19). According to
Mabou Pioneers many of the original settlers arrived in 1816, largely from the Braes of Lochaber, Moidart, Morar, and other areas of the west coast and islands (MacDonald n.d.). Indeed the 1818 Census shows that there were over 600 Scottish settlers in the Gut of Canso to Grand Judique area, 371 in Port Hood (including Mabou and Judique), Broad Cove - Margaree had 258, and St. Andrew's 230. Smaller numbers had settled in the Baddeck area, River Inhabitants, the Gut of Canso and Little Bras d'Or districts. As ships began including Sydney as a port of call, settlement figures on the eastern side of the island began to increase. We know, for instance, that settlers claimed land in the Framboise-Loch Lomond district in the early years of the 19th century, while the area around Catalone-Mira River-Sydney was populated around 1828. Corresponding with the collapse of the kelp industry, the 1820's showed an increase in immigrants from the islands and coastal areas, 1828 reaching the highest point with 2,413 immigrants landing in Sydney. Throughout the '30's the figures dropped but increased dramatically between 1839 - 42. 1841 and '42 account for 1,500 and 1,278 immigrants respectively. The flow ceased in the mid-1840s.

"By 1838 the Cape Breton population is believed to have been about 38,000 and of that number the Scots were unquestionably the majority group" (Campbell and MacLean 1974:67). Patterns of settlement were often dictated by the clannish inclinations of the Scottish Highlanders:

... the Highlanders ... preferred if possible to settle among pioneers who had come from their particular district in Scotland, who spoke their dialect, and who shared the same religious faith. (C. Dunn 1991:26)

Thus the area around the Mira River is dominated by folk from Uist, Grand Narrows by Barra folk, Baddeck by Skye folk, St. Ann's by Lewis and Harris folk, and Inverness County by folk from Mull, Rum, Tiree, Lochaber, Knoydar, and the
mainland (Fergusson 1977:32). These patterns of settlement have had far-reaching consequences on such issues as regional styles which will be discussed later. Furthermore, such large numbers of emigrants scattered all over the island created a Highland Scottish presence, which is tangibly realised today through place names such as Glencoe, Inverness, and Iona, and through the family names which have been handed down over several generations of Scots in Cape Breton. Certainly, an interest in their Scottish past is evident among Scots descendants living in Cape Breton today. In their Account of Two Clanranald Families at Judique, Cape Breton, Mildred and John Colin MacDonald discuss the importance of genealogy in the Highland consciousness:

among the Highland Scots, knowing one's genealogy has always been an important aspect of the cultural and social fabric ... it became ... a kind of sacred duty to be aware of one's own genealogy. (MacDonald and MacDonald n.d:1)

Various genealogies of Scottish families in Cape Breton have been published, including Mabou Pioneers (MacDonald n.d.) and a History of Inverness County (MacDougall 1972). For the purpose of this study these and other similar works are important in establishing an unsevered connection between the Scotland of the 18th and 19th centuries and the Cape Breton of the present day. From his private papers Buddy MacMaster allowed me access to research into his own family tree. Information from this, which illustrates the Scottish - Cape Breton connection over a span of seven generations, is shown in Figure 2. For similar information pertaining to Mary MacDonald (Mairi Alaisdair Raonuil Beaton) see Gibson (1992:9).
Figure 1  Map of Cape Breton Island
Figure 2 Buddy MacMaster - Family Tree
1.3 'My Heart's in the Highlands' - Transplanting the Culture

Ged chaidh an sgapadh air gach taobh, Cha chaochail iad an gnaths. 

*Although they were scattered in every direction, they did not change their ways.*

'Am Faigh a'Ghaidhlig Bas?' (in Dunn 1991:64)

The cultural resources which the early emigrants took with them to their New World destinations served as their most valuable commodity as pioneer settlers. Before examining the ramifications of this, it is important first of all to assess what exactly this culture was - or at least the musical dimension of it - in those years prior to the emigration which first brought Highlanders to Cape Breton, right through to the final trail of Scottish settlers in the 1840s. Unfortunately, an absence of research on the topic has meant that only sketchy information pertaining to the musical style and repertory exists.

Although references to a plethora of bowed stringed instruments abound in Scottish history, according to Bruford and Munro the history of the fiddle in the Highlands did not begin until the late 17th century when the modern violin became popular (Bruford and Munroe 1973:3). Along with the harp the bagpipe was the typical Highland instrument, and this continued to dominate at outdoor events even after the introduction of the fiddle which was used indoors and for dancing. Various sources testify to the presence of the fiddle in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In 1703 for instance, Martin Martin wrote that in Lewis he heard of "... eighteen men who could play the on the violin pretty well without being taught", while the 17th century poet Mary Macleod mentions "the music of the fiddle lulling me to sleep" (Collinson 1966:213). From the same source we learn of other noted fiddlers such as Neil Campbell MacIntyre (Neil Mor) of Sleat, Alexander MacDonald (b. 1795) of Stonefield, Skye, his son James, and Neil MacKinnon of Strath (b. 1795) (Collinson 1966:213).
Eighteenth century Scotland witnessed what has become known as the 'Golden Age' of fiddling. This was spear-headed by a number of individuals of Highland origin, referred to by Allister MacGillivray as "Gaelic-speaking fiddler-composers" (MacGillivray 1981:1) such as Neil Gow, Nathaniel Gow, William Marshall, Robert Mackintosh, Daniel Dow, Alexander Cummings, and Alexander McGlashan, all of whom were responsible for publications of Scottish music. Interestingly many of these figures, besides being traditional musicians, were also involved in more genteel music circles, since the divide between the folk and European Art musician was not yet rigidly defined. It is doubtful however that spin-offs from this bi-functionality, such as literacy for instance, would have reached the more remote northern and coastal areas and the islands. This suggests that the publications of such musicians were not integrated into the culture in these areas and as such cannot serve as an indication of the music at the time. There are three collections however which do focus to varying degrees on the music of these rural Gaelic locales. Daniel Dow, in c1776, edited a *Collection of Ancient Scots Music*, which has been described as "a unique source for some of the compositions of Highland and visiting Irish harpers in the previous century, as well as Gaelic and Scots song tunes" (Bruford and Munro 1973:7). The dance music repertory is alluded to in an appendix to the Reverend Patrick McDonald's *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* of 1781, although it has been suggested that the majority of tunes actually included here are in fact pipe tunes. Another relevant collection of tunes and Gaelic songs (without words) was published by Captain Simon Fraser in 1816 - *Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles* - although aspersions have been cast on its authenticity (Bruford and Munro 1973:7). The focus of these published collections on pipe music and Gaelic songs along with fiddle music suggest the popularity of all these idioms within the Highland tradition. This certainly gives credence to the notion postulated in Bruford and Munro's work that the Highland fiddle style and repertory was strongly influenced by both the bagpipe and the puirt-a-beul traditions. Their attempt to reconstruct an image of the Highland fiddle tradition relies heavily on comparisons
with these traditions, as well as considering the style of more contemporary fiddlers from the area. Ironically they point to Cape Breton as the most viable source representing the old Highland fiddle sound. Other information pertaining to the musical style of 18th century fiddlers can be gleaned from accounts written by individuals such as Dr. McKnight (1809) and Alexander Campbell (1802).

Just as we have evidence to the effect that there certainly was an active fiddle tradition heavily influenced by the piping and Gaelic language in the Highlands prior to and during the period of emigration to Cape Breton, there is also tangible evidence which proves that this same tradition did travel to Cape Breton - "... their fondness for entertainment changed little in the crossing of the ocean" (Campbell and MacLean 1974:69). The first clues we have come from accounts, both poetic and otherwise, of musical activity on the emigrant ships themselves. The bard Domhnall Gobha (Donald Chisholm) (1735-1810) who emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1803 composed a poem entitled 'N uair theid Flori 'na h-Eideadh' ('When the Flori is Rigged') commemorating the ocean crossing. In it he alludes to the transportation of the native culture:

'S mise dannsa le solas air a bord le ceol binn.

I dance with delight to sweet music on board.
(MacDonell 1982:67)

References to the bagpipe and its music making the journey are to be found in The Highland Settler among other sources:

When the Hector was about to set sail from Scotland in 1773 for Pictou, the captain discovered that a certain John McKay had stolen aboard without paying his fare. The captain was about to set the

1MacDonell believes that he actually made the journey on the Aurora. (MacDonell 1982:65)
stowaway ashore again when the Highland passengers discovered what was taking place. John McKay was an able piper; so they pleaded with the captain, offering to share their rations with the extra passenger if he might be allowed to remain on the ship with them to the New World. The captain relented, and the travellers were entertained with the best of bagpipe music while they crossed the ocean. (C. Dunn 1991:55)

Likewise Sherwood, in an article devoted to the voyage of the 'Hector', refers to the lone piper, John Fraser who entertained the emigrants throughout the ocean crossing and led them ashore at their destination:

As the Hector people came ashore the Indians moved back, and when piper Fraser blew up his pipes, and the wailing sound echoed over the waters and against the trees, the Indians took to the woods. (Sherwood 1973)

Information pertaining to the presence of music among the pioneer settlers may also be culled from similar sources. In what is believed to be the oldest extant Gaelic commentary on pioneer life in Cape Breton - 'O, 's Alainn an t-aite' ('Fair is the Place') - the bard Micheil Mór MacDhomhnaill (Michael MacDonald) mentions:

Fidhleireachd 's piobaireachd
Aig gillean La Fheill Mhicheil,
A chluinniteadh seach mile
Nach gann, nach gann, O.

Fiddling and piping
by lads on Michaelmas day
can be heard beyond miles
unlimited.
(MacDonell 1982:60-61)

Examples such as this preserved through the poetry of the day, and also through local and family folklore, testify to the presence of a strong Highland Scottish musical tradition on Cape Breton from the time of the pioneer settlers. This was preserved
relatively intact until the turn of the present century, at which point, in 1928, the first aural proof in the form of commercial recordings emerges. As will be discussed later, the music featured on the earliest of these recordings represented a sound which, according to those few available authorities, is very strongly reminiscent of that of the Highland fiddler of the 18th century.
CHAPTER TWO
A NEW VOICE IN SCOTTISH MUSIC?

The brief overview of the historical connections between Highland Scotland and Cape Breton provided in Chapter One essentially illustrates that the 18th century Highland musical tradition traversed the ocean and was transplanted in that new environment which was Cape Breton Island. The fate of that musical tradition in this new location must now be considered.

2.1 A Marginal Survival

Social Science has pointed out that immigrant peoples who settle together tend to maintain cultural forms that flourished in their homeland at the time of departure. Whereas there may be continuous evolution and massive change in the "old country" (where one's identity is assured just by being there), in the new land, language and music are kept as they were, held that way in part by a kind of community-survival mechanism. (Stecher 1992b)

This statement alludes to the concept of marginal survivals, defined by Bruno Nettl as a theory which "demonstrates how a trait may disappear in the original center of its geographic distribution, but can survive and even flourish much longer in the outskirts or margins of that area" (Nettl and Myers 1976:18), and as such raises two important issues which must be addressed in some depth. The first concerns the role of a group's culture in the context of a new environment, and the notion that that culture may be retained and maintained in a displaced context. Transplanted in a new area, efforts to retain any tangible links with the old country assume priority, and a conservative attitude wins out over any moves of a progressive nature. The second issue is directly connected with this, and considers that situation whereby the old tradition flourishes in a distant or peripheral location, while at home, or in the original centre, progression has caused many radical changes.
The Cape Breton situation certainly provides the necessary criteria for classification as a marginal survival. It is interesting that North America has, in several instances, acted as a holding ground for European traditions which have dwindled away in the old countries. Nettl provides an in-depth study of the Amish people, a Swiss-German farmer group, as a case in point (Nettl 1957). Similarly, the Gwich'in fiddle music and dance tradition, with its roots in Orkney and Scotland, has been defined as another example of a marginal survival (Mishler 1993:21).

The basic criteria for a marginal survival includes a substantial group settling together, what Nettl describes as an "enclave", isolation imposed by geographic conditions or by other barriers such as language, and a conservative attitude. The Highlanders arriving in the New World certainly faced all these factors. The vast number of immigrants has already been established in Chapter One; a conservative attitude inbred in all Highlanders was fortified with distance from their home; and the Gaelic language immediately distinguished them from the other ethnic groups that constituted the fabric of North American society. While all the Highland emigrants to the New World shared these traits, it is the isolation factor which seems to have been central to the Cape Breton situation in its emergence as the chief nurturing ground of the old Highland ways. Similarly Mishler (1993) and Bennett (1989) have pointed to the significance of the isolation factor in their studies of the Athapaskan and Newfoundland musical traditions respectively. Of all the areas of the Scottish diaspora - North Carolina, Prince Edward Island, Glengarry County, and Nova Scotia - Cape Breton was indeed the most remote, existing, at least until the early years of this century, on the periphery of North American life. R.A. MacLean testifies to this - "those who came ... remained more culturally Scottish than their American brethren. Isolation had to be an important factor here" (MacLean 1992:16). He also postulates that the rapid absorption of Highlanders into mainstream American society is indicative of the "difference between the American melting pot and the Canadian mosaic" (MacLean 1992:16).
For those pioneer settlers to Cape Breton the cultural resources which they brought with them to the New World were to play a large part in directing their lives on foreign soil. Far from abandoning it along with the old land, their culture and traditions such as language, music, song, dance, story-telling and superstitions were elevated to a new level of importance, serving primarily as a nostalgic reminder of the old home and the old ways. It was also highly relevant in retaining their identity. This was important on two levels, firstly to distinguish them from the other ethnic groups - the Micmacs, Acadians, American Loyalists, Irish - who had also made Cape Breton their home, and secondly, to assert their Scottishness, thus proving that geographical relocation alone could not weaken this.

The stage was certainly set for the old Highland ways to be nurtured in this new Cape Breton environment. The culture had travelled well, and all the inclination was there to essentially hold on to the old ways. With regard to aspects such as the Gaelic language and song, various sources testify to their presence in early Cape Breton life. Where the fiddle music is concerned occasional information may be gleaned from social and historical accounts of pioneer life. Unfortunately, however, no aural evidence of the musical sound was available until the late 1920s. This makes the whole issue of determining musical change prior to 1928, when the first commercial recording of a Cape Breton fiddler was issued, quite a nebulous one, where room must be allowed for a certain amount of conjecture. Being in such an isolated environment it seems quite plausible to suggest that the only exposure the Highlanders on Cape Breton had to other cultures was internal, in other words on the island itself. It stands to reason then, given the dominance of the Scots, that their traditions and ways would have been more influential than susceptible to influence, and so their old musical ways were allowed to flourish, unaffected by external influences. Authorities in Scotland further point to Cape Breton as the most viable representation of the old Highland sound (Bruford and Munro 1973:9-10). Certainly the characteristics of style with which they credit the typical fiddler in 18th century
Highland Scotland, are exemplified in the playing of many of those Cape Breton fiddlers whose music came to be recorded commercially or otherwise in Cape Breton in the early decades of this century. This is further substantiated by commentaries on the performance styles of fiddlers such as Neil Gow (Campbell 1802:275), in which traits mentioned are still evident in the playing styles of Cape Breton fiddlers. Thus, even in the absence of solid aural evidence, enough material exists to give credence to the widely espoused theory that on Cape Breton Island, the old 18th century fiddle tradition did survive.

That period up until the 1920s, however, had seen massive changes affecting the music in Scotland. First and foremost was a shift in geographic location:

by mid- [19th] century the musical centre of gravity had ...swung round from its earlier orientation on Speyside and Perthshire, thence to Edinburgh, and was slowly and very surely coming to rest in Aberdeenshire and the North-east. (Alburger1983:170)

Central to the musical directions of this period was the renowned James Scott Skinner (1843-1927), the first figurehead in Scots fiddling since the demise of Gow and Marshall more than a generation previously. Skinner's career has been described as presenting "a virtual history of the development of the Scottish fiddler from untutored player to concert performer" (Alburger 1983:171). A virtuoso fiddler, schooled in both the traditional and classical idioms, Skinner introduced new standards of style and technical ability, most significantly through freeing the music from the restrictions imposed upon it by the requirements of the dance. He was also a prolific composer - "the last of the famous Scots fiddle composers" (Collinson 1966:227) - with several published collections to his credit. His influence on the subsequent development of Scottish fiddle music was also due in no small part to the fact that he was the first fiddler to have his music recorded, first on cylinders, later on 78s, 45s and LPs, thus making it accessible to a wider public.
Alongside Skinner, a number of other factors were in operation, all of which were serving to alter irrevocably the face of Scottish music. From the first recordings of Skinner, technological developments in this industry - recordings, radio, television - were to have a massive affect on disseminating a new musical standard, decided chiefly by Skinner himself. The coupling of the upright piano with the fiddle had ramifications on the musical sound also, while the accordion, first introduced c1850, quickly gained a foothold, posing a serious threat to the reign of the fiddle, eventually superceding it in importance. Furthermore, 1881 saw the establishment of the first of the Strathspey and Reel Societies, in Edinburgh. This was followed by others such as the Highland Strathspey and Reel Society formed in 1903. In 1898 William C. Honeyman published his *Strathspey, Reel and Hornpipe Tutor*. One of the primary objectives of this was:

> to compile a standard collection for players of all grades and for Strathspey and Reel Societies, with music clearly marked so they could all perform with the same bowing. (Honeyman 1898)

Standards were also set by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society formed in 1923 (Alburger 1983:198). This period (ie c1850-1920) also saw the birth of some of the later greats of Scottish fiddling such as Bill Hardie (b 1916) and Hector MacAndrew (b 1903). By the late 1920s the musical sound, practices, and aesthetics in Scotland were considerably different from the 18th and early 19th centuries. And so as Cape Breton began to emerge from the shackles of isolation at precisely this time, the musical tradition it was promoting had little in common with contemporary Scotland. Still firmly grounded in the older Scottish ways, Cape Breton perfectly exemplified the concept of the marginal survival.

### 2.2 A New Voice

It has thus been postulated that until the late 1920s, Cape Breton acted in the capacity of a safe nurturing and retaining ground for the Highland tradition, and proved that between the flood of emigration in the 18th and early 19th centuries and
the 1920s, massive changes had occurred in Scotland itself. While time stood still on
the far distant island of Cape Breton, the music in Scotland was essentially forging a
new and different path for itself. This divergence is still manifest today. As an Irish
fiddler observing both the Scottish and Cape Breton situations for the first time, it
was clear that they were related, but the depth of this socio-historic and musical
relationship was not immediately obvious. It appeared to me that they were very
separate and distinct dialects of a musical language that could essentially be expanded
to include the fiddle traditions of the Shetland Islands and County Donegal,
representing in effect

a fiddle based musical continuum which embraces Canada and Cape
Breton, through Ireland, Scotland and Shetland and into Norway and
the Scandinavian countries. (McLaughlin 1992)

The question must then be asked, does the Cape Breton tradition really provide us
with a window to the past? Are we dealing with a simple clear-cut situation whereby
we can see and hear the past through the present? Such a scenario has indeed been
proven in other musical contexts. Craig Mishler for instance believes this to be a
function of the Gwich'in fiddle tradition of rural Alaska. In this situation the music
and dance preserved is also of Scottish origin, this time Orcadian. Mishler
acknowledges the fact that "in Orkney and Scotland dance and music has changed
dramatically since the turn of the 20th century" (Mishler 1993:20) and goes on to
suggest that

... the spectator of contemporary Gwich'in jigs and contra dances and
the listener of contemporary Gwich'in fiddling therefore is looking
through a transparent time warp and seeing the historical image of
one culture's social behaviour refracted through the prism of another.
(Mishler 1993:21)
Certainly it would seem that those Scots living in Scotland, who have recently discovered Cape Breton have, in a desperate bid to redeem themselves musically from what has retrospectively been described as a "diluted and sanitised" tradition (Hamish Moore, Personal Communication), opted for this attitude. In other words, Cape Breton represents for them their true culture which they must re-adopt as quickly as possible. In the notes which accompany his album \textit{The Driven Bow}, fiddler Alasdair Fraser states this clearly:

\begin{quote}

fortunately, the fiddle and dance traditions on Cape Breton Island in the Canadian Maritimes provide us with a window which sheds light on the way 18th and 19th century dance fiddlers, such as Neil Gow (1727-1807), used to play in the Highlands of Scotland ...Let's hope that some of the great fiddle and dance tradition that has been absent from Scotland for so many years can be restored. (Fraser 1988)
\end{quote}

Credit must be given to those individuals who have recognised the very rich heritage which has been preserved in Cape Breton. For the past number of years Cape Breton fiddler Buddy MacMaster and step-dancer Harvey Beaton, have been invited to teach summer courses at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, on the Isle of Skye; several musicians and dancers such as Hamish and Maggie Moore for instance have made the pilgrimage to Cape Breton; Hamish Moore in his album \textit{Dannsa' Air An Drochaid (Stepping on the Bridge)} (1994) and Alasdair Fraser in \textit{The Driven Bow} (1988) both pay musical tribute to the traditions of Cape Breton; Maggie Moore and a number of other dancers are involved in a very real effort to revive the step-dance tradition; and the projected inclusion of a Cape Breton room at Balnain House - Home of Highland Music, Inverness, further reflects an acknowledgement in Scotland of the Cape Breton connection.

Nevertheless, the view that "Cape Breton ... has preserved and held [the Scottish] music and dance culture in trust" (Moore 1994) is a highly simplistic and romanticised one. What I would suggest is that while in the Cape Breton of 1928
little may have changed from the time of the first settlers, by 1995 the situation has changed dramatically, so that now Cape Breton has developed its own unique identity. In the development of this identity certainly strong elements of the Highland music tradition have been maintained, while other aspects of the Gaelic culture such as the language, have fared less fortunately. Of course, more recent externalisations of Scottish culture such as Highland dance and a Cape Breton tartan have infiltrated the island, although these symbols of a later "invented tradition" (Trevor-Roper 1983:15) have remained separate from the earlier traditions. Certainly since the opening up of the island to intrusive external influences, the old Highland fiddle music and dance traditions have been subjected to changes on various levels. Compared with Scotland these changes have been neither radical nor immediate; they have also followed a totally different path. Most significantly, whereas in Scotland the emphasis today is on the accordion and synchronised group fiddling, totally divorced from the dance, the music-dance connection and the solo performer have remained at the core of the Cape Breton tradition. Nevertheless, as I will illustrate throughout this work, the changes which have characterised the Cape Breton musical tradition of the twentieth century have in many ways been substantial. In fact the period, rather than merely paying homage to an older musical tradition of an old land, has actually witnessed the evolution of a distinct new voice in Scottish music, a Cape Breton voice. Certainly the musical heritage of the past is still evident within this, but it has been reshaped and redefined within its new environment, and within the hands of individuals who, with each successive generation, are becoming more Cape Breton and less Scottish. That genre of Cape Breton music has, albeit in the very recent past, become elevated to international status, and is appreciated by musicians across the world. For today's Scots to recognise and acknowledge the shared ancestry of their traditions and to appreciate the Cape Breton concern with that older sound is perfectly acceptable. Nevertheless, it is important that the progressions which have balanced, and in some instances outweighed, the regressions within the evolution process in Cape Breton's musical development of this century, are not overlooked.
The Cape Breton fiddle music of 1995 no longer represents a mere fossil of an earlier sound; rather it has taken the Highland fiddle music of 18th century Scotland, and from it generated a new energy, realised in that musical voice which is now well established as Cape Breton. From the peripheral, a new pivot has emerged.
SECTION TWO

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION
CHAPTER THREE
CHANGE AND IDENTITY - THE CENTRAL ISSUES

The issue of change is an integral part of any discussion of evolution. In the context of musical evolution - in this case the evolution of a Cape Breton fiddle music from an 18th century Highland Scottish tradition - change is significant at both the specifically musical or core level, and at the wider social, or superstructural level. Based on a loose interpretation of Merriam's tripartite model of concept, behaviour and sound (Merriam 1964), this thesis will examine the changes which have taken place within the Cape Breton tradition, thus following the process of evolution of the Cape Breton fiddler from the Highland fiddler of the 18th century, and the Cape Breton fiddle sound from that of 18th century Highland Scotland. Is the Cape Breton fiddle tradition as we know it in 1995 a fossil from 18th century Highland Scotland? Is it a new musical language? Or is it, in effect, a new voice in Scottish music?

As will be made clear throughout this chapter, the 1920s mark the beginning of Cape Breton's social awakening. Emerging for the first time from the shackles of isolation, this period witnessed much activity on the island at all social and cultural levels. Since 1928 was the year in which the first commercial recording featuring a Cape Breton fiddler appeared, hence providing us with our first aural experience of the music as it had existed in Cape Breton for over a century, I have chosen this date as the starting point for my explorations of musical activity in Cape Breton. 1928 is certainly a significant year in Cape Breton musical history. Nonetheless, it is possible, certainly in the period directly prior to this, that some degree of musical change may already have been instigated. In an effort to refrain from being overly dogmatic when dating the moment when change began to affect the musical sound as it had survived in the isolation of Cape Breton Island, 1928 will be qualified by the term 'circa'. The time frame in which I propose to explore the evolution of Cape Breton fiddle music is thus c1928 - 1995.
3.1 An Overview of Socio-Musical Change in Cape Breton c1928-1995

I can see this point [1925] as a watershed between two ages; up to this time nothing much had changed from what my parents and grandparents had known ... But the days of the pioneers had come to an end ... the Land of Lost Content was merging into the Age of Discontent. (Earle Peach 1990:108-109)

Authorities have agreed that change, in all aspects of musical activity, is a reality for most cultures. Nettl believes that "if there is anything really stable in the music of the world it is the constant existence of change" (Nettl 1983:174). John Blacking, in referring to the "continuity of change", states:

> every musical system has inherent in it a certain amount of constant change which is one of its core elements, required simply to hold the system intact and to keep it from becoming an artificially preserved museum. (Blacking 1973:177)

Likewise Merriam acknowledges the ubiquity of change, while reminding us that it never happens "wholesale or overnight" (Merriam 1964:277). The perception is that until the onset of the twentieth century change was minimal, escalating rapidly and dramatically from that period onwards, in response to technological and other developments. Bruno Nettl testifies to this in a study of the process of change in Persian Classical Music in Tehran:

> a generally accepted article of faith has been that the music of simple cultures ... has existed in two periods; an early one, stretching back far beyond historical horizons, which was static; and a recent one, beginning with the onset of Western influences, in which change has been very rapid. A certain amount of change - very slight and very slow - has been admitted for the earlier period, but it has been thought to be almost negligible, compared to the rapidity of recent developments. (Nettl 1978:146)

This theory is certainly applicable to Cape Breton society. Until the early decades of this century, the island was effectively isolated from the rest of North American
society. While its remote geographic position resulted in Cape Breton being insular, internal isolation was also afforded by lack of transport and, until the late 1800s, by an insufficient communication infra-structure. This, coupled with atrocious weather conditions for several months of the year, ensured that within the island each community existed in an autonomous state, for the most part independent of all others. Such an environment provided an ideal nurturing ground for the Gaelic culture transported to Cape Breton with the pioneer settlers, allowing them to maintain their ways for longer than those Scots who had chosen other areas such as the mainland for their new homes (Campbell and MacLean 1974:70). Since each community was in essence merely transplanted from Highland Scotland, given that the first settlers tended to gravitate towards others with the same family background, religion, and/or dialect, this added a further stability enhancing the maintenance of Gaelic culture. The negative aspects of this should also be considered:

isolation was very much a fact of life with those who settled in Cape Breton, and while it allowed them to retain their cultural modes, and particularly their language, it was also a cultural and economic handicap ... Not stimulated by new ideas or competition, many were satisfied simply to retain what they had, and to transmit the same values to their descendants." (MacLean and Campbell 1974:75)

A certain amount of change in this early period is alluded to, thus underpinning Nettl's suggestion that "we must ... assume that change also occurred in the more distant past":

as the 19th century moved onward, however, they moved with it, perhaps at a cautious pace, but moving nevertheless. (Nettl 1973:75)

Until the early decades of this century, when the outside world began to impinge upon Cape Breton to any significant extent, the island was effectively suspended between two worlds, the old and the new. This applied also to all aspects of cultural
life on the island, creating in Cape Breton what has already been described as a marginal survival.

In a study of the Nova Scotian Scots, Beyond the Atlantic Roar, the 1930s are pinpointed as the decade in which irrevocable change affected eastern Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton Island:

it was during the 1930s that Nova Scotians of Scottish descent experienced their last full measure of those traditions. The experiences of the Depression and the Second World War broke the isolation which permitted the retention of their cultural traditions and values. The generation that grew to manhood in the 1930s and during World War Two represented the last large numbers of Nova Scotia Scots who had lived largely as their fathers and grandfathers had done. Following World War Two, they could not be contented with what they had known. By that time, in eastern Nova Scotia, the Victorian Age had ended, and the 19th century had finally run its course. (Campbell and MacLean 1974:110)

The process of weakening the social and cultural fabric had already been put in motion through the out-migration which had been a reality since the late 1880s. Economic prospects lured many Cape Bretoners, and Nova Scotians in general, to urban centres across Canada and the United States. The following quotation appeared in an article entitled The Mobile Nova Scotian in 1938:

To find a Nova Scotian in 23 out of the 41 sub-districts of Yukon and the North West Territories is simply astounding ... To find them in 46 out of the 58 sub-districts of Manitoba and British Columbia in 1881 is probably still more astounding. (MacLean 1938:6-9)

Particularly until the 1920s, the area most favoured by emigrants from Cape Breton was Boston, colloquially referred to as "the Boston States". Later, places such as Detroit, Halifax, and Toronto, saw substantial immigration from Cape Breton. The summertime visits of those Cape Bretoners "from away" were eagerly anticipated at
home; these represented the annual glimpse into life outside Cape Breton. The effects of this returning emigrant syndrome was to have lasting implications on all aspects of life on the island - "it was the sons and daughters returning on vacation from the 'Boston States' who put the first deep puncture in the folk-culture" (Campbell and MacLean 1974:185). Homogenisation at an internal level was facilitated by internal migratory movement, particularly evident in rural to urban movements from around 1900 onwards. Population figures for Sydney reflect this trend, growing from 2,427 in 1891 to 9,909 by 1901. The opening of the Steel Plant in Sydney and the formation of the Dominion Steel and Coal Company encouraged many rural Cape Bretoners to move to the industrial east. The closure of the mines in Inverness county around 1911 created a further incentive, a forced migration almost (LD#1/ST#1). Industrial expansion made Sydney and its environs the obvious choice for all ethnic groups, and areas such as Whitney Pier became veritable ethnic melting pots. Within such a cosmopolitan urban environment certain concessions, in terms of language for instance, were inevitably made, and as such the cultural purity, as it had been maintained in isolated rural areas, was undermined. Significantly though, the predominance of Scots over all other groups allowed them to maintain much of their cultural identity intact, eventually even influencing others. From the urban east, change eventually infiltrated the remainder of the island, although it was as late as the post World War Two era before it impinged significantly on the western coast.

Improvements in roads and rail transport, the advent of the motor-car, the first radios and local radio stations, the introduction of the gramophone, commercial recordings of local musicians, and a plethora of social events such as dances and parish picnics, contributed towards the increase of a Cape Breton awareness that became increasingly manifest from the 1920s onwards, and affected all aspects of life, not least the music. Certainly the outside world had started to make an impact on the island, but it seems that as much activity was internal; the island's inhabitants were for the first time beginning to discover their new land. In the 1950s, this, by now more
unified Cape Breton, was further exposed to external influence in the form of television and the opening of the Canso Causeway in 1955, linking Cape Breton with the Nova Scotian mainland, and the rest of Canada. The reality of musical change has already been noted, along with the general recognition of the acceleration in change since the turn of the century and the onset of the global village. Nettl acknowledges the likelihood that rapid or at least substantial change in music and its surrounding social events occurred with, or perhaps followed, the development of technology, communication, widespread standardisation, along with knowledge and tolerance of diversity." (Nettl 1983:181)

Musical change as a reflection of social change has long been recognised. Certainly a case can be made for this where Cape Breton is concerned, in that a strong interrelationship can be observed between change as it has affected social, identity, and specifically musical areas. Since c1928 "folk music has not ... diminished in its symbolic role of distilling and representing a community's social basis; rather it has responded to a changing social basis by changing itself" (Bohlman 1988:57). The isolation afforded Cape Breton prior to the 1920s created the perfect environment for musical stagnation, and consequently the preservation of the old Highland sound. Repertory was limited and governed by the dance; besides the fiddle tunes remembered from the old country, the bagpipes and Gaelic songs provided the only alternative sources for new material. Local talent alone could be emulated, since there was no access to other fiddlers; the tradition was almost exclusively oral and firmly rooted in Gaelic Scotland of the 18th century. From the late 1920s, and corresponding with Cape Bretons emergence from its secluded existence, an island fiddling community began to develop. Any regional idiosyncrasies which may have

2 As folklore has it, on the night the Causeway was completed, an old lady in Cape Breton, leading her family in prayer, added "thank God for having at last made Canada a part of Cape Breton" (Ducharme 1987:24).
existed were, for the most part, smoothed out; a standard repertory of tunes was shared; a wider vocabulary of stylistic techniques became available - all facilitated by the introduction of the radio and the promotion of fiddle music through this medium, the improvements in transport facilities which enabled fiddlers from all over the island to come in contact with one another, an expanding social infrastructure of dances, picnics, and concerts, and the appearance of the first commercial recordings which added a further dimension to the transmission process. As the outside world impinged on a more unified Cape Breton throughout the 1940s and '50s, the music continued to evolve correspondingly. Increasingly the Scottish origins were being reduced in their significance as fiddlers in Cape Breton began to experiment with new sounds; granted, these Scottish origins, as they translated into musical terms, were never forgotten. As Cape Bretoners began to travel outside the island because of the war, or in the quest for economic prosperity, external musical influences began to impact upon the fiddle tradition. The published collections of Scottish and other musics acquired initially by Cape Bretoners stationed in Scotland with the Canadian military during the second World War, for example, had lasting implications on the repertory, and marked the beginnings of an emphasis on quantity and diversity. Likewise new musical opportunities arose for fiddlers to perform in unfamiliar environments and with musicians from other musical backgrounds. The effects of such liaisons inevitably would have caused some degree of change in the Cape Breton fiddler's style and repertory. The arrival and acceptance of other musical traditions to Cape Breton - one aspect of the outside world impinging on the island - would obviously have consequences on the local music. Unfortunately this was often negative, particularly in the '60s when Rock 'n' Roll became the popular music of the day, and the fiddle music and its surrounding social events no longer held appeal, particularly for the younger generations. Coinciding with the arrival of Rock 'n' Roll, a change in the liquor laws was implemented, whereby public areas where alcoholic drink was served were no longer accessible to the lower age groups. The few social square dance events that continued quickly became the domain of the older generations only. Even
among this generation Pig 'n Whistle dances became the popular social event, whereby rather than the square-dance proper, a hybrid of square and popular round dancing was the norm, usually with the balance in favour of the latter. By 1971, the fiddle tradition in Cape Breton had reached a crisis which was brought to the fore following a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation documentary entitled *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, predicting the imminent demise of the tradition, since the younger generation were showing no interest in it. This immediately provoked a reaction within the Cape Breton community; a committee was quickly established with the objective of proving that the notion of the vanishing fiddler was a myth; this was achieved to a certain extent in 1973, when, as a finale to two solid days of music making in Glendale, over one hundred fiddlers, under the direction of the local parish priest, Fr. John Angus Rankin, took to the stage - a clear statement that the Cape Breton fiddler was alive and well. The revival inspired by the CBC documentary, initiated by the Glendale fiddlers festival, and promoted by the newly formed Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association, gathered momentum throughout the '70s and '80s, so that by 1995, it seems that the Cape Breton fiddler is secure. As will be discussed in the next section, the period was also significant in allowing a new Cape Breton musical identity to stabilise. In part, the need for this was a response to Cape Bretons increasing acceptance and recognition throughout the music world. As part of the revival movement in Cape Breton, family dances were re-introduced, where all ages were welcome in a liquor-free environment. In reality this generally means that alcohol is consumed outside the dance-hall. At dances such as those at Glencoe Mills, an important part of the nights activities is centred around the parked cars and their alcoholic contents, the outcome being that there is often as much music and dance activity there as inside the hall. Likewise there has been an upsurge in the number of local dances and concerts being held. One significant factor since the 1970s has been a very definite move towards eclecticism in musical terms, reflecting increased exposure to other musical traditions. This has been facilitated through the media and also through direct personal contact realised through the participation of
Cape Breton musicians at festivals initially in Canada and the U.S., but increasingly throughout the world. An extension of this international recognition and acceptance of the music has been the recent ventures of some Cape Breton fiddlers musicians into the area of popular music; in this case, popular music with a strong Cape Breton element. The Rankin Family Band and The Barra MacNeils both fall into this category; as prominent young fiddlers Ashley MacIsaac and Natalie MacMaster both embrace the band format, they too seem to be heading in a similar direction. The work of such groups has been very significant in furthering the cause for a generic Cape Breton label. The revival of the '70s has gained a further impetus from the international recognition bestowed on these individuals. In Cape Breton it has generated a new wave of energy. Significantly this resulted in many non-Scottish descendants turning to the music for the first time, now that they recognise its potential in musical areas with which they are more familiar. Likewise individuals with no Cape Breton connections are taking up this music also, often with tremendous results - "It can be done, and you don't have to be born in Cape Breton to do it" (Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16). Within Cape Breton this hybrid musical expression is important in the movement towards recognition and acceptance of this music as a symbol for all the island's people. Nettl reminds us:

> we perhaps no longer have many persons who listen to only one kind of music; most are involved in the total musical culture of the nation. But each person still has a type of music that he considers uniquely his own and the special symbol of his population group. (Nettl 1976:19)

Cape Breton fiddling has moved from an exclusive affinity with those of Scots descent through to becoming increasingly accessible to all people of Cape Breton Island. In the environment of 1995, where country music, bluegrass (popular especially among the French Acadians), rock, blues, jazz, western art music, ballad singing, Gaelic song, and choirs are all important elements of musical expression, the
hybrid form of an emerging Cape Breton popular music may well be the final step necessary in ensuring that the fiddle tradition is at the core of that symbol.

3.2 Towards a Cape Breton Musical Identity

Neither Canadian nor Scots, but people who have been dislocated, uprooted. (*The Blood is Strong*, BBC Documentary)

Current thinking in ethnomusicology recognises music as an important element in the issue of cultural identity, which has become increasingly topical throughout the present century, in direct response to globalisation and its corollary - what Nettl suggests as a "cultural grey-out" (Nettl 1983: 345). Writing in the recently published *Ethnicity, Identity and Music - The Musical Construction of Place* John Baily points to this musical significance in matters of identity:

...music is itself a potent symbol of identity; like language ... it is one of those aspects of culture which can, when the need to assess 'ethnic identity' arises, most readily serves this purpose. (Bailey 1994:48).

The relationship between the fiddle music and all aspects of musical and cultural identity within the Cape Breton tradition is a complex one. Ambiguity arises as the Scottish fiddler evolves into the Cape Breton fiddler, and as Scottish music evolves into a Cape Breton music. Is the label Cape Breton merely a geographic one, or does it imply an underlying musical and cultural significance? Or is there a case for the retention of the older Scottish label as an identification marker for the fiddler and his/her music? Would a term yielding the "dialectical interaction" between core and boundary (Bohlman 1988:62) or internal and external, ie. Cape Breton Scottish, be more appropriate? In any case, has the evolution process referred to been the product
of internal choice or external pressure? Has the external perception paralleled, anticipated, or followed the local or internal perception?

The purpose of the following discussion is to question the authenticity of the generic label, Cape Breton fiddle music. The various stages leading to the coining of the term, and its acceptance, will be discussed initially. The significance of this as a marker in the wider cultural reality will then be explored.

(a) Scottish, Cape Breton Scottish or Cape Breton Fiddling? - A Shifting Musical Identity

As was already discussed in Chapter One, the fiddle music found on Cape Breton Island today is firmly rooted in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, brought to the New World as part of a larger cultural baggage to which the immigrants held firmly into the twentieth century. This culture was a marker of their identity, a symbol of their Scottishness. By extension, this was also true of the musical component of this culture. Thus the music was very definitely a reflective agent, reflecting the Scottish identity of this marginal enclave on the eastern Canadian seaboard.

Since the late 1920's have been decided upon as the starting point for acknowledging change in the context of the present work, this will be adhered to in this discussion of identity. In any case I believe that the shift away from a strictly Scottish musical identity was a product or consequence of a number of social factors in vogue after

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4 In an article in The Inverness Oran (1993), Greg MacLeod, argues for the use of the word "Scotch" as opposed to "Scottish", since this is what would have been most commonly used in Cape Breton "until some government authority began to use the term 'Scottish'". Interestingly the debate which ensued echoed a similar one published in the newspaper Mosgladh in 1931. The decision to use the derivative 'Scottish' for the purpose of the present work is based on the more widespread use of the word in contemporary Cape Breton.
this time which resulted in change in all aspects of Cape Breton society. In the pre-
'20s isolation of Cape Breton, a Scottish musical identity acted both as a reverent link
with the old country and as a distinction from the other ethnic musics which made
Cape Breton their home. As the twentieth century progressed however, and the
music became increasingly disseminated internally and externally, it became obvious
that the ethnic label attributed to it needed review. This, I would postulate, became
all the more necessary as it came into contact with contemporary Scottish music,
both sharing identical ethnic badges but differing in sound and performance practice.\textsuperscript{5} The compromise was the coining of the label Cape Breton Scottish music in the
second half of the century, indicating simultaneously its Cape Breton location and its
Scottish origins, while distinguishing it from contemporary Scottish music. Central to
this embryonic recognition of a distinct Cape Breton identity was the experimentation
with musical sound which was characterising the same era, furthering the cause for
detachment from the Scottish stamp.

Where did the need for this compromise arise from? Was it an internal or external
phenomenon? Certainly in the early days when the fiddle music came to be
recognised outside of Cape Breton, in America for example, record companies, in
their quest to market ethnic musics, were anxious to label it as Scottish and to sell it
as such to Scottish immigrants living there. In his thesis \textit{Fiddling to Fortune: The
Role of Commercial Recordings made by Cape Breton Fiddlers in the Fiddle Music
Tradition of Cape Breton Island} Ian MacKinnon substantiates this suggestion with
the information that pioneer recordings of Cape Breton musicians in outfits such as
The Columbia Scotch Band and The Caledonia Scotch Band, recorded by the New

\textsuperscript{5}It is important to remember that the Scottish culture being referred to is that
grounded in 18th century Gaelic Scotland. While manifestations of the later
"invented" Highland tradition (Trevor-Roper 1983:15) have gained some acceptance
in Cape Breton, notably Highland dance and tartanism (of which Cape Breton
incidentally has its own variety), these are clearly perceived as being of a 'different'
Scottish culture.
York based Columbia Record Company, were released as part of the Columbia Scottish Series (37000 F-37029F) "produced for sale to the Scottish ethnic market in North America" (I. MacKinnon 1989:52-53). From Figure 3 which shows a sampling of album titles between 1928 and 1995 it is obvious that a gradual shift away from a Scottish identity as a marketing device took place. This applied to both U.S. recording labels as well as to those which were Nova Scotia based. Certainly the earliest recordings used the Scottish identification label almost exclusively. Gradually there was a noticeable decline in the retention of this. I would suggest that this came about in order to differentiate the Cape Breton fiddler's sound from that of fiddlers living in Scotland or recently emigrated from there. Before the advent of recordings it was quite feasible that both sounds, one oblivious to the other, could be designated as Scottish. Once the recording industry began in earnest, however, some differentiation was necessary since these musics, although obviously related, were by now quite distinct, thus creating confusion when described by a single term. The qualifier of Cape Breton was the most obvious choice, indicating that there was a difference while allowing their common heritage to be acknowledged. Another factor which probably called for and justified the creation of a Cape Breton identity was the social factor of emigration. Just as those who had made the move from Scotland to Cape Breton in the preceding generations espoused their Scottish musical identity, now those forced to emigrate from Cape Breton were conscious of their Cape Breton musical background.

The process of diffusion of the Scottish music and the subsequent emergence of a Cape Breton musical identity resulted in some very contrived identities for a while. Fiddlers of non-Scottish extraction included "Scotty" in their names eg. Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald (half Irish) and Paddy "Scotty" LeBlanc (Acadian). The latter

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6One Cape Breton fiddler Colin Boyd though was grouped in with the Irish Series (33000 F-33562F) when his three 78rpm discs were released on the Columbia label in the late 1920s (I. MacKinnon 1989: 53)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Album Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Hi, How Are You Today?</td>
<td>Ashley MacIsaac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Tradition Continued</td>
<td>Stephanie Wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Fiddle Tunes</td>
<td>Dougie MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Ceilidh Trail</td>
<td>Howie MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>A Baddeck Gathering</td>
<td>Charlie MacCuspic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>A Cape Breton Christmas</td>
<td>Ashley MacIsaac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Fathers and Sons</td>
<td>Jerry Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Traditional Music from Cape Breton</td>
<td>Scumalash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Dwayne Cote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199?</td>
<td>Traditional Cape Breton Music</td>
<td>Donny LeBlanc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199?</td>
<td>Island Treasure</td>
<td>Sandy MacIntyre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Road to the Isle</td>
<td>Natalie MacMaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Rock in a Stream</td>
<td>The Barra MacNeils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Party at Marion Bridge</td>
<td>Percy Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Cape Breton Fiddle</td>
<td>Kinnon Beaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>... And His Sound is Cape Breton</td>
<td>Carl MacKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Cape Breton ... My Land in Music</td>
<td>Sandy MacIntyre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Sound of Cape Breton</td>
<td>Joe Cormier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Cape Breton Scottish Memories</td>
<td>Winnie Chafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Cape Breton Violin Music</td>
<td>John Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Scottish Violin Music from Cape Breton</td>
<td>Joe Cormier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Scottish Canadian Fiddle Music</td>
<td>Dan Joe MacInnis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19?</td>
<td>The Bard of Scottish Fiddling</td>
<td>Little Jack MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19?</td>
<td>... And his Old-Time Scottish Fiddle</td>
<td>Joe MacLean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Canada's Outstanding Scottish Fiddler</td>
<td>Winston Fitzgerald</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3  A Shifting Musical Identity as Reflected in a Sampling of Album Titles
released an album entitled *The Fiddling French Canadian Scot* - a clear intimation of evolving identity.

The early 1970s was a critical time for the fiddle music on Cape Breton Island as a full-scale revival went underway to refute the notion that the tradition was in danger of extinction. This period marks the beginning of a very definite and conscious Cape Breton musical identity. The single event that ignited the revival was a CBC documentary entitled *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* - a very explicit and unambiguous intimation of identity. It marked the beginning of an awareness of a musical identity which continues to the present day. From 1971 and the fiddle festival at Glendale - a celebration of the living fiddle tradition - to the present day, there has been an ongoing shift towards promoting this Cape Breton musical identity. The most recent trend is towards album titles which make no reference to identity or heritage, reflecting a confidence among the younger generation in an indigenous Cape Breton identity which does not require constant redefinition on album covers. Rarely is the music classified as purely Scottish, although as anxiety concerning musical change has accelerated, some of the purists have reverted to this. Greg MacLeod strongly condemns this reversion:

> the new custom of promoting the term 'Scottish' and avoiding the use of the word 'Cape Breton' in our music is symptomatic of a general problem on Cape Breton Island. It seems to be a reluctance to take credit for our music and is related to a general passivity and lack of assertive attitude ... the question of calling Cape Breton music 'Scottish' is really a kind of put-down of Cape Breton Island. The suggestion is that Cape Bretoners are not good enough to be able to produce this kind of music. (MacLeod 1993)

Reverting to the older label of Scottish by those attempting to stem musical change only serves to confuse identity, while failing to impact upon the musical sound. While efforts to re-introduce the term 'Scottish' are noticeable in the hope that it will inspire a return to the old sound, the musical identity is now more strongly than ever a Cape
Breton one. The Cape Breton label of course has become increasingly relevant with successive generations as they inexorably move further away from their Scottish roots. This is testified by Cape Bretoners themselves. In an earlier article Greg MacLeod is recorded as claiming that "it's really a Cape Breton thing now, more than a Scottish thing" (Cameron 1975:14). This is certainly substantiated by the emergence of "an individual 'sound' immediately recognizable as Cape Breton" (Carver 1981). In the interviews I conducted, an acknowledgement of and pride in this Cape Breton musical identity was unanimous:

Now we're quite proud to call it Cape Breton brand of music, see ... I would say that ... it is no longer basically Scottish at all ... it's Cape Breton music. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)

This is not to imply however that the Scottish musical heritage is being ignored. Certainly in Cape Breton it is very much part of the music tradition, but conditioned by an understanding that this is the Cape Breton interpretation of it, this is a new voice in Scottish music. While the use of the term Scottish today may be used in conjunction with the Cape Breton label as a reminder of the old order, in casual conversation it occasionally appears in isolation to denote the fiddle music tradition. Nevertheless, if queried, this will become qualified with the label Cape Breton. Likewise, some of the important musical events such as the summer outdoor concerts, which are referred to colloquially as Scottish concerts, have dropped this in their official titles.

Outside the island it is easy to understand, given the differences in sound and practice in the musics of contemporary Cape Breton and Scotland, how they could be categorised as two distinct, albeit related traditions. As an Irish musician, I had my fixed perception of Scottish music as one thing, and of Cape Breton music as another. I was quite surprised on my first visit to Cape Breton to realise that their self-definition was not quite as clear-cut as I had imagined! This distinction between
contemporary Scottish and Cape Breton is assumed automatically today by non-Cape Bretoners. In concerts in the U.S. for instance Natalie MacMaster and Jerry Holland would be advertised as Cape Breton fiddlers as distinct from Scottish fiddlers such as Aly Bain or Alasdair Fraser. The Nimbus Records Ltd. album featuring music from the 1993 Eigse Na Laoi Festival in Cork, Ireland, is simply entitled *Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island*, underlining the identity of Cape Breton music in its own right. Matters like this will surely be influential in encouraging Cape Bretoners to become more assertive about their own musical identity, assuring them that they have indeed established their own musical voice.

It is evident therefore that a shift has taken place in the issue of identity of the fiddle music. This shift from Scottish, through Cape Breton Scottish, to Cape Breton proper, began when the need to distinguish the tradition from that of contemporary Scotland arose, principally through the dissemination of both musics through the mass media, but also with the decrease in isolation of Cape Breton, accelerated by the opening of the Canso Causeway in the 1950s linking the island to the Nova Scotian mainland. The validity of such a transfer in emphasis was increasingly justified as the musical sound came to be re-shaped in the new environment. The move towards a Cape Breton musical identity was consolidated in the early 1970s when the fiddle music tradition seemed to be fast disappearing. In a bid to revive it, the Cape Breton identity of the music was stressed. In 1995 this Cape Breton identity continues to be reinforced. The Scottish element has by no means disappeared however - in fact as other aspects of Scottish culture such as the language decline rapidly, the music assumes even more importance as a marker, or reminder, of Scottish heritage. Nevertheless for Cape Bretoners the Scottish dimension is increasingly recognised as being secondary to the generic Cape Breton identity of the fiddle music tradition.
(b) Reflecting or Generating a Cape Breton Cultural Identity

Since it has already been established that there has been a shift in identity in a purely musical context, it is necessary at this point to examine the broader issue of cultural identity in order to assess the role of music in this; in particular to assess whether the shift in musical identity reflected an emerging cultural identity, or was instrumental in actually generating it. John Baily comments on this bi-functionality of music in the context of cultural identity. The first perception is of music in a reflective capacity, where the music simply acts as "a ready means for the identification of different ethnic or social groups" (Baily 1994:48). The second perception is of music as a generative agent - "it also has potent emotional connotations and can be used to assert and negotiate identity in a particularly powerful manner" (Baily 1994:48). Nettl postulates that "culture could well be defined as what people take for granted or as those things on which the members of a society agree" (Nettl 1973). In terms of culture, Cape Breton is paradoxical, appearing simultaneously unified and fragmented. Pride in a collective Cape Breton identity is increasing with each successive generation. It has become important in marking the Cape Bretoner as distinct from the Nova Scotian or the Canadian. It is also significant in providing a very distinct identity for those increasingly spread throughout the relatively new phenomenon of the Cape Breton diaspora. Significantly, for the majority of ethnic groups on the island, while pride in their individual heritage is important, each would be more eager to associate with Cape Breton than with any group of similar origin in Nova Scotia or across North America (See LD#35a+b/ST#35). Markers of this collective Cape Breton identity range from the land itself, through to the ubiquitous hockey game, an anthem - Kenzie MacNeil's 'The Island', a flag, and shows such as the Summertime Revue. A popular magazine entitled simply The Cape Bretoner further underlines this collective identity. Besides those easily identifiable elements which are Canadian in origin, it is the juxtaposition of an array of cultures which contributes largely to the cultural melting pot that is Cape Breton. It is in this
capacity that the fiddle music is justified as being a symbol of Cape Breton identity. Incidentally, it is worth noting that the music has constantly been referred to by a label denoting its ethnicity - Scottish, Cape Breton Scottish or Cape Breton - rather than simply traditional music or fiddle music, terms applied frequently in other cultures where identity is more securely established.

Besides the Canadian-born inhabitants, there are numbers of Americans, many English, Scotch and Irish, quite a number of French, scattered representatives of Germany, Norway and Sweden, a strong Italian colony, a number of Hungarians ... not a few Jews, numbers of Negroes from Alabama. (Vemon 1903:249)

The multiplicity of ethnic groups which make up the fabric of Cape Breton society have all consciously strived to maintain some degree of identity, with varying levels of success, usually depending on the numbers involved, and their spatial distribution in relation to other ethnic groups. While those of Scots descent continue to dominate, French Acadians and Micmac Indians also form substantial groups. Minority groupings include the Irish, Italians, Ukranians, Lebanese, Indians, Pakistanis and Poles. Often the various ethnic groups tend to gravitate together, so that in Whitney Pier for instance we have what is essentially "a community of distinct neighbourhoods based on the various ethnic backgrounds of its people" (Whitney Pier Historical Society 1993:3). Likewise the French and the Micmacs are somewhat segregated spatially, the largest French settlements being in villages such as Cheticamp and the Micmacs on reserves such as Eskasoni. Division in this manner has allowed individual groups to cultivate their own cultures. This is manifest in the case of the French Acadians for instance, in their use of their own language, their own food, a flag, and specific festivals such as Micareme and Festival De L'Escaouette. The retention of ethnic origins is further encouraged and supported by the presence of a Cape Breton Multicultural Association. Nevertheless, the social and economic realities have resulted in much integration and subsequent unification, which has translated into a
pride in Cape Breton being the common denominator between the myriad ethnic
groups that constitute the island's society. A blurring of boundaries has occurred to
some extent, most notably where the inherited Scottish culture is concerned. Greg
MacLeod, for one, has commented favourably on this:

I'm pleased that the culture has drawn others to it rather than turning
in on itself. I've been at fiddle workshops where in the breaks between
the music you'd hear conversation in English, French, Gaelic and
Micmac, all the languages of Cape Breton. (in Cameron 1975:14)

Authorities have agreed that music is often an effective channel through which ethnic
boundaries may be traversed. Martin Stokes for instance alludes to this in his writings
on Celtic musics:

Celtic music is ... always potentially easy, participatory, and crosses
national borders. Consequently it allows people access to ... a domain
of 'Celtdom' denied to them by the complexities of, for example, a
Celtic language. (Stokes 1994:6)

The idea of one culture adopting the music of another culture in isolation from all
other aspects of that culture is not peculiar to Cape Breton. Naomi Ware mentions
this trait in connection with jazz for example:

The American experience with jazz clearly demonstrates that much
music can be assimilated without other cultural elements if the latter
are regarded as undesirable." (1978:317)

In the case of Cape Breton, many factors combined in allowing the fiddle music, and
on occasion the corresponding dance tradition, to become diffused among many of
the ethnic groups. First and foremost was the fact that this fiddle music which arrived
with the Scots was very prominent on the island given the sheer number of Scots
settlers. This was all the more pronounced since the other ethnic groups had only a
weak instrumental tradition or, in some cases, none at all. Even the Micmacs and the
French who boasted of such strong cultures in so many respects had no continuous
traditions of instrumental music. The areas in which these people lived were surrounded by the Scots and their music and it was inevitable that it should infiltrate their lives:

The Scottish music is played everywhere, because we were influenced like from both sides; we're surrounded by Scottish people from Mabou, Inverness, to the other side, Pleasant Bay and everywhere. So that's all the music that was played ... so as far as fiddle music, that's the music ... French people play in Cheticamp. (Joel Chiasson, LD#25/ST#25)

Wilfred Prosper justifies his association with the fiddle music tradition - "if I was born in China I'd probably play Chinese music, but I was born in Cape Breton" (LD#46/ST#46). As an instrumental tradition it was perfect for diffusing among all these ethnic groups since it transcended all language barriers. This became particularly significant as the Gaelic language gradually declined and the English language came to prominence, an added unifying factor in the multi-ethnic society. Likewise moves towards institutionalising the music certainly helped it become more accessible to those of all ethnic origin.

In an article entitled 'The Role of Music in the Creation of an Afghan National Identity, 1923-73'. John Baily quotes a poet:

That person who was given birth by his mother on this soil, Whatever language he speaks, he is still an Afghan. (Baily 1994:57)

This is true too of Cape Breton where, in spite of maintaining separate heritages and traditions, the reality that individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds are all Cape Bretoners, is becoming increasingly significant with successive generations. Kate Dunlay's comment - "the music has become that of any Cape Bretoner" (Dunlay 1989b:22) - is certainly true today, where some of the most highly regarded Cape Breton fiddlers such as Arthur Muise are not of Scottish extraction. The inevitable
extension of this is for non-Cape Bretoners to become exponents of the Cape Breton fiddle style. Considering the playing of David Greenberg of New York Jewish descent, Joey Beaton felt compelled to admit that "it can be done, and you don't have to be born in Cape Breton to do it" (LD#16/ST#16) - a symptom of Nettl's cultural grey-out.

In Cape Breton there are those who are very strongly of the opinion that Cape Breton fiddling is a syncretic form, a synthesis of Scottish, Irish, French, and Micmac fiddling. I disagree with this, mainly because research has proved that none of these groups had a strong fiddle music tradition vibrant in Cape Breton which merged with the Scottish style, resulting in a new hybrid sound. As I have already mentioned the fiddling, originating in Scotland, was diffused in Cape Breton among the French, Micmacs, Irish and so on. Inevitably this was to have consequences on the musical sound, as variations of interpretation occurred, shaped by the different backgrounds of the people involved. The eclectic attitudes and the absence of the Gaelic language in their understanding of the music (See 9.2 (c)) had to influence their interpretation of it. Thus, rather than syncretism, where different musics are combined and emerge in a new hybrid form, what happened in Cape Breton was that the music as it came in contact with the different cultures was influenced and altered in various ways - all part of the process of becoming a new and distinct Cape Breton voice in Scottish music.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE CHANGING CAPE BRETON FIDDLER

The Cape Breton Fiddler is a many-faceted creature, being at once an elderly gentleman with a Sunday suit and tunes that have no names; a young lady, a smile in her eyes and Gaelic in her bow; a little boy clutching candy in one hand, rosin in the other - as motley a mosaic as ever you'd hope to find. (MacGillivray 1981:Preface)

Over the period 1928-1995 the mosaic depicted by MacGillivray has become an increasingly motley one. The changes which have affected all aspects of life in Cape Breton throughout that time, as the previously insular society became exposed to the outside world and was consequently influenced by it, had implications on the individuals within that society, one of whom was the Cape Breton fiddler. The role of the fiddler within the community for example has been somewhat transformed. Until the early decades of this century we know that the fiddler held a very special role in society - "[he] ranked up there with the priest or a doctor" (Carl MacKenzie, LD#8/ST#8). This was primarily due to the fact that the fiddle music and its associated activities was one of the few social entertainments available at the time. Increasingly from the 1920's onwards however, a plethora of alternative entertainment sources materialised, so that the Cape Breton community was no longer dependent on the fiddler to the same extent. Certainly the music remained an important part of the island's social fabric, but no longer monopolised it.\(^7\) The fiddle music tradition has also suffered fluctuations in popularity throughout the century, again largely resulting from the introduction of new and popular entertainment idioms to Cape Breton, ranging from the appearance of television in the 1950s to the ubiquitous Rock 'n' Roll of the '60s. With the popularity of each successive fashion, the Cape Breton fiddler was relegated to the periphery of social life, until the revival

\(^7\)Increasingly throughout the century the words fiddle and fiddler have come to replace the violin and violinist referred to earlier, and still retained to some extent today by some of the older Cape Bretoners, such as Buddy MacMaster and Marie MacLellan. Perhaps the changing status of the fiddler with the Cape Breton society, is reflected in this.
efforts of the '70s provided a new and reinforced platform upon which he was free to develop. Certainly the Cape Breton fiddler who has emerged from that time is a much transformed creature, who has adapted to the increasingly diverse social situations in which he finds himself.

Until the early part of this century the Cape Breton fiddler was an individual, usually male, Catholic, and Gaelic speaking, of Highland Scots lineage. Of course it should be remembered that at this time the Cape Breton fiddler as such did not exist, but was in fact referred to as Scotch or Scottish (See Chapter Three). This individual lived in isolated rural pockets of Cape Breton Island, usually along the west coast in Inverness County where the music was transmitted orally in a strong home environment as part of a broader Gaelic heritage. By 1995 the Cape Breton fiddler (now keenly aware of that identity label) is usually English-speaking, is as likely to be female as male, and has increasingly come to the music in isolation from other aspects of the Gaelic cultural package, often outside of the home environment. The notion of the Cape Breton fiddler as a teacher is one which has developed since as late as the 1970s. No longer strictly Scottish in background, the Cape Breton fiddler has a new personal identity which has gradually expanded to include French Acadians, Micmac Indians, and Irish among others. Much of this has been facilitated by the physical movement of the Cape Breton fiddler from rural enclaves into all parts of the island, urban centres included, and is further realised as he/she migrates to other areas across North America. Increasing exposure of the music through the media of radio, commercial recordings, and television, combined with diversification in performance contexts, has further facilitated this. Certainly the Cape Breton fiddlers of 1995 are much more widely travelled than their counterparts earlier in the century. Much of this is the direct result of the move towards embracing professionalism, realised today in the hands of Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac for instance. Changing audiences have also resulted in degrees of change in moulding the Cape Breton fiddler. Always versatile in musical terms, the early fiddlers often doubled as pipers or
callers at square-dances. Today's fiddler, however, is usually proficient on the piano - an instrument which has only become part of the tradition since the middle of the century - at composing tunes and at step-dancing, with the exhibitionist practice of fiddling and step-dancing simultaneously becoming increasingly mandatory. The commercial success of the Cape Breton fiddler since the 1970s has made the music accessible to a wider audience and has subsequently inspired other fiddlers across the world to learn the music. Thus while the sound may still be Cape Breton, the fiddler need no longer be.

4.1 Changing Patterns in Profiles, Numbers and Age Groups

It wasn't as popular for sure as it is today. You didn't have as many fiddlers. And you didn't have as many things promoting the music. (Minnie MacMaster, LD#38/ST#38)

If you go to a concert somewhere ... let's say a Mabou Ceilidh or something, every second person's coming with a fiddle case; like it's so different to the way it was when I started. (Kinnon Beaton, LD#23/ST#23)

The dualism between the public and the private has long characterised the Cape Breton fiddler. Throughout this century, the present day included, the numbers who merit description as private players far outweigh their public counterparts, although it must be conceded that the majority of those so-called private fiddlers, particularly from the 1970s when the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association was established, do venture into a more public domain at least on an annual basis to perform at the fiddlers festival now held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's. That so many unfamiliar faces continue to attend this gathering and often the monthly rehearsals throughout the year, is a constant reminder that those fiddlers who have monopolised the performance arena are but a small number within a much more widespread tradition,
but also suggests that the poles of public and private are becoming less defined. In light of this it must be recognised that within the current Cape Breton climate, the numbers of those more high profile, public fiddlers is greater than ever before, which reflects a new sense of purpose on the part of the individuals themselves, realised through increased opportunities which require the participation of a greater number of players, and furthermore, an increase in the overall standard of performance and versatility of the fiddlers which allows so many to move onto the public platform with ease. The choice available in terms of top quality fiddlers is nowhere better reflected than on the square-dance circuit. Until the revival period of the 1970's, square-dances were essentially the domain of a small number of fiddle players, such as Winston Fitzgerald, who travelled the island playing in the same communities on a regular basis. While this tradition is maintained today to some extent by Buddy MacMaster being the resident fiddler for the Thursday night summertime dances at Glencoe Mills, for example, most dance halls draw from all the fiddlers available. A typical month of West Mabou Saturday night dances for instance, will feature a different fiddler every night.

The establishment of regular classes in fiddle music, both throughout the year and in the form of summer schools, along with the disintegration of gender and ethnic barriers, has certainly gone a long way towards expanding the numbers of practicing Cape Breton fiddlers and increasing their public profile. The recent rise to international stardom of some Cape Breton fiddlers such as Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac, and the inclusion of the fiddle (albeit increasingly in a peripheral capacity) in the band formats of The Rankin Family and The Barra MacNeils, have continued to make the music accessible to younger generations in particular, and has encouraged steadily increasing numbers to take up the fiddle themselves. Interestingly, individuals approaching the music from this angle are often not of Scottish heritage and indeed increasingly have no Cape Breton connections, thus adding a further dimension to the tradition. The consequences of this will be
discussed further in the following section (4.2). Within Cape Breton itself however, there has been a marked increase in interest in the fiddle music, reflected in the numbers of younger children becoming fiddlers themselves. Already, players following on Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac are making their mark, with Robbie Fraser, Dawn and Margie Beaton, Gillian Boucher and Maddie Rankin, showing much promise. Interestingly for these young players, the public platform is perceived as the natural one. Robbie Fraser for example, has been performing in summer concerts since the age of five. This is certainly symptomatic of a new perception of the Cape Breton fiddler, where the public arena is gradually becoming the norm; perhaps it also is a consequence of the moving of the nucleus of the tradition from the home - essentially the private domain - to the classroom, which in itself is a public environment. The transfer from the classroom to the stage is not as daunting a one as from the kitchen to the stage.

The situation in the earlier part of the century progressively indicated that while there was a select number of important high profile fiddlers, and a substantial body of private or 'kitchen fiddlers', a certain amount of stagnation was happening in that the music was not being adopted by successive generations to any large extent:

the fiddlers that were at it were sort of like the same ones all the time; they weren't getting some new ones coming up like they are today ... it was the same fellows keeping it going and no new ones, no new breed joining in. (Minnie MacMaster, LD#38/ST#38)

Archie Neil Chisholm, born in 1907, and playing the fiddle from a young age, is convinced that

the reason that ... my brother [Angus Chisholm] and I attended an awful lot of these parties [was] because actually fiddlers ... were scarce in the area, very scarce compared to today. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)
Furthermore he estimates that "there are ten players for every one that existed in my day" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD #31/ST#31). He also tells the following story:

about forty years ago ... a picnic that was held at Terre Noire ... they went all over the place to find fiddlers in north Inverness, and they could only find three of us who would be willing to play at this picnic ... now today you could leave Cheticamp ... and you could find thirty or forty violin players, good ones, medium ones and poor ones. (Archie Neil Chisholm LD#31/ST#31)

The weakening transmission process from old to young continued through the century. Certainly, there were occasionally young people who did show an interest in the music, although for the most part there was little contact between them. John Donald Cameron testifies to this, pointing out that others around his own age such as Carl MacKenzie, Fr. Angus Morris and Fr. Francis Cameron, were all taking up the fiddle for the first time simultaneously, although all on different parts of the island, and thus oblivious to each other. Restricted by the social conditions of the time, no immediate energy was generated by the isolated activities of these individuals. The reduced numbers of younger fiddlers, and the lack of impact created by those who were playing, was all the more emphasised as the older school began to pass away. Kinnon Beaton recalls the musical climate at the time he became interested in playing the fiddle in the late 1960s - "it was kind of at a dying out time when I started playing. There weren't very many playing whenever I started" (LD#23/ST#23). In any case many of the older players were reluctant to share their music with younger, aspiring players. Archie Neil Chisholm is one of many who recalls the negative attitude of certain members of the older community, telling how himself and his brother Angus were discouraged:

[We] were being discouraged by an old man who lived near us and who used to play the fiddle, see. And he didn't want to see any other young players growing up, and he'd tell us 'boys, you'll never make fiddlers. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#6/ST#6)
The crisis facing the musical tradition culminated in 1971, in the documentary *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, which was very much a turning point and marked the beginning of efforts to nurture an interest among the younger generations in their musical heritage. Certainly the reality of over one hundred fiddlers performing *en masse* in Glendale was a significant statement that the Cape Breton fiddler was alive, albeit surviving away from the private eye. To present such a number of players together in one place was an achievement in itself; as Joey Beaton said "we never saw a hundred fiddlers assembled in one place before ... that was history being made" (LD#16/ST#16). That the majority of these players were of an older generation was the main problem which had to be tackled. Individuals such as John MacDougall and Stan Chapman were encouraged to teach fiddle classes, local priests sponsored instruments, and the pattern which had been in evidence for the most part of a century began to be reversed - the Cape Breton fiddle was again being passed into the hands of the youth.

Figure 4 represents a sampling of Cape Breton fiddlers of varying age groups and according to gender who are very much a part of the current public scene at various levels. The criteria presented is based on my own observations during fieldwork in Cape Breton between 1992 and 1995. The fiddlers included in this table are those whom I have observed most regularly in performance contexts ranging from the ceilidh to the concert stage. Of course the public profiles of the fiddlers included varies quite dramatically. Mary Morrison, for instance, who performs regularly at the Saturday afternoon matinees at The Elks Club in Sydney provides a marked contrast to the exposure afforded Natalie MacMaster. This information also includes only those fiddlers who are resident on the island and as such does not include individuals such as Sandy MacIntyre, John Campbell, Joe Cormier, Margaret MacDonald and other Cape Breton fiddlers who now live elsewhere and who only return occasionally in the summertime. Furthermore, fiddlers such as Joe MacLean, Dan Hughie MacEachern, and Cameron Chisholm who are no longer active publically, are not
mentioned. Neither are those numbers of fiddlers, whom I consider semi-public players, having observed them a number of times, but only in the context of the Cape Breton Fiddler's Association meetings. Fiddlers such as Jackie Dunn and John Pellerine, from Antigonish, but who are regularly involved in musical activities on Cape Breton are included. The purpose of this table is above all to provide an illustration of the increase in numbers of players among the younger generations.

That those in the 40-59 category constitute the smallest numbers reflects the reality that certainly, in those decades of the '40s, '50s and '60s, numbers of young people taking up the fiddle were at their lowest. The substantial numbers in the 20-39 category are testimony to the revival efforts of the 1970s, with the tradition continuing in strength among those increasing numbers in the 0-19 age bracket. The fact that all of the individuals listed in this category have already considerable experience in public performance has already been observed. The trend perhaps started with those fiddlers at the lowest end of the following age group, such as Natalie MacMaster, who issued her first recording at the age of 16 for example, and Ashley MacIsaac, who was a seasoned performer both in Cape Breton and beyond, by the time he turned 19. Two further points should be mentioned in connection with the fiddlers in the 0-19 category. Firstly the numbers of fiddlers in this age group is certainly more impressive than Cape Breton has ever known, a fact which is even more significant considering that the names presented here refer only to those who have already established themselves in the performance arena. The current situation is in marked contrast to that of three decades ago when Jerry Holland was performing, and because of his age and his skill was regarded as something of a novelty (LD#42a+b/ST#42). Kinnon Beaton, taking up the fiddle a little later in the '60s, was at 12 years also regarded as being exceptional:

the year I started, I started in March, at the end of March ... and like I played in the Glendale concert in July, so it was only three, four
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Dawn Beaton</td>
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<td>Margie Beaton</td>
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<td>Lisa MacIsaac</td>
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<td>60+</td>
<td>Robert Stubbert</td>
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Figure 4 1992-1995: Cape Breton Fiddlers, Age and Gender Balance
Besides the dramatic increase in numbers of young fiddlers, the second point of note concerning them is as Fr. Francis Cameron succinctly stated "they're better much younger" (LD#53/ST#53). Certainly, the introduction to fiddle classes from a young age, coupled with the constant exposure to the music in all its guises, the return of family dances, in which young and old can participate in a liquor-free environment, and the opportunities to perform publically being a very real incentive, fiddlers from a young age are certainly receiving the maximum of encouragement today. The current high level of activity surrounding the fiddle music, the numbers of commercial recordings and the frequent appearances of Cape Breton fiddlers on television shows are all important factors in setting standards for the younger fiddlers to aspire to, which is increasingly translated into real terms more and more quickly. Robbie Fraser for instance, had over 30 tunes in his repertory by the age of seven (LD#20/ST#20); sisters Dawn and Margie Beaton have taken the practice of fiddling and step-dancing simultaneously - popularised by their cousin Natalie MacMaster, among others - a step further by both performing together in perfect synchronisation; Boyd MacNeil and Bhreagh MacDonald are two young fiddlers following in the footsteps of The Barra MacNeils with their own band, Slainte Mhath, which since the East Coast Music Awards in Sydney in 1995, has steadily gained a high reputation, based on the combination of their musical abilities and innovative ideas.

4.2 Ethnic Background

As was already discussed in Chapter Three, the issue of changing perceptions of identity has been an important one in twentieth century Cape Breton. In musical terms this has resulted in the evolution of an awareness of a Cape Breton musical
tradition, integrally connected with the development of a new and distinct musical sound. The relevance of this in terms of the wider cultural picture has also been considered. Now it is time to reflect on the individual who is the Cape Breton fiddler, and examine more closely the various ethnic backgrounds from which he/she might be created.

While the fabric of Cape Breton society includes a multitude of ethnic groups, it seems that as yet only those which are firmly established and recognised for the strength of their independent identities have chosen to embrace the fiddle music tradition which is firmly associated with that dominant ethnic group, the Highland Scots. Certainly among those minority ethnic groups, such as the Italians, the Ukrainians, the Lebanese, and the Poles for instance, the fiddle music, now universally recognised as Cape Breton, has not infiltrated their lives to any great extent, and as such, as already observed in the earlier discussion, plays little part in their perception of a collective Cape Breton identity which is built for the most part on less ethnic-specific criteria. The more stable and assertive ethnic groups referred to therefore are the French Acadians, the Micmac Indians and the Irish, these groups, along with the Highland Scots, being the most significant in terms of population numbers. Along with the Scots, whose initial heritage the fiddle music was, individuals from these three ethnic backgrounds have helped redefine who the Cape Breton fiddler is in 1995. The evolution of the Cape Bretoner from the Highland Scot, over a period which has seen over seven generations in the new land, has also been an important part of this same process.

The extent of the involvement of the French and the Micmacs should be first considered. Given that both groups can boast of a relatively solid ethnic identity, facilitated by their physical separation in villages and reserves, manifest in the retention of their respective languages, and celebrated through song during their various festivites, why have they turned to the fiddle tradition? Firstly however it is
important to get their involvement into perspective. It must be remembered that where French and Micmacs are referred to in the context of the fiddle tradition, it is essentially individuals from these groups, rather than the groups as a whole, that are concerned. This is immediately apparent from Figure 4 illustrated above. Of the sixty-one fiddlers listed only six - Robert Deveaux, Joel Chiasson, Arthur Muise, Donny LeBlanc, Didace LeBlanc and Peter Porier - are of French Acadian stock, and only two, Lee Cremo and Wilfred Propser are Micmac Indians, thus constituting a relatively small percentage of the total. It seems to me that the primary incentive for individuals of a French or Micmac background to turn to the local fiddle tradition quite simply stemmed from the lack of surviving instrumental traditions within their own cultures, highlighted all the more as the fiddle music became increasingly exposed to them from the late 1920s onwards. For both ethnic groups, music was certainly a part of their lives, manifest in both cases in song, and in the case of the Micmacs, dance and drumming. It seemed natural, that coming from such an environment they would gravitate towards the other musics that surrounded them, which in this instance was a strong fiddle tradition. Certainly the French interest in this music has remained constant and continues to increase, to the extent that certain players such as Arthur Muise are regarded as being among the chief exponents of the style:

I seen them at the Broad Cove concert and when they'd announce Arthur Muise was gonna play you'd see all the old fellas coming from the back of the woods making for the stage ... to listen to Arthur. (Didace LeBlanc, LD#35a+b/ST#35)

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8Micmac Sarah Denney has done much since the 1970s in the revival of chants and dances. Interestingly it is believed that the Micmacs did have an earlier fiddle tradition. The following quotation is an extract Campbell Hardy's Sporting Adventures in the New World, Vol. 1 (1855:129-130), and describes a visit at the home of Micmac Indian Christopher Paul - "the eldest son, a fine lad, about fifteen years old, commenced such a scraping on an old violin, by way of increasing the entertainment, that I could not get out a word on the subject I wished." (quoted in Holmes Whitehead 1991:250)
The Irish contribution has been significantly different to that of the French Acadians and the Micmac Indians. This no doubt is a result of the closeness in the musical traditions of both Scotland and Ireland. Whereas the Acadians and the Micmacs coming from essentially unrelated backgrounds have had little to offer in the way of appropriate repertory for example, there has been much cross-fertilisation inspired by the Irish connection. Similarly, certain individuals such as Johnny Wilmot and Robert Stubbert for example, have chosen to incline towards nuances of style which obviously link into the Irish tradition. Of course, the belief commonly held among older Cape Bretoners that the penchant for an increase in tempo, which has characterised the fiddle music throughout this century, was encouraged initially by the French does point to the fact that some French influence is a possibility. Furthermore the eclectic interests of French Acadians, in bluegrass music for instance, is also believed to have influenced their playing of Scottish fiddle music. Where the Irish influence in Cape Breton is concerned it seems fair to say that, with some notable exceptions, musical influences have been more significant in the Cape Breton tradition than specific individuals. By this I mean that even taking into account the similarities in the musical traditions of both areas, those Irish musicians who found themselves in Cape Breton, rather than maintaining a strand of Irish music which was separate from the more widespread Scottish/Cape Breton one, succumbed to an assimilation process in which the Irish was absorbed and reshaped, thus contributing to the evolution of a new and distinct Cape Breton musical sound. This was particularly true of families such as the Murphys and the O'Handleys who settled in the Margaree and Judique areas respectively and, while happily embracing the local musical idiom, were also noted for having introduced Irish tunes, particularly jigs and waltzes into the repertory (See Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31 and Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19). The notable exceptions which I mentioned can be traced to that area known as the Northside (North Sydney, Sydney Mines, Bras d'Or etc.), where spatial distribution facilitated a stronger Irish musical identity to be maintained.
That the fiddle music tradition has moved into the hands of a people increasingly removed from the 18th century Highland Scot has resulted in linguistic changes which in turn has had implications on the musical sound. The loss of the Gaelic language as the native tongue of the Cape Breton fiddler has subsequently led to the decline of influence of that language on the fiddle style. Figures show the drastic decline the Gaelic language has witnessed in Cape Breton in this century. A 1941 census for instance estimated some 10,000 native Gaelic speakers on the island. By 1989 a study indicated a number between 500 and 1,000, most of these being senior citizens (J. Dunn 1991:62). The communal language of the Cape Breton fiddler in 1995 is English. Consequences of this changing social phenomenon on the musical sound will be discussed at a later stage, and is mentioned here only as a symptom of the change in who the Cape Breton fiddler has become over nearly a century.

The notion of spatial distribution is one which has certainly diversified in conjunction with the changing Cape Breton fiddler throughout the twentieth century. From rural enclaves habitated by Highland Scots internal migration to the urban environs of Sydney and out-migration centering on various cities throughout Canada and the United States saw the Cape Breton fiddler adapting to different environments. The progression in commercialism, evident since the late 1920s but most particularly since the musical revival of the 1970s, has further encouraged exposure of the Cape Breton fiddler. The result has been a burgeoning interest in the fiddle style which is gradually resulting in individuals, not only from non-Scottish extraction but increasingly with no Cape Breton connections, taking up the fiddle music. In some cases, such as that of David Greenberg in New York, this has been quite successful. Jackie Dunn commented on this with regard to those younger people recently taking up the fiddle in the Antigonish area, inspired largely by the success of young Cape Breton fiddlers such as Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac and by bands such as The Rankin Family Band. Less than twenty years ago when she was starting to learn the fiddle in the area, she and her fellow students all had strong family connections with Cape
Breton. Today, such connections are no longer requisite and the music is being embraced on the merits of its sound alone.

Having moved from a Highland Scot through to a Cape Bretoner of Scottish, French Acadian, Micmac Indian or Irish background - or indeed, any combination of them - the Cape Breton fiddler is certainly a more complex individual in 1995 than at the start of the century. Certainly though the Cape Breton fiddler is more than merely the bearer of a specific musical style however, and a distinction between those individuals who can perform the music adequately, and those true Cape Bretoners, of whatever ethnic stock, should be remembered.

4.3 Gender

The men are strong players. You've gotta get in there with them, follow them and drive 'er with them! I was the only woman playing with those men for a long time. If you have the quality, there's no disadvantage being a woman! (Theresa MacLellan in MacGillivray 1981:149)

The issue of women in music is a topical one cross-culturally, with dynamic changes having taken place in the area of gender balance since the early twentieth century and the revival of feminism. While Cape Breton society, in its geographic isolation, was by no means central to this movement, some of the principal concepts nevertheless have infiltrated the social system. Women certainly have played an important role in Cape Breton society over the years to the extent that MacKenzie in Highland Community on the Bras d'Or commented that

women were the main props of home and community life in our rural areas until they became emancipated by modern conveniences and new concepts of what should constitute their particular duties. When this happened the communities fell to pieces. (MacKenzie1978:43)
Traditionally in Cape Breton the fiddle was very much associated with the male population. A cursory glance through *The Cape Breton Fiddler* (MacGillivray 1981) bears this out, with only 7 of the 93 biographies dealing with women players. In the opening quotation above, Theresa MacLellan alludes to the scarcity of female fiddle players earlier in the century. Likewise Archie Neil Chisholm comments on this reality - "in the old days ... it was a rarity to see a woman or a girl playing the fiddle" (LD#31/ST#31). He recalls one of the first women fiddlers he came across - Mary MacDonald - and how she was "the dreamboat of every bachelor" at the picnics where she used play (LD#31/ST#31).

Of the 7 primary women informants in *The Cape Breton Fiddler* two are now deceased (Mary MacDonald and Tena Campbell), two fall into the 60+ age group (Theresa MacLellan and Theresa Morrison), two into the 40-59 group (Winnie Chafe and Margaret MacDonald), and one into the 20-39 group (Brenda Stubbert). Significantly, in the past 14 years since the publication of this book in 1981, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of prominent women players, so that by now there is more of a balance within the Cape Breton music tradition. This is illustrated in Figure 4 above, where the female fiddlers in the current scene, between 0-39 years, include Natalie MacMaster, Lucy MacNeil, Wendy MacIsaac, Jackie Dunn, Stephanie Wills, Natasha Roland, Lisa MacIsaac, Bhreagh MacDonald, and Dawn and Margie Fraser. The obvious assumption at this point is quite simply that there are more females playing the fiddle now than there were in the past. However, there is no doubt that there were certainly more than seven women playing the fiddle before 1981. The *Partial Directory of Cape Breton Violinists* included as an Appendix to *The Cape Breton Fiddler* for instance, yields some twenty extra names of women fiddlers, the majority of whom were alive in 1981. The choice as to which fiddlers to concentrate on was obviously determined by such things as public profile. Thus, the fact that only seven women fiddlers were chosen, implies that only this small number were public figures. Some of the less public female fiddlers until this time included
Cassie MacIntyre (Sandy MacIntyre's mother) and Katie Anne Cameron (John Donald and John Allan Cameron's mother). Mary Morrison, an elderly lady whom I interviewed myself, was also active from the early decades of the century. One point of interest is that during the war years, particularly the Second World War, women musicians enjoyed a higher public profile. Veronica MacKinnon for instance played frequently for dances around the Iona area at this time. For those individuals who were more exposed as musicians early in this century, the usual platforms were primarily the kitchen-rackets or house-parties, and events such as weddings and parish picnics. Throughout the 1930's Tena Campbell, referred to as "the queen of the bow", was heard frequently through the medium of radio on programmes such as Celtic Ceilidh and Cottar's Saturday Night. While the first commercial recordings featured female piano accompanists such as Bess Siddell, the first releases by a female Cape Breton fiddler were as late as the 1970s when Theresa MacLellan and Winnie Chafe both issued solo albums.

The notion that women musicians were not as active as men in the public domain is consistent throughout many cultures. An extension of the male/female dualism is the concept of public/private domains. This is certainly applicable to the Cape Breton situation where the relatively small numbers of women noted as performers is not synonymous with a lack of female musical activity, but rather indicates that their music making was more the conserve of the private domain of the home. Tommy Basker certainly agrees with the idea that there were more female fiddle players than were publicly recognised:

"and some of the women, I, I've known this for years; the women in the house they played, but you never heard them playing, but when"

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9Theresa MacLellan had recorded earlier with The MacLellan Trio which featured her brother Donald on fiddle and her sister, Marie, on piano.
there was no company they played. Closet players, yeah.
(LD#33/ST#33)

A parallel situation existed in Ireland in the patriarchal society prior to the 1960s:

there were in fact a great number of superb women musicians and singers up and down the country, but their talents were restricted to the privacy of their own homes. (Curtis 1994:125)

In the home environment of Cape Breton the women folk played an important role in the transmission of the music, even when they were not instrumentalists themselves. Songs in the Gaelic language were a natural part of everyday life particularly for the women who sang constantly as they went about their daily routines. Many of these Gaelic songs made the transfer from vocal to instrumental piece (voice to fiddle). Often it is a woman who is acknowledged as being the original source. Archie Neil Chisholm for instance credits his mother with providing some of the material himself and his brother Angus shared in their fiddle music repertoires:

now a great many of the tunes that we learned to play we learned them from my mother who would be spinning or scrubbing or anything like that. And there was a song in her voice all the time in spite of the fact that we were poor and had hardly anything ... but she was always able to sing Gaelic particularly when she was spinning ... she'd be spinning with the old-fashioned wheel with the pedal on it and at the same time humming these tunes. Now for instance the 'High Road to Linton' ... we learned that from her ... and another one that we learned was 'Miss Drummond of Perth', it's a strathspey ... and even the one that we learned first 'The Cock o' the North', we learned that from her. (LD#6/ST#6)

Women were often noted for their jigging of tunes, basically performing the tunes vocally in a combination of Gaelic words and nonsense syllables. Maggie Ann Cameron Beaton remembers a Mrs. Neil MacDonald who "could jig all the good old tunes. People would dance a Scotch Four to her at a spinning frolic" (MacGillivray
Lloyd MacDonald likewise recalls a female relative whose jigging of tunes was prominent in her family's instrumental training:

and of course all the tunes were learnt, an awful lot from the women. My father and ... my uncle both played ... but my aunt Lizzie who couldn't play anything taught them how to play tunes ... 'cause she'd come home from a dance and they'd ask her how was that reel the fiddler played and she'd jig it for them and they'd go in the parlour and pull the fiddle out and start playing it, and then she'd correct their mistakes. (LD#5/ST#5)

Rod C. MacNeil made the comment that "girls were much better than boys at jigging" (LD#18/ST#18). He comments further on the musical memory of the women, with specific regard to his mother - "if she went out to a dance and heard a different tune, she'd be jigging it the next day" (LD#18/ST#18). The inclination of the female Cape Bretoner towards the dance was, like the song, facilitated and nurtured in the home environment, for as Fr. John Angus Rankin saw it "she could stop and dance in the middle of making the biscuits" (LD#17/ST#17). Nevertheless, when it came to public events of an exhibitionist nature, it was again the male performers who were prominent, until quite recent times.

The home environment played a major role in dictating the musical path of any child, male or female. Allister MacGillivray believes that "when there was a father in a family of a large group of kids, he'd certainly hand the violin to the girl as quickly as to the boy if she had the talent and the desire" (in Caplan, No. 29). Biological and social conditioning however would have affected the female decision to continue playing later on. Fiddler Margaret (Chisholm) MacDonald made her choice to relegate her musical activity to the background while her children were young - "my children were always the most important thing to me, so, from 1966 to '73 I never touched the violin" (MacGillivray 1981:114). With the introduction of firstly the pump organ and then the piano into Cape Breton fiddle music circles from the turn of the century, the female musical interests seemed almost unanimously to gravitate in
this direction. Again this appears as an extension of the male/female roles with the 
fiddle - the dominant instrument - being played by the male, and the piano or 
accompanying instrument by the female. Particular fiddler/piano player duos emerged 
such as Winston Fitzgerald and Beattie Wallace, and Donald Angus and Elizabeth 
Beaton, further underlining this perception. Interestingly, despite the increasing 
elevation in status of the piano accompaniment throughout this century, to the 
current situation where the sound is not Cape Breton without it (much of the musical 
developments having been instigated by the female exponents), the piano players have 
not necessarily received the corresponding credit, suggesting that vestiges of the 
gender differentiation are thus retained.

Besides providing accompaniment to the fiddle music, the piano training of these 
women contributed another valuable asset to the tradition in that the rudiments of 
music theory which they often received in conjunction with formal training enabled 
them to pass on the skill of note-reading to the male fiddlers. Fiddlers of the past 
such as Danny Beaton, Johnny Ranald Beaton, and Dan J. Campbell have 
respectively acknowledged a mother, a wife and a sister as having contributed to the 
accuracy of their playing, having introduced them to the rudiments of notation. After 
a futile attempt at learning to read music from Dan Hughie MacEachern, Buddy 
MacMaster, with the help of the piano player Mildred Ledbeater in Antigonish, 
became an avid note reader. Wilfred Prosper acknowledges the nuns teaching in 
Eskasoni as being important in teaching musical notation skills to the Micmac 
community there (LD#46/ST#46).

It seems that the prominence of women in Cape Breton fiddling is one of the 
consequences of the revival period from the 1970s. Many of the fiddlers in the 0-39 
age bracket are certainly products of this. Nevertheless there continues to exist a 
number of female fiddlers, often the mothers of some of the younger high profile
players, such as Margie Dunn (Jackie Dunn's mother) and Anna MacDonald (Howie MacDonald's mother) who do not perform publically. The disintegration of the gender barriers has therefore been a very recent phenomenon. The establishment of formal classes in fiddling did much to encourage the participation of both sexes in much the same way as it allowed the music to move outside the confines of a traditional home environment. Certainly the gender issue is much more balanced than in the past in terms of numbers of females playing the fiddle. Significant too is the number of female performers who are prominent in the newly emerged professional circuit, with fiddlers such as Lucy MacNeil, Wendy MacIsaac, Jackie Dunn, Stephanie Wills and, most notably, Natalie MacMaster frequently representing Cape Breton on an international stage. The role of women in all other aspects of the musical tradition has also steadily gained recognition. Step-dancers such as Melody and Kelly Warner and Natasha Roland perform regularly; individuals such as Winnie Chafe and Stephanie Wills teach fiddle on a regular basis; others such as Jean MacNeil, Betty Mattheson, and Mary Janet MacDonald are recognised step-dance teachers, with the latter having recently released an instructional step-dance video; Mary Jane Lamont is a noted Gaelic singer; fiddler, Brenda Stubbert is a well-known composer of tunes in the local idiom; and prominent piano players include Tracey Dares and Hilda Chiasson. Ironically, as the female population has turned towards the fiddle in increasing numbers (and no doubt will continue to do so for at least another generation, inspired by Natalie MacMasters achievements, for instance) the number of male piano accompanists has grown, further facilitating the demise of the poles of gender discrimination. Marie MacLellan comments on how "lately there's a lot of men playing piano. But in my day it was pretty well all women playing piano" (LD#3/ST#3).
4.4 Towards Professionalism

The success currently being enjoyed by a select number of professional Cape Breton musicians is a relatively new phenomenon within that tradition. Certainly, illusions of professionalism have long been part of the Cape Breton scene, but large-scale commercial success, the international acceptance of the music and corresponding public profile, and the financial implications inherent in this, are concepts which have become a reality for the Cape Breton fiddler only within the past decade. The 'illusions of professionalism' can be traced back at least to the turn of the century, and no doubt were manifest to some extent prior to this. Certain individuals were established as travelling musicians, many fiddlers but also pipers, most notably Sandy Boyd. Of the fiddlers, names such as Ned MacKinnon, James D. Gillis, Alan MacFarlane, Donald Beaton, Hughie Angus MacDonald, Ronald Gillis, Joe LeBlanc, Peter MacPhee, and Dan R. MacDonald were especially renowned. Such individuals were usually bachelors, of no fixed abode, and who undertook regular employment only on occasion. Each would travel a particular area of the island, gravitating towards homes of fellow musicians, or those in which they knew the music would be appreciated. Upon arrival, the travelling musician was liable to spend anything from a few days to a few months there. Mary Maggie Vernier recalls such visits of Peter MacPhee to her home - "when he'd land up at our house, he'd stay like for the winter" (LD#27+28/ST#28). In return for bed and board, the fiddler would offer continuous musical entertainment, and generally provided a valid excuse for many ceilidhs or kitchen-rackets. Those who were able composers, such as Dan R. MacDonald, often expressed their gratitude by making new tunes for the host family. The presence of such an individual often encouraged musical interest in the younger members of the household, not least since a very productive musical environment surrounded his stay (See Sheldon MacInnes, LD#4/ST#4).
The semi-professional fiddler emerged during the middle years of the century. Individuals such as Winston Fitzgerald, Angus Chisholm, and Bill Lamey for instance all secured day-time employment, while undertaking musical engagements in the evenings. The concept of the semi-professional fiddle player remains the popular choice for most active fiddlers today, and reflects the reality that for the majority of practitioners another more secure form of employment is necessary. Jerry Holland for instance is a carpenter by trade, Dougie MacDonald works as a miner, Carl MacKenzie lectures in engineering at University College, Cape Breton, Francis MacDonald was in the army, Stan Chapman and Jackie Dunn are school teachers, John Donald Cameron manages a music store, and others such as Fr. Angus Morris are obviously priests. The need for occupations which are economically viable, to which the income generated by musical performances may be supplemented, is further underlined by the numbers of Cape Breton fiddlers no longer resident on the island who have moved to larger urban centres across Canada and in the U.S. in order to secure financial stability. Of course, for many who work regularly, musical performances are retained as a hobby; all the same, a substantial number of Cape Breton fiddlers do view themselves as bi-occupational - in other words as semi-professional musicians. This concept became more clearly defined as the century progressed, and increasing numbers of fiddlers became aware of the economic possibilities in the recording industry and the performance arena. Particularly since the revival of Cape Breton fiddle music since the 1970s, a number of channels have opened up to support this lifestyle. The teaching of fiddling, and also piano accompaniment and dance, is one such example. Individuals such as Winnie Chafe and Stephanie Wills practice this on a full-time basis, while others such as Kyle MacNeil and Shawn MacDonald operate on a part-time level. Shows such as The Rise and Follies, The Cape Breton Summertime Revue, and most recently, Cape

10Bill Lamey worked in a bakery for a time; Angus Chisholm worked as a warden in the National Park.
Breton Gold, provide seasonal employment for musicians. Some of the fiddlers who have had opportunities through such ventures include Jerry Holland, Natalie MacMaster, Tara Lynn Tousenard, Christa Tousenard, Shawn MacDonald, and Wendy MacIsaac. The Normaway Inn operates an employment package for the younger Cape Breton fiddlers, who work in the hotel by day and perform for guests in the dining room by night.

The venture into fully-fledged professionalism in terms of a music career, very much a new perception in Cape Breton, is still regarded with caution among Cape Breton fiddlers. Buddy MacMaster for instance had already retired from his work with the rail company before he took up performing on a full-time basis. Natalie MacMaster and Tracey Dares, currently the busiest Cape Breton fiddle/piano duo, are both managing to complete degree courses in spite of a hectic schedule which sees them playing across the world. Most of the members of The Barra MacNeils and The Rankin Family Band have qualifications to their names, with most of them practicing in their diverse fields, which range from music teachers and artists to lawyers, before deciding to become professional musicians. Ashley MacIsaac is certainly among the first to leave high school and move straight into the professional music world. Dave MacIsaac is one musician who has been playing professionally for many years. His home base in Halifax, and his musical versatility which sees him performing regularly with blues musicians for instance, puts him in a different position from the typical Cape Breton fiddler. Another Cape Bretoner who embraced professionalism, in the 1960s in this case, was John Allan Cameron. Again, John Allan was not typical of the Cape Breton fiddler in that he promoted his talents for singing and playing Cape Breton tunes on guitar along with, and indeed before, his fiddle playing.

One of the dramatic changes affecting the Cape Breton fiddler through the period c1928-1995 concerns that of financial renumeration. At the start of the century fiddlers gladly accepted payment of any description. Joe LeBlanc, in return for
playing for weddings down north, for instance would come home with "a huge big load of fish. They'd pay him with whatever they had and it was all the same as money to him" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). "Little" Simon Fraser was given a fiddle once after playing for a three-day picnic (MacGillivray 1981:23). Typically fiddlers received payment in the form of liquor. Otherwise the hat would be passed around (MacGillivray 1981:98). Until more recent decades, the issue of wages remained a flexible one, and cash payments, when they happened, were usually low. Mike MacDougall for instance recalls playing in St. Peter's parish Hall during the forties for $2.50 per night. Sandy MacInnis was paid $1.50 for a picnic at River Denys. John Alex MacLellan received $5 at some of his dances and noted how that was recognised as being "good money at that time" (MacGillivray 1981:147). Even those better paid players such as Winston Fitzgerald would average around $15-20 dollars per night (Estwood Davidson LD#51/ST#51). Little or no financial renumeration was forthcoming for the many radio shows Winston and other fiddlers engaged in from the late 1920s onwards, since such a platform was regarded as being an opportunity to promote other performances by the musicians.

The first changes with regard to the whole payment issue date back to 1966 and the establishment of a Cape Breton Musician's Association, a local branch of the earlier provincial organisation, the Atlantic Federation of Musicians, based in Halifax. The Cape Breton organisation, including musicians from all traditions, not exclusively fiddlers, did much to standardise performance fees, so that today the minimum wage is $125 per performance. For an increasing number of fiddlers the asking price is considerably higher than this. Those full-time/professional fiddlers have, in the last couple of years, moved away from the local union, and employed their own managers, often based in Nova Scotia or in Upper Canada. Agents, distribution companies and so on are now part of the musical life of these still select number of musicians. So too is the reality of Cape Breton musicians being signed to some of the top recording companies, such as Warner, Polygram, and EMI. Certainly, as we
observe Natalie MacMaster hosting radio shows and being the focus of a Farmer's Milk promotion, and Ashley MacIsaac's video release to coincide with his latest album, it is obvious that Cape Breton fiddling has moved into another era.
CHAPTER FIVE  
THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF THE CAPE BRETON FIDDLER

The individual who is the Cape Breton fiddler has, as already observed, adapted and changed quite significantly over the period c1928-1995. Much of this has been in response to, and in tandem with, changes in the social environment throughout those years. In this chapter the focus is on that environment and the processes of change which have affected it, and ultimately how this has affected the Cape Breton fiddler and his/her music.

5.1 The Home Environment

The home environment is recognised as being the undisputed axis of society. Here it will be postulated that the home environment is also central to the music tradition within Cape Breton. While this tradition has been and continues to be subjected to processes of change on various internal and external levels, one of the constants has been the home environment which has continued to serve as an anchor within that tradition. Certainly modifications have occurred. Nevertheless its role and function remain central to the tradition's existence and strength. In an interview with Sheldon MacInnes, the role of the home is outlined and the fact of its constancy reinforced:

...it's not a whole lot different than it would have been 40, 50, or 60 years ago ... that need for the home environment to nurture and support and provide the more formative involvement in music in order for us to promote that general Cape Breton style. What I see today in, certainly among our young violinists, and I would cite Ashley MacIsaac, and Natalie [MacMaster], and all of the fiddlers that they associate with, I think if one were to look carefully at their home environments we would see that that's where it all started for them, that's where it all began. (LD#4/ST#4)
In fact MacInnes goes as far as to voice his fear that a dilution or dissolution of the home environment would have irreparable consequences on the integrity of the tradition:

...that home environment, in the very formative years, has to nurture that potential musician, and if that's not happening, or when that ceases to happen in Cape Breton, the music as we know it today, and as we've known it in Donald Angus Beaton's era, will become something quite different. (LD#4/ST#4)

This encapsulates two important points, firstly concerning the central role of the home in the cultivation of the tradition, and secondly, suggesting its position as a stabilising and conservative agent within that tradition.

In order to examine and justify these points the various strands that constitute the home environment, past and present, will be discussed. In isolating the different strands upon which it operates as a starting point for the tradition and the modifications which have characterised it throughout the present century, it will be possible to determine the validity of these statements.

The home provides the basis upon which the broader society is built. This broader society can be sub-divided into two levels. The first level or stratum is the immediate community, the local society, urban or rural, to which the home belongs, primarily as a result of geographical conditions, which of course may have been pre-determined by other factors such as family or religious ties, or commercial/industrial requirements. Multiple examples exist within the Cape Breton context. Pioneer settlers for instance generally settled in groups determined by family and religious ties. In the 1900s the closure of the mines in Inverness County resulted in substantial relocation of families to the industrial east of Cape Breton. Emigration to numerous cities across Canada and North America has become a regular feature of Cape Breton life, and has led to the establishment of Cape Breton enclaves in cities such as
Boston, Detroit, Toronto, and Halifax. Dave MacIsaac, commenting on the north end of Halifax, where many Cape Breton families chose to settle in the 1950s particularly, says "it was almost like a little Cape Breton up here" (LD#7/ST#7). The second stratum is the wider community, which in this case is Cape Breton Island itself. Within this pyramid structure it becomes immediately apparent that the home environment certainly functions as the cornerstone in the make-up of society, a theory which by extension can be applied to the more specifically musical community. As a corollary to this, the possibility of its non-function poses a threat to the community's existence.

The home as an organism within the social fabric of the Cape Breton music tradition is a multi-faceted entity which fulfils several functions including social and educational ones. With regard to each function or strand however, the home environment serves either an instigational or an occasional role, as in the transmission process and social milieu respectively. The leading question is whether an abundance of active home environments generates the tradition at community level, or is the opposite the case - that a healthy tradition at community level stimulates an increase in the number of active home environments? Certainly a healthy home environment is superfluous without the presence of the broader community network, just as this cannot function without the support of a rich and stable home environment. The home and the community, in its immediate and wider capacities, are therefore inter-dependent.

It would be a myth however to presume that every home in Cape Breton acted in the capacity of nurturing the musical tradition. That would be in an ideal situation. In the actual situation, the community of Cape Breton is a combination of both active and passive home environments, the numbers of which are not fixed. In the active home environment parents or siblings traditionally are active participants in the tradition, or at least provide constant exposure to the music and encouragement to the younger
generations. The *passive* home environment is where none of these processes are voluntarily initiated. Certainly this home environment might be receptive to the music, through media exposure for instance. However no effort is made to contribute to the tradition. To date only in rare instances have such environments nurtured musicians of any calibre. In the early years of this century, the situation was clearcut and represented the two poles outlined; certain families were associated with music and carried this through several generations; others were not involved at this level of the culture. Progressively, however, this situation has altered and become more complex. In 1995, the poles of the active and passive home environment are no longer as clearly defined, with those passive situations being increasingly exposed to the music via the media, while active home environments can now be created in the absence of practitioners by manipulating these same sources. For some families, particularly during the late 1950s and the 1960s, the transmission process was weakened as the fiddle music tradition was overshadowed by other popular phenomena of the time. Usually the chain was not completely severed and was easily restored with the next generation, particularly when facilitated by the technology then available. From the 1970s therefore, the traditional home environment was one element of a much more complex musical society which had expanded to include a more formalised teaching context, and a higher media profile than ever before, thus relieving pressure on the home environment to act in the capacity of transmittor; enlarging the category of those home environments wherein, despite the absence of any public performers among the older generations, the music is fostered and encouraged; making the totally passive home environment less of a reality, given the high level of media attention the music has increasingly received; and, perhaps most significantly, allowing those from passive home environments to approach the music for the first time.

A small number of active home environments can actually generate a large number of practitioners in the various disciplines that make up the Cape Breton music tradition -
fiddling, piano playing, step-dancing, piping and singing. It is usual to find more than one individual practitioner in these homes. A survey of the biographies that constitute *The Cape Breton Fiddler* (MacGillivray 1981), for instance, testifies to this, where in the vast majority of cases a section is set aside in which fellow musicians from the immediate and extended family are listed. The concept of the musical family has been central to the Cape Breton tradition, operating in conjunction with the idea of the home environment. The musicality of certain families is widely referred to. Minnie MacMaster for instance states "my mother's people are full of music" (LD#38/ST#38); Donnie MacDougall refers to the Beatons of Mabou as being "chalk full of music, the whole goddamn clan of them" (LD#27/ST#27), and to Sandy MacIntyre's family - "the music was right in the people" (LD#27/ST#27). Obviously among blood relations there is the possibility of musical talent being inherited in the genes. Relations though marriage are also healthy since they consolidate the notion of the home environment. A typical scenario is illustrated in the family tree given below (Figure 5), which embraces some of the island's best known performers over the span of three generations - John R. MacDonald, Dan R. MacDonald, Alex Francis MacKay, John Allan and John Donald Cameron, Buddy MacMaster, Natalie MacMaster and Mary Elizabeth MacMaster. Similar inter-family connections link up the MacNeils of Sydney Mines with the MacKenzies of Washabuck, Natalie MacMaster with Dawn and Margie Beaton, Howie MacDonald with Dougie MacDonald, and Ashley MacIsaac with Wendy MacIsaac.

A healthy home environment cannot be nurtured by forcing the issue, therefore freedom of choice must be exercised at all times. This practice seems to have been in operation in the home environment in Cape Breton, where it is not uncommon to find traditional music activists and non-activists together. MacInnes comments on this aspect where:
Figure 6 Musical Links Between Families
you had a chance to become very involved in the tradition, or you sort of abandoned it completely and found other interests. (LD#4/ST#4)

Likewise the home can dictate the area of involvement:

Joey Beaton, where he tells the story where he wanted to play the fiddle, and because he was left-handed his father didn't encourage him. And it's the father, it's the home that's going to make it or break it. Because he was left-handed he wasn't encouraged to play the violin, so he said 'well the hell, I'll play the piano.' (LD#4/ST#4)

Incidentally, Donald Angus Beaton, the father in question, obviously regretted curbing Joey's interest, since the next son, Kinnon, also left-handed, was certainly encouraged to play the fiddle.

An extension of the home environment serves as a point of mediation between the insular home/family situation and the more general, institutionalised setting. This extension basically involves the intrusion of an individual, or individuals, not members of the immediate family, upon the home environment. This individual might be a neighbour from the immediate community, or a visitor from the wider community. The context might be a social occasion such as the ceilidh or house party which is integral to the Cape Breton tradition. Another category of visitor was the one who would impinge upon the home environment for months at a time; they were musicians who wandered from one musical household to the next. Well-known examples were fiddler/composer Dan R. MacDonald and piper, Sandy Boyd. These individuals served to provide an added incentive and inspiration to the younger generations to become involved in the music. A case in point concerns the MacInnis family from Big Pond, well known for their contributions to the musical community of Cape Breton. From this family the noted musicians are Dan Joe (fiddle), George (piano), Jamie (pipes), and Trese (step-dance). Sheldon has dabbled in piping, while all step-dance to different levels. It is interesting that while Dan Joe, the father of the
family, was a well known fiddler, none of the children were inclined to take up this instrument. Dan Joe offered help to Patricia, but she declined. Sheldon feels that things might have been different however:

if there had been another violinist in our community who was sitting in the kitchen that night, or whatever, she might have said 'well, yeah, I'd like to work with Mike MacLean' or 'I'd like to work with somebody else'... but that never happened. (LD#4/ST#4)

This outside impetus worked favourably in the case of George MacInnis, who, guided by Doug MacPhee, has developed into one of the island's most respected piano players.

Many of today's fiddlers in the 0-39 age group such as Brenda Stubbert, Dwayne Cote, Kinnon Beaton, and Natalie MacMaster have parents who play the fiddle; others have older siblings or other relatives who play (eg. Boyd MacNeil, Dougie MacDonald); still others such as Jackie Dunn and Rodney MacDonald come from a home environment where other aspects of the tradition such as step-dancing or piano accompaniment are practiced. Of course in certain homes all of these factors apply. The 1990s have produced the first success stories coming from home environments where a strong practical association with the music may be absent. Certainly individuals such as Tracey Dares, Joel Chiasson, Natasha Roland, and Robert Deveaux come from home environments, and indeed localities, where exposure to the music may not have been as readily accessible as for some of their peers. In Cheticamp for example, musical activity is largely confined to the taverns and those under 19 years of age have difficulty in getting access to live performances. None of the young musicians mentioned above have musically inclined parents or siblings:

...none, none. Not even a cousin plays, no grandmothers, no uncles, no aunts. (Joel Chiasson, LD#25/ST#25)
Of course, in the absence of practical experience with the music, the technological developments of this century, which have led to the increasing commercialisation and commoditisation of Cape Breton music, has created the potential for a new type of home environment, one which is based on exposure to the artificial reproductions of the music available via the media of tapes and radio. Tracey Dares for instance benefitted from such a support system:

...mum and dad always listened to the music and everything. They'd always have a tape on, and they'd go to the square-dances and this and that. (LD#14/ST#14)

This home environment was enhanced by the constant visits of fiddler Percy Peters to her home during the formative years. Similarly, individuals such as Hilda Chiasson and Peter Porier have offered this nurturing ground to Robert Deveaux, again in the absence practitioners among the immediate family. Interestingly when Robert Deveaux took up the fiddle it inspired his grandfather, who had not played for a number of years, to begin practicing again. As yet, none of these practitioners have had to rely solely on artificial media for creating some semblance of a musical home environment.

Interestingly, when pressed, these four informants could name at least one relative who played to some extent, even Joel, who acknowledges an uncle "who tries desperately to play the fiddle" (LD#25/ST#25). Their determination to achieve credibility in the absence of a home environment was realised (to different degrees in each case) through the availability of formal classes, commercial recordings of the music, and exposure to it at the broader social level. Interestingly, three of the four came to the music through the step-dance tradition, which in turn they had been introduced to initially at an institutional level. In the case of Tracey and Joel, they began experimenting with this sound on the piano which they had been studying in
connection with the popular and classical music idioms respectively. Joel and Natasha benefitted from a mutual support system which brought them together on a regular basis to practise, learn tunes and techniques, and basically provide for each other a substitute for the home environment. This support system is necessary, and in their case had to be artificially stimulated.

These young players represent a mid-way point on the active-passive continuum, placed in a position which has only been made possible due to other developments - largely technological - of this century. Their role encapsulates aspects of the traditional home environment - which is of course still fully active for some fiddlers - with the more modern and multi-faceted environment. In very recent times it has become feasible that a passive home environment, coupled with (or indeed created by) an absence of a generic musical heritage, need not necessarily cancel the musical potential of an individual given the number of alternate avenues into the music which have become available. Tara Lynn Tousenard is one fiddler who is the product of this environment, absorbing the music largely through the formal class situation. As the numbers attending such classes has increased in recent times, particularly around the urban areas, it seems likely that the numbers of fiddlers emerging from non-active home environments will rise in the near future. These numbers will be supplemented by those non-Cape Bretoners, who, in response to the acceptance of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition on the world stage, have become interested in the music. While this may be the reality of the future, in 1995 the home environment whether in its traditional role, or more dependent on modern facilities, remains central to the Cape Breton fiddle music tradition. In the words of Sheldon MacInnes:

So the environment that makes a musician, allows a musician to grow, even though it may evolve in some ways along the way ... that environment is still very much the home environment. [It] is still alive and well in Cape Breton, not as abundant as it once was ... but the homes that have it as a priority, you know, are making a significant contribution to allowing the tradition to move on. (L.D#4/ST#4)
5.2 The Transmission Process

The old violin players never seemed to want to teach anybody.
(Donnie MacDougall, LD#27/ST#27)

The formalised concept of teaching Cape Breton music and dance was unheard of for much of the twentieth century. Firmly grounded in the oral transmission process, the music was passed from generation to generation in a very natural and unstructured manner. The home environment was central to this process, and aspiring young fiddlers, surrounded by the music in this context, absorbed rather than learned the musical traditions of their forefathers. Certainly the young people would have been encouraged to play, and perhaps given some initial instruction if necessary. For the most part however the transmission process happened at a natural and relaxed pace.

As the century progressed, the idea of formal instruction gradually began to infiltrate the tradition. Initially it was confined to those Cape Breton fiddlers who, exposed to other musics for the first time and experimenting with repertory and stylistic techniques, were anxious to receive some degree of training from musicians schooled in the classical violin style. Angus Chisholm for example received tuition from fiddler Jimmy MacInnis, a locally renowned exponent of the classical style. Winston Fitzgerald, particularly interested in matters of musical theory, attended a course at the School of Music in Halifax and later completed a music correspondence course with an American institution. Other fiddlers, having emigrated to urban areas such as Detroit and Boston, often took the opportunity to avail of music lessons. For the most part these lessons were occasional and confined to a small number of fiddle players. Instruction was typically from a classically trained violinist to the Cape Breton fiddler and as such the emphasis was on technique. The idea of transmitting the traditional Cape Breton fiddle music in this more formal and structured way had still not been introduced in the middle of the century.
In fact it was the early 1970s before this practice was applied to the Cape Breton situation. In a direct response to the disturbing claims of the television documentary *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, where the future of the tradition was challenged, a move was made to revitalise the fiddle music tradition by actively involving the younger generation once more - a natural progression which had unfortunately been neglected, especially over the previous decade. In 1971 John MacDougall held the first fiddle classes in Mabou. Stan Chapman began teaching fiddle in Antigonish around 1975, and later extended his classes to include Creignish and Mabou. Since that time a number of experienced fiddlers in all parts of the island have taught periodically. Such individuals include Kyle MacNeil, Neil Beaton, Dougie MacDonald, Carl MacKenzie, and Allie Bennett. Those who have taught fiddle on a more regular basis over the period 1992-1995 include Winnie Chafe and Shawn MacDonald in the Sydney area, Stephanie Wills around Creignish, and Stan Chapman in Antigonish on the Nova Scotian mainland. It is a testimony to Stan's reputation as a fiddle teacher than many pupils make the weekly journey from Cape Breton, particularly from Inverness County, to attend his classes. Besides regular classes which correspond with the school year, summer tuition is also available through the Gaelic College at St. Ann's. Over the past fifteen years the related disciplines of piano accompaniment and step-dancing have also moved into the formal teaching domain.

The availability of such classes has created a fundamental change within the Cape Breton since the early '70s, in that the classroom is now regarded as the normal and natural environment for the transmission of the tradition. This is the case even when the fiddlers involved are coming from a solid musical home environment - almost as if

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11 Winnie follows a teaching agenda which is substantially different to the typical Cape Breton method. This is of course inkeeping with the fact that her musical interests are more in line with those of contemporary Scottish players than with Cape Bretoners.
this has to be validated by the institution. Furthermore it has created a channel which allows those with no background in the musical tradition to be introduced to it. This originally affected Cape Bretoners particularly in the urban areas, where by 1970, the fiddle music tradition was not popular, but has extended to include people from countries all over the world.

By opening up the transmission process in this way the necessity of an active home environment - in either the traditional mould whereby the parents played and passed the music on to their children, or in its more modern version in which artificial means of reproducing the music are important - is diminished. Stan Chapman - arguably the teacher who has made the greatest contribution to the younger generation of fiddlers since the 1970s - is convinced that while the transmission process may effectively have moved from the kitchen to the classroom, a solid home environment, while perhaps no longer a prerequisite, is certainly an important element. Certainly his most successful students such as Ashley MacIsaac, Natalie MacMaster and Jackie Dunn, for example, all come from this strong support systems in their homes. In this respect he can be seen as having "nurtured and supported something that was already there" (Sheldon MacInnes, LD#4/ST#4). In fact it has become Stan's policy to consider a prospective student's musical background before accepting him/her into his classes. He emphasises the absolute necessity for an active home environment by using the discipline of the Suzuki Method as an example. Here, one of the fundamental concepts is to stimulate such an environment by encouraging a parent, usually the mother, to learn to play the instrument along with the child. This approach, although artificial, is obviously a compromise which is seen as greatly enhancing the transmission process. In Cape Breton Lauren Fraser has followed this example by taking fiddle lessons himself at the same time as his son, Robbie.

The move towards the classroom and the more formalised approach to the transmission process has resulted in a greater use of literacy in what was previously
an oral process. Certainly, literacy became increasingly common among Cape Breton fiddlers since the 1940s, but functioned as an aid in the assembling of repertory rather than being linked directly to the transmission process. The most recent development has been the production of an instructional video by Inverness fiddler, Francis MacDonald. Some of the uses and effects of notation and literacy skills in the teaching environment will be discussed in Chapter Six.\(^{12}\) It is important to remember however that notation is often used as a tool for co-ordinating large numbers in a classroom situation, and as a mnemonic aid. Written sources are never suggested as stylistic guides; rather the ear is encouraged consistently and promoted as the most important aspect of the tradition, with literacy being retained only as a support to that.

5.3 The Influence of the Church

The Church kept it alive.
(Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17)

Religion was one of the chief determinants which influenced the settlement patterns of the pioneers in Cape Breton, with Catholics generally gravitating towards Inverness County and parts of Victoria County, while Presbyterians dominated along the North Shore. While fiddle and pipe music was popular among the Catholic population, Gaelic song was favoured by the Presbyterians.

\(^{12}\)The discussion on the transmission process here was undertaken with a view to providing a general look at how changes have been incurred over the period c1928-1995 and some of the implications which such changes might have had. Further discussion on the methodology employed will not be undertaken here, since with the exception of a higher awareness of notation among the younger fiddlers who have gone through that system, a very basic and systematic approach has been maintained. For further information on the transmission process within the Cape Breton fiddle tradition see Virginia Garrison (1985).
In the Highlands of Scotland, particularly during the nineteenth century, the clergy were notorious for their campaign against the practising of music, and travelled throughout the countryside destroying pipes and fiddles. Evidence of this also characterised the Cape Breton situation almost until the turn of the present century:

some of the early Cape Breton clergy held to the ancient superstition that fiddles and pipes were 'instruments of the devil' ... these zealous churchmen tried to stamp out the music and all activities that went with it. (MacGillivray 1981:2)

The most notorious example was the Reverend Kenneth J. MacDonald, Parish Priest of Mabou from 1865-1894, who collected all the instruments in his parish and physically destroyed them. Other priests are also believed to have encouraged the destruction of instruments and many fiddles were in fact discarded under this regime. Lee Cremo has suggested a positive consequence of all this activity - the Micmac Indians often came into possession of the instruments that the Catholics had abandoned. The activities surrounding the music such as the dance were also frowned on by the church. Rod C. MacNeil recalls:

my father ... remembered when square-dancing started ... it was frowned on by, well, not just the Protestant clergy, but the Catholic clergy too ... one priest mentioned that a fiddler ... who was playing to that sort of thing, well he must have been inspired by the devil, because he certainly didn't approve of that kind of dancing. (LD#18/ST#18)

The association between music and dancing, as well as the abuses of liquor, further incensed those clergymen who disapproved of such activities in the first instance.

Certainly by the turn of the century a greater tolerance of music and its related disciplines was apparent among the Catholic clergy in particular. Perhaps this reflects an appreciation on their part for the financial potential in social events centred on the
music tradition. Certainly in the early part of the century the clergy were strong in their support of events such as the parish picnic where the funds were channeled back into the parish, financing the building of new churches for example. Individuals such as Fr. MacDonald, Fr. MacKinnon, Fr. Roberts and Fr. Chiasson worked with parishioners in the Iona area in the organizing of the local picnics there. Parish halls were offered as venues for square-dances, garden parties, picnics, and later concerts were held on church grounds. Again, in each instance the profits benefitted the clergy in some way. Many however, such as Fr. Mike MacAdam, Fr. John Hugh MacEachern and Fr. John Angus Rankin became enthusiastic supporters of such events.

As the century progressed, the tolerance of the music by the church gradually merged into support, particularly after the 1970s and in conjunction with the widespread efforts at revitalising the tradition. Fiddle music was accepted as part of wedding and funeral services. Priests, such as Fr. John Allan Gillis in the parish of Mabou, volunteered to buy instruments for those local children who wished to partake in the newly established fiddle classes in the area. Those for whom he provided instruments assembled at his funeral in 1973 and played 'Dark Island' as a tribute to him. Many priests became actively involved in the music themselves. Fr. Francis Cameron, Fr. Angus Morris, Fr. Colonel MacLeod, and Fr. Ross are well-respected fiddle players; the late Fr. John Angus Rankin and Fr. George MacInnis play piano; Fr. Eugene Morris is widely admired as a step-dancer. Such individuals have also played an important role at other levels. Fr. Eugene Morris for instance was involved in the teaching of step-dancing for a number of years; Fr. John Angus Rankin was at the forefront of the Glendale Fiddler's Festival in its formative years, not least when he directed the massed fiddlers finales; Fr. Francis Cameron, during his time as parish priest in Mabou in the early 1980s, opened the doors of the glebe house to local fiddlers, so that it became a popular venue for ceilidhs; Fr. J.J. MacDonald in the Sydney Mines area encouraged similar social activities.
5.4 Occasions and Venues

The pipes were considered suitable, and indeed almost indispensible, at any occasion, trivial or serious, solemn or hilarious; the everyday visit, the baptism, the engagement party, the wedding, the funeral, were all graced by the pipers skill. (C. Dunn 1991:56)

While the Highland bagpipe may have been dominant in the lives of Cape Breton's pioneer settlers, the fiddle very quickly established its position as the most popular and accessible musical instrument, and became associated with all aspects of social activity. In the past, fiddlers like James P. Campbell were "called up to supply music for reiteich (engagement rites), jamborees, dances of many varieties, and ceilidhs" (MacGillivray 1981:18). Later Angus Chisholm was "kept busy entertaining at wood frolics, kitchen rackets, house-dances and school-house dances" (MacGillivray 1981:21). The contemporary Cape Breton fiddler has at his/her convenience a wide array of performance platforms, embracing both the private and public domains, the local and the international, the formal and the informal. Recognition of Cape Breton music worldwide has certainly opened up new and challenging performance opportunities for these musicians. Modern society has certainly been responsible for the creation of new performance outlets, particularly those which are media related. While the gamut of performance platforms has been gradually expanded and altered however, there is a core of activities and venues that have remained constant as the nucleus of the Cape Breton tradition. In fact the principal events in the Cape Breton calender have long histories, dating back in some cases to the pioneer days. As has always been the case in Cape Breton, it is important to remember that not all of these opportunities and locales are accessible to all of the fiddlers. Overlooking any definite discrimination, it is inevitable that some fiddlers will have a higher profile than others, and subsequently be in more demand, to the extent that a small number of players might monopolise the whole scene. Fiddlers profiles and the whole issue of professionalism in the context of Cape Breton has already been discussed. Generally
however most fiddlers of quality perform in a number of different performance contexts throughout their careers.

(a) The Ceilidh

The importance of the home environment in nurturing traditional music has already been examined in some detail. As an extension of this understanding it is easy to imagine that the home might also become the nucleus of the community's musical activity. This has certainly been the case in Cape Breton, where the home has been a central venue for local musical occasions. In the days prior to the building of communal centres such as schools and parish halls, a local house was the only option for a gathering. Visiting has always been an important part of rural life, and from this very concept the word 'ceilidh' survived. The ceilidh, referred to variously over the years as the kitchen-racket, house-party or house-session, has been one of the constant social events in Cape Breton right up to the present day. While slight changes can be identified, the basic concept has remained the same, with the resulting outcome being an evening of chat, music, dance, friends, food and drink.

Ceilidhs or house-parties were, and indeed are, very much a part of Cape Breton life. Particularly before other social events were established the ceilidh was the main entertainment. Generally such events were spontaneous, happening when a few neighbours would visit. They might be fiddlers themselves, or they might be calling in the hope that the fiddler of the house would play for them. Margie Dunn for instance recalls that men working at the two sawmills near her family home in Queensville would arrive at their home to play cards and to encourage her father to play a few tunes on the fiddle (LD#52/ST#52). Certain houses in a locality would be renowned as ceilidh or party houses. Generally such a house would have a resident fiddler.
Later, when the pump-organ and then the piano were introduced, the first homes to boast of such instruments became regular haunts. Otherwise the occupants of the house were known for their deep appreciation of music, or were noted for their hospitality:

...the home of Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Ranald Beaton became famous for hospitality and music, and visitors would travel long distances by horse and wagon to share in the Gaelic humour, piping, fiddling and step-dancing. (MacGillivray 1981:11)

Although birthdays, baptisms or anniversaries were often celebrated with such ceilidhs, these special occasions were by no means prerequisites. Ceilidhs might occur at any time. Sunday afternoons however were particularly favourite times. John Donald Cameron recalls how fiddler Dan Hughie MacEachern would "make his Sunday rounds":

He'd leave home, and go off somewhere and show up in a house and he was always welcome ... and they were always glad to see them coming because Sunday evening, what else was there to do? (LD#37/ST#37)

Sandy MacIntyre remembers Sunday afternoons filled with music when he was a young boy:

On Sundays our house was a gathering place for fiddlers. We'd have 4 or 5 players drop in, in white shirts and ties after Mass, and they'd stay all evening... (MacGillivray 1981:126)

As emigration became a fact of life in Cape Breton so to did the home-coming party or ceilidh for emigrants returned on vacation.
The unexpected arrival of a travelling or intinerant fiddler (or piper) was another excuse for a gathering. Archie Neil Chisholm tells of the fiddler Donald John 'the Tailor' Beaton:

[He] would leave his home in Mabou, and he would probably spend six weeks to two months travelling throughout the country. And wherever he went he was welcome, and wherever he went immediately the young people would find out that he was there. And they'd gather...one of the places where he used to stay was at a Gillis' home, that's about a mile from here, towards Margaree Harbour. And once...people would see down with his fiddle under his arm in the case...they'd know where he was going and they'd all gather there that night. (LD#31/ST#31)

Other noted travelling fiddlers were James D. Gillis, Hughie MacDonald from Margaree, and Ronald Gillis from Margaree.

Attendance for these ceilidhs was local, particularly before the 1920's, but also in rural Cape Breton for several decades afterwards. People arrived on foot or by horse and buggy. Michael Anthony MacLean from Washabuck remembers many ceilidhs at his home as a boy. People "used to cross on the ice in the winter, and in the summer a ferry-boat operated from Baddeck to MacKay's Point" (MacGillivray 1981:141). News of the happening spread locally by word of mouth, and the turnout could be anything up to several dozen - "...there would be nothing to see 50 or 60 people there" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). Later the automobile was to arrive and bring about some changes regarding the attendance at the ceilidhs, and indeed on all aspects of community life. As Peach explains in his *Memories of a Cape Breton Childhood*:

once we had become mobile, completely new vistas suddenly opened up before us. The little world encompassed within a 2-mile radius...began to recede into the background. (Peach 1990:56)
The plethora of talented fiddlers to be found at a ceilidh today was not always available in certain areas of Cape Breton. Fiddle players, young and old, were always guaranteed an invitation. Archie Neil Chisholm believes the reason for so many invitations coming the way of himself and his brother Angus was due to the fact that at that time fiddlers were scarce in the area.

Prior to the opening of school-houses and parish halls, events in the home essentially combined the ceilidh and the square-dance as we know them today. The dancing of square-sets was an integral part of the evenings proceedings at a typical Cape Breton ceilidh. In his book *Archie Neil - The Triumph of a Life!* and in personal interviews, Archie Neil Chisholm recounts several of these events at which he and his brother Angus performed from an early age:

> I've seen us playing at house-parties where we'd play sitting in the door. And they'd be dancing in two rooms. For instance if this room was vacant and that room was vacant we'd sit sort of in the door. And they would be square-dancing there and there. And ah, probably the caller - they always had a caller in those days. (LD#31/ST#31)

A typical nights entertainment therefore would have commenced after the chores of the day and the family supper. Friends and neighbours would start to drop in, the men carrying fiddles and bottles, the women with trays of food. The host, if a fiddler, would often be the one to get the music underway, in the true Gaelic tradition:

> A' chiad sgeul air fear an taighe,  
Sgeul gu la air an aoidh.

*The host owes the first tale;  
the guest owes tales until day.* (C. Dunn 1991:48)

The night would be filled with square-sets and solo step-dance exhibitions, fiddlers playing solo or in pairs. The rest of the company would be either listening intently or gossiping or telling stories in small groups. If a singer or piper were present they would also perform. Occasionally the singers would assemble in a different room,
away from the fiddle music and dancing (Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17). The amount of variety depended on the people present. For instance in the absence of many musicians the emphasis of the evening's entertainment might be on singing or story-telling (MacKenzie Campbell 1977:68-70). While in Inverness County fiddle music was the core entertainment at these events, this was not necessarily the case all over the island, where instead music functioned to various degrees (Mac Gillivray, MacLeod and Jaarsma 1985:60-64). Generally the womenfolk and the menfolk stayed within separate groups. At some time, often around midnight a lunch would be served, after which the ceilidh usually resumed until the small hours.

On occasion, house-parties or dances were operated on a semi-commercial basis. If a fiddler had played all night for a dance it was common for the hat to be passed around and a small donation made (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/St#31). In The Cape Breton Fiddler there is information concerning an Alex Michael MacDonald who "used to charge a 25c admission for dances held in his house" (MacGillivray 1981:39). A similar situation existed in Newfoundland:

at that time communities often had no public building or hall, necessitating use of a private house. Occasionally the owners of the houses used were paid a fee, making the house in a sense public. (Quigley 1985:75)

Another such extension of the house party was the pound party:

People would get together - bring a pound of something. They would take bread, flour, butter; it was all food they brought. The family the food was for didn’t know anything about it. They would be surprised. We would gather after dark and go in the house with the things we brought and put them on the table. Then if they allowed it, we would have a dance and play games - bingo, checkers - and later we would have tea. (MacGillivray, MacLeod and Jaarsma 1985:62)
This is a typical example of the Cape Breton community spirit, evident from the pioneer days - people coming together to help each other and to have a good time in the process. Even earlier social events that had this objective are still heard of although they are rarely carried out today. These would include barn frolics and wood frolics, whereby neighbours and friends would gather to help out at the task on hand, and celebrate after their day's work. Hugh A. MacDonald was one fiddler regularly involved in these community events:

near his home, Hughie's name and music were closely associated with the barn-raising and plowing frolics. After a vigorous day's labour was completed at such an event, the music would begin in earnest and continue all through the night. (MacGillivray 1981:35)

Today the ceilidh remains an important part of the Cape Breton fiddlers social life. Subtle changes have taken place. For instance, the dancing of square-sets is no longer an integral part of the night's events. Certainly it might occur at some point, but with more expensive house furnishings, the dancers are often relegated to the outside deck. Since the division between the dance and the ceilidh is much more clear-cut today, the ceilidh more often provides a chance for a fiddler to demonstrate those aspects of his/her repertory not required for dancing, reflecting the dance player/listening player dichotomy which was first distinguished around the middle of this century. According to John Donald Cameron "you hear the best music of all at house-parties ... people who sit down and enjoy listening" (LD#37/ST#37). Today's ceilidh will not necessarily be such a local affair. Often select invites are issued to friends from all over the island, over the telephone and by word of mouth, guaranteeing less unexpected guests. Ceilidhs rarely occur spontaneously nowadays, mainly, as Dan MacDonald laments because "people don't visit anymore" (LD#2/ST#2). Certainly however, any excuse for organising a ceilidh is appreciated, and certain homes now host such an event on a regular basis. Another feature of todays ceilidhs is that the emphasis is on fiddle playing - there is not the variety of
stories, games etc. as there was in the past. Perhaps the reason for this is a positive one, testifying to the fact that there are so many fiddlers at these ceilidhs today. Certainly, however, there are exceptions. One of the first ceilidhs I attended was at the home of Rod C. and Helen MacNeil, in the remote area of Barra Glen. The house was full, there was food and drink galore, and all day and night along with the fiddle music there was dancing, piping, and Rod C. himself singing songs and telling stories in the Gaelic language, which he would then translate for the benefit of those present. An Irish influence can also be detected in some of the current Cape Breton ceilidhs, particularly at those at the MacNeil home in Sydney Mines, where along with the solo fiddling, dancing, singing, and harping that characterise all these events, part of the evening is always spent with all present 'jamming', in an approximation to the session format popular in Ireland. Musicians Paul Cranford and Paul MacDonald particularly promote this performance context. Likewise, at ceilidhs at the MacDonald's of Boisdale, it is not uncommon for various members of the family to play together. Again in different locations the emphasis may change, and it is interesting that the areas which still concentrate less on the fiddle are those outside the Inverness County region. For instance, at the home of Tic and Emily Butler in Sydney - a house famous for its hospitality and its ceilidhs - the emphasis is generally on singing, although fiddlers such as Mickey Gillis and Lloyd MacDonald may perform. No matter where on the island, and who is in attendance, the essence of the ceilidh remains the same - an occasion when friends and family gather together to enjoy each others company and music.

(b) The Square-Dance

The more formalised concept of organised dances coincided with the establishing of school-houses throughout the island. While this brought the dancing into a more
public domain, away from the confines of the private home, we have seen that it did not result in the home becoming redundant in the context of Cape Breton music. On the contrary, the home has remained an integral part of social activity. The main consequence is that the dividing lines between the house ceilidh and the public dance have become more defined.

The building of school-houses was initiated before the turn of the century. A typical school-house was simply a one-roomed wooden building ideal for adaptation for community events such as dances. The dances were clergy organised events. They were ideal opportunities to earn money for parish costs such as the upkeep of the school itself, the church, and to pay expenses such as the teacher's wage. Archie Neil Chisholm for example often had to play for a dance in order to ensure his teaching wage for the year - "he'd be willing to play for quarter dances to raise money for his own wages - he'd done that at other schools " (Ducharme 1992:137) These clergy-operated events also enabled them to exert control over the evenings activities and to ensure that a high moral standing was observed at all times. In this respect the Cape Breton situation was no different from anywhere else. In a study of dancing in Newfoundland, Colin Quigley discusses clergy control:

Their motivation was no doubt partly financial and partly moral, as we have seen the rules of proper decorum more stringently observed at the institutional, hall times. (Quigley 1985:77)

Until well into this century, dances were held in school-houses. Hector MacKenzie (b. 1933) was much in demand as a dance player around the Iona region - "in my late teens I was playing for dances. There were about a dozen one-room schoolhouses around here then, and each one would have a dance" (MacGillivray 1981:134). The next step from the schoolhouse was the parish hall, which in the early decades of the twentieth century eventually became established in practically every community. The
hall in Creignish was built in the mid-1920s for example. Like the schoolhouse dances these were also under the auspices of the church, although there were exceptions to this:

Father Cormier was death on dances, and Archie Neil had helped start a weekly dance, open only to singles under thirty. They were ready for Father Cormier to raise the roof over it. Archie Neil figured they had it over him on a technicality. The hall was in South West Margaree, just out of Father Cormier's precints ... (Ducharme 1992:80)

Interestingly the early dances to be held in these halls were referred to as 'Balls'. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)

The first organised dances coincided with fixed calendar celebrations, marked certain seasons of the year, or were held in response to occupationally related or other local events. Some communities would hold dances on a quarterly basis. The summer was an ideal time, but, inevitably with church control, times like Advent and Lent would be dance-free. Harsh winters were also unsuitable times for such occasions as travel was severely curtailed by ice and snow. Advertisement for the dance was simply by word of mouth, following an announcement in the local church:

it would be announced in church. And that was how they'd hear. There weren't radios, there was no way of mass communication or anything like that. So it was just by word of mouth that you would get the news of the dance. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)

Prior to the 1920s dances in either school-houses or parish halls were relatively rare occurrences. In any case they would not have been referred to as square-dances, since that phenomenon only appeared after the turn of the century. The dances performed would thus have been of the older Scotch Fours and Eight-handed reel varieties. Like any event before the 1920's the dances were local affairs. People would arrive on foot or by horse and buggy from around a 15-mile radius. Travelling
to the dance was a social occasion in itself. From the 1920's on though, motor-cars began to infiltrate community life and made dances accessible to those from further away. For these early dances a local fiddler would be invited to provide the music. Since no public address systems were in operation until as late as the 1940s a common practice was for two fiddlers to play together. Popular examples of the earliest fiddle ‘teams’ include Big John Alex MacDonald and Alex Michael MacDonald, Sandy MacLean and Malcolm Beaton, Ronald Gillis and Hughie Angus MacDonald, and Angus Allan Gillis and Angus Chisholm. I have also heard stories of two fiddlers playing simultaneously at both ends of the hall, although I could find no concrete evidence to substantiate this. A habit of other fiddlers present at the dance would be to volunteer their services throughout the night, in order to 'spell' the main fiddler off, in other words to give him a break. Of course at these times women were rarely to be found playing the fiddle, and certainly not in a public forum such as a dance hall.

At first the fiddler was paid for his services from a collection whereby a hat was passed around towards the end of the night's proceedings. Later a small fee was formally fixed. There was also small admission fee charged for entrance to the hall. In some communities and for special events, refreshments were served. Liquor was consumed off the premises, even throughout the Prohibition years beginning in the 1920's.

The 1940s and '50s was the heyday of the square-dance in Cape Breton. The square-dance proper became increasingly popular as a social event from the 1920s onwards. MacGillivray comments on this:

though a local priest had once placed a strict ban on dancing in the area, mainly due to abuses of liquor, by the time Angus Allan [b 1897] was in his 20s the mood had begun to change. Soon dances enjoyed a period of renewed popularity and improved respectability. (MacGillivray 1981:27)
Dances became popular social occasions in most communities and were held on a more regular basis. They became an important platform for the fiddlers, who often travelled round the island playing seven nights a week in different venues, establishing their own dance circuit. Dan Joe MacInnis for example "by the age of fourteen ... was playing for dances at Grand Mira and soon operated on a regular dance circuit within a 20-mile radius of Sydney" (MacGillivray 1981:122). Particular fiddlers became associated with certain venues. One of the most popular was the Wednesday night dance at Glenville where the resident fiddler was Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald. Bill Lamey "took on a busy schedule of dance playing at Nelga Beach, St. Theresa's Hall, Big Pond and Christmas Island " (MacGillivray 1981:110), while Alex Francis MacKay played for "dances held at Princeville, Glendale, Kingsville" (MacGillivray 1981:131). At this stage the piano had become established as an accompaniment to the fiddle. Initially pianos were borrowed from private homes and transported to the dance-hall on a cart or sleigh, weather depending. Gradually however funds were raised to buy pianos for the local parish halls so that by the mid-1930s for example these were to be found in halls such as those at Margaree and East Margaree. Women fiddlers, such as Mary MacDonald and Theresa MacLellan, were also making more regular appearances. The age-group of the attendants at dances was also changing. Whereas before the dance was typically a family affair, the predominant group now was the young adult. Minnie MacMaster, attending the dances in Inverness County, recalls how her father used drop herself and her older sisters off in his truck, and then would wait outside for them until the dance ended:

he felt out of the way sort of thing. He felt probably maybe that he was older ...I ... can't remember anybody older than twenty, maybe twenty-five. (LD#38/ST#38)

For many of the dances people would often travel long distances, and would attend dances in different areas on different nights of the week. Those halls most noted for the dances regularly held in them included those at Mabou, Port Hood (where in the
1940s Buddy MacMaster accompanied by either of his sisters, Betty-Lou or Lorraine, played often at Neily's Dance-hall), Brook Village, Broad Cove, Nelga Beach, Sydney (where the Dance-halls included St. Theresa's, The Cabin, the Ritz and the LOC), Big Pond, Christmas Island, Grand Mira, Princeville, Glendale, Kingsville, Glenville, Inverness (where Winston Fitzgerald frequently played at the Labour Temple), and Glencoe Mills.

Today the square-dance continues to play an important and central role in the Cape Breton tradition, although the number of dance halls may not be as large, and the diversity of regular dances may not be as great as it was in the '40s and '50s. Halls which once would have held dances on a weekly basis might now have no more than one or two a year. The reasons for this have much to do with the extra choices of entertainments now available, as well as the ability of people to travel to other areas for entertainment, no longer being confined to the local community. Nevertheless, there are dances organized on a regular basis, and particularly in the summer season there are often a number being held simultaneously. For the fiddler the square-dance is an important platform, and there may be rivalry among fiddlers to secure dances. Today's square-dance is still held for the most part in the local parish hall. In 1995 those halls most associated with square-dances include those at Glencoe Mills, West Mabou, Broad Cove, Glendale, Big Pond, North West Margaree, Iona, Westmount, Mira, Gabarus, Baddeck and Christmas Island (See Figure 6). Some of these halls are church operated, others are fire halls or Legions. The majority of dances are organised now by lay members of the community. Some are held on a weekly basis throughout the year, such as the Saturday night dance in West Mabou. Others are operated on a regularly throughout the summer season, the most renowned of these being that at Glencoe Mills held on Thursday nights from July through to early September. Otherwise dances are held at special times of the year such as Canada
Figure 6  Locations of Popular Dance-halls in Cape Breton, 1992-1995
Day and Labour Day, or in conjunction with other festivities such as the local summer concert.

Dances remain important as community fund-raising events. Admission charge seems fairly standard at five or six dollars. Dances usually begin at 9pm and finish at 1am. In some venues such as the Big Pond Fire Hall a lunch is served. This is not the procedure where dances are held on a more regular basis. An important distinction is made today between dances where liquor is served and those where it is not. In accordance with Canadian law, admission age to a liquor dance ie. a dance where there is a bar serving alcoholic drink, is 19 years. For those venues where there is no bar no age limit is imposed, and the dances are referred to as "family dances". The dance at Glencoe is one such dance and at this it is not uncommon to see, several generations dancing together, literally from nine to ninety! The absence of a bar is not a deterrent. Those who wish to imbibe simply stop off at the liquor store en route and stock up the trunk of the car. In Glencoe Mills there is subsequently often as much socialising done outside the dance-hall as inside.

The practice begun in the ’40s whereby fiddlers would travel beyond the local community to play for a dance is regarded as the norm today. Again a fiddler's reputation preceeds himself and the name will be as much of a draw as the venue. The idea of a resident fiddler at a particular hall is rare today, although Buddy MacMaster is synonymous with the Thursday night dances at Glencoe Mills, and in fact has played there regularly for almost thirty years. More typically regular dances are hosted by a different fiddler each time. Usually a single fiddle and piano accompanist is hired, although it is expected that other musicians in attendance will play for a square-set at some point during the night's activities. The local variant of the square-set is danced repeatedly, occasionally interspersed with solo step-dance exhibitions, or, if advertised as a round and square-dance, with waltzes, to music provided by the fiddler, or, more usually, a singer. While the presence of a caller was
regarded as essential in the earlier part of the century, such an individual is rarely found at a dance today, with the exception of those dances held at Baddeck.

(c) Weddings

Early weddings in Cape Breton were regarded as major events during which the music was sustained for days on end. After the wedding ceremony, during which there seems to have been no fiddle music involved, the wedding party would retire, usually to the bride's home for festivities. According to fiddler Hughie Angus Jobes (b.1906) a wedding, in the early days of his career, "was a huge social event involving an outdoor dance on a platform constructed especially for that purpose" (MacGillivray 1981:108). This practice of centring the musical activities around a specially constructed out-door stage continued into more recent times. Minnie MacMaster tells of weddings she remembers from the 1950s:

in the summertime - most weddings were in the summertime - so they'd just put, I suppose, a few bricks underneath, or some kind of boards underneath, make a stage attached right on to the side of the house. And the wedding, the food, the whole thing took place right there ... I think there'd be an assigned fiddler and then you'd have other people come that would play the fiddle, so they would join in and give ... them a hand. (LD#38/ST#38)

While invitations might be issued, a wedding was very much open to the community, and once the fiddling began, huge numbers of local people would arrive. Playing for wedding celebrations became an important platform for the Cape Breton fiddler. As boys, John Donald and John Allan Cameron were kept busy playing at weddings:

We were just going to school, so we had the whole summer to ourselves. And that's what we did all summer - play ...played an awful lot of weddings ... at that time dances for, you know, the wedding party. They'd start in the morning and went on into the evening. And
of course most of the fiddlers, the established fiddlers, perhaps they were working during the day. So John Allan and I ... we had the whole day. We fiddled and played the guitar, this sort of thing, during the day. And then the, ah, the big-shot fiddlers showed up for the night. (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37)

Other popular wedding players included Dan J. Campbell, Buddy MacMaster, Donald Angus Beaton, and John Campbell. Often the festivities would last for several days. Archie Neil Chisholm tells of the effect of this on the fiddling fraternity:

Johnny White ... was awakened at 10 o'clock at night to come and play for a wedding reception. They wore out he didn't know how many fiddlers. This may have been the second or third day they were at it. (Ducharme 1992:46)

Increasingly from the mid-century, the fiddlers main duty was to provide music for the dances. Earlier however, a greater degree of ritual involving the music and dance was associated with the wedding festivities. Frank Rhodes documented the dance traditions of Cape Breton Island in the mid-1950s:

no one ... remembered the full set of dances of an old Highland wedding, but many remembered that the dancing began with 'Ruidhleadh nan Caraid' ('The Married Couple's Reel'), a four-handed Reel danced by the bride and bridegroom with the bridesmaid and best man. This was followed by a second four-handed Reel danced by a set of relations of the bride and bridegroom, and after this everyone danced ... later in the evening the bride and bride-groom danced another four-handed Reel to the tune 'The Bedding of the Bride', and that from this reel the bride was stolen away ... the dancing at the wedding did not end with the end of the reception, for on their way home the guests 'danced away each cross-roads' before parting to go on their separate ways. (Rhodes 1964:275)

Certainly at least two dance tunes referred to as the 'Old Time Wedding Reels', recorded in the 1930s by Dan J. Campbell and Angus Allan Gillis, and still popular in the Cape Breton fiddler's repertory today, suggest that the association of particular tunes with parts of the wedding celebrations was certainly a feature of Cape Breton's
past. The wedding reel dance has also been documented in other related traditions by Flett and Flett (1964) and Hornby (1992) for example.

Although no specific dances and corresponding tunes are part of contemporary wedding festivities, for some Cape Bretoners fiddle music and dancing remains an important part of this context. This is usually the case where musicians, dancers, their relatives, or those who are associated in some way with the music, are concerned. Even where the traditional music is prominent in the social activities surrounding the wedding however, the rest of the celebration usually reflects the standard pattern in terms of choice of environment and procedure. Typically, even where the music may be provided by a fiddler, the wedding couple's dance is invariably the waltz. Reflecting current trends in society, the typical wedding practice is for the bride and groom and their invited guests to retire to a hotel following the ceremony, where a meal is served and the customary speeches and toasts carried out. This is followed by music and dancing. While at most Cape Breton weddings this may be strictly of a modern and popular variety there may also be a balance between this and more traditional music. One wedding which I attended shortly after arriving in Cape Breton epitomised that blend of the old and the new, the music at the reception ranging from rock 'n' roll through fiddling, piping and square-sets, to Gaelic songs. In keeping with the traditions of the past, the celebrations continued from Saturday until Tuesday, when the ceilidh at the home of the bride's parents finally ended.

One area which has seen change in recent times is the church ceremony itself, where first pipers, and then fiddlers have come to supplement or replace the traditional organist and vocalist. At the weddings of fiddler Dave MacIsaac and Nancy Harris in September 1993, and Trese MacInnis and Jimmy MacNeil in July 1994, for instance, Carl MacKenzie performed at various parts of the ceremony. Usually where this occurs the wedding couple are either musicians or dancers themselves, or are strongly involved in the musical community. More recently, a practice has emerged of
hiring a fiddler to play at the ceremony, even by those who have no direct
collections with the music. This certainly reflects the popularity which the fiddle
music is enjoying at the present time.

(d) Wakes and Funerals

In contrast to the Irish tradition, wakes in Cape Breton were solemn affairs. Certainly
these were social events where the community gathered in the home of the deceased -
and were "used in order to meet the social needs of the living as well as to pay
respect to the dead" (Campbell and MacLean 1974:188). As such they were
opportunities to meet, gossip, and tell stories. Archie Neil Chisholm acknowledges
another social dimension of the wake - "It was a great place to date a girl, and take a
girl home from, the wake" (LD#31/ST#31).

There were of course occasional exceptions:

Basil's wake ... was legendary, the best attended and most enjoyed
wake in the history of Margaree Forks. It was the finest session of
gossip the neighbours had experienced all that winter; the liquor
flowed, the fiddle never stopped, two new courtships were struck up,
and everyone was late for the funeral the next day. While the
deceased would have enjoyed these proceedings as much as anyone
there, the priest was scandalized. (Ducharme 1992:66)

In general circumstances however, wakes were much more dignified events, and
certainly the fiddle music had no role on such occasions. The same was true of the
funeral proper. At these the only music, if any, was provided by the organist. Piping
however also had a function at the early Cape Breton funeral:

In the old days a funeral took place in primitive style in Cape Breton.
They had to travel footpaths except for the old French Road. No
horses, no sleighs, no hearses. Four men carried the bier on two poles on their shoulders to the nearest burying ground. A piper walked ahead of them playing a lamentable funeral dirge. (MacDonald 1968)

This is certainly one aspect of the tradition which has seen a change, particularly since the 1970s. As a final mark of respect for fellow musicians, fiddlers have turned out in their dozens to play their traditional music at funerals. Rather than objecting, many priests have encouraged, suggested and requested this, and some have even joined in with their own instruments. Records of the funeral in Creignish of Alex Joe MacDonald, who died on 1/2/’73 mention that "appropriate violin selections were rendered by Mr. Buddy MacMaster accompanied by Mrs. Betty Lou MacNeil, during the communion and as the body was being borne from the church." The funeral of Dan R. MacDonald took place in Mabou on 24 September 1976 - "at various times throughout the service, more than 75 fiddlers played tunes composed by Dan R. Rev. John Angus Rankin directed the violin symphony located to the right side of the altar" (Anon. 1976). At the funeral of Angus Allan Gillis at Stella Maris Church on 12/10/’78, "fifty violinists by way of special tribute and respect were also in attendance, and played appropriate Scottish music, under the able direction of Reverand John Angus Rankin. P.P. Glendale" (MacDonald 1979). Increasingly, fiddlers are hired specifically to provide the music at funerals. Buddy MacMaster for instance says - "pretty near everybody that dies around here I play ... at the funeral" (LD#19/ST#19).

While slow or pastoral airs are often regarded as the most appropriate in such contexts, fiddlers may be asked to play tunes of any type, and at any part of the ceremony. The fiddle tunes played at the funeral of Dan R. MacDonald, for instance, included some of his own compositions such as 'The Glencoe March' and 'The Strathlome March', an air 'Hector the Hero', strathspey 'Miss Drummond of Perth' and reel 'The Muilean Dubh Reel', as well as piping and vocal selections. According
to Buddy MacMaster the tunes chosen are dictated by the various parts of the ceremony:

[It] depends on when you play, you know, what part of the mass ... if its when they're taking the remains out, you play something like a march ... but during the consecration or the communion you usually play a slow air. Some people, they find the slow music too sad you know ... but I kind of like slow airs, you know, and the sad stuff. (LD#19/ST#19)

(e) Contests

In 1993 a Nova Scotian newspaper published a letter pertaining to Cape Breton fiddlers and the whole issue of competitions, which caused some controversy (MacDonald 1993a). The instigator was involved in the Old-time fiddling tradition and was essentially campaigning for competitors for a contest due to be held in the province. The writer blatantly criticizes Cape Breton fiddlers for their reluctance to partake in such events:

...your fiddlers seem to hide out until the May contest is over ... If they are worth their salt, let's hear them at Memorial Rink, Dartmouth, proving themselves. (MacDonald 1993a)

The fact that the Cape Breton fiddler shows no interest in such contests obviously rankles with some enthusiasts of other traditions. Nevertheless the Cape Breton fiddler is not deliberately trying to provoke such a reaction. The whole issue of competition simply has no place in the life of the typical Cape Breton fiddler. Granted, this was not always the case. In fact the formal contest was one of the important platforms for fiddlers right up until the 1950's, and continued, although becoming increasingly less widespread for a further two decades. Figure 7 below lists some of the important contests for the Cape Breton fiddler.
<table>
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<th>Competitor</th>
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<th>Miscellaneous</th>
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<td>Ronald Kennedy</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>'Baby' Joe MacLellan</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fountain Pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Intercolonial Hall, Boston</td>
<td>Sandy MacLean</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Hughie MacEchern</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Judique</td>
<td>'Baby' Joe MacLellan</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Judique Highland Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>$20, Old Time Fiddling Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Glace Bay</td>
<td>Tena Campbell</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Glengarry Co.</td>
<td>Angus Allan Gillis</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>St. Finnan's Centenary Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>New Glasgow</td>
<td>Donald MacLellan</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Championship of Eastern N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>St. Ann's</td>
<td>Bill Lamey</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Premier of N.S. Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>Lee Cremo</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Maritime Old Time Fiddling Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Nashville, Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>North American Fiddling Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Donald MacLellan</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Mod Ontario Trophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Figure 7** Contests Featuring Cape Breton Fiddlers
The earliest references to contests date back to the 1890's, where at a contest near Glendale, fiddler Malcolm H. Gillis won a trophy for 1st prize. Contests continued in Cape Breton until the early 1980s. At the most recent, held in 1980, fiddler Hughie Angus Jobes received the Buddy MacMaster Trophy for jig playing in competition (MacGillivray 1981:108). Among the communities which hosted such events were Inverness, St. Ann's, Sydney, Glace Bay and Judique. Usually they were held in the local community hall or fire hall. At times they were organized in conjunction with other events, particularly those that advocated competition in other areas of Scottish culture, such as piping. Events in this category would include Highland Games, and the Mod, held at the Gaelic College. Contests in Cape Breton seemed to have enjoyed their heyday in the 1920's and '30s, no doubt inspired by those being held throughout Nova Scotia and beyond. Cape Breton fiddlers competed in contests held throughout the Maritimes in places such as Prince Edward Island, New Glasgow, Antigonish; across Canada, such as those held in Glengarry County, Ontario; and in the United States, particularly in Boston and Detroit. Occasionally a competition would be staged in Cape Breton in order to choose a representative to attend a Boston contest. Mick MacInnis and Dougal MacIntyre were two of the selected fiddlers who competed in Boston in two separate contests in 1926. Both were proclaimed the winner in their respective contests. Mick MacInnis talked about his experience there in The Cape Breton Fiddler:

The Boston competition lasted for one week and I finally won out from over a hundred fiddlers. The Intercolonial Club of Boston presented me with a trophy on which was inscribed 'Michael MacInnis, best old fashioned fiddler, 1926, Intercolonial Club, Boston. (MacGillivray 1981:45)

The prizes for such contests were usually in the form of trophies such as that won by Mick MacInnis. These were usually for first prize. At other times winners received medals. 'Red' John MacKinnon for instance won "17 medals for fiddling and dance" (MacGillivray 1981:55). Mary MacDonald "occasionally took medals in
competitions" in Boston and Detroit (MacGillivray 1981:117). In a competition in Judique John Alex 'the big fiddler' MacDonald "earned 3 medals, 2 gold and 1 silver" (MacGillivray 1981:39). Sometimes the winner received a small monetary prize. For example at a competition in Boston Sandy MacLean won $20 for 1st prize, while Dan Hughie MacEachern received $15 for 2nd prize. At a contest in North Sydney in 1929, 'Baby' Joe MacLellan won a fountain pen.

The number of competitors in these competitions varied. Mick MacInnis for example estimates around 100 contestants in the 1926 Boston contest. In 1929, Sandy MacLean reckons that at a similar contest in the same venue, there were a total of 21 players. Whereas at the Cape Breton contests the fiddlers would be local, at those in locations outside the island the Cape Bretoners would be competing against fiddlers from across the province, the country, and the U.S. Likewise the judges would be from diverse backgrounds. When Dougald MacIntyre won the contest in Boston in 1926, the famous Scottish violinist James Scott Skinner was one of the judges. While judges "from away" ie. from outside Cape Breton, often attended the local contests, at other times the judges would well-known and respected older fiddlers, from another part of the island. Gordon MacQuarrie for instance judged a contest in 1930 at the Judique Highland Games (MacGillivray 1981:61). Competitors for the Cape Breton contests varied in ages. Apparently though it was unusual for young teenagers to take part. In telling the story of a contest in Sydney won by 'Baby' Joe MacLellan, then aged 17, his sister Theresa says "the audience didn't expect him to be in the running with all the older players in the contest" (MacGillivray 1981:60).

The competitors represented, in many cases, the cream of Cape Breton musical talent. Many of those in demand at weddings, dances, picnics, and house-parties took part in contests locally and elsewhere. Tena Campbell, well known for her live and radio performances, won a contest in Glace Bay in 1932, and was also holder of the Maritime Contest title. In 1925, at a contest in Inverness, Ronald Kennedy competed,
and won, against many of the top local players. Apparently the renowned Angus Chisholm "had won so many competitions that promoters barred him from entering further ones" (MacGillivray 1981:22). Other top Cape Breton fiddlers to partake in contests at one time or another were Angus Allan Gillis, Sandy MacLean, Dan Hughie MacEachern, Donald MacLellan, Bill Lamey, and Mary MacDonald.

Interest in contests certainly declined in Cape Breton, so much so that after 1980 there seems to be no records of any contests held locally. The reasons for this are not quite clear. Perhaps it was simply, as Archie Neil Chisholm says, that the fiddlers no longer had any interest in becoming rivals:

and then, all of a sudden, the good players seemed, what the hell, why should we bother becoming rivals, and they just quit going to the contests." (LD#31/ST#31)

Certainly today the notion of entering a contest would be quite foreign to the average Cape Breton fiddler. The growing away from competitions was probably borne out of weariness for the whole contest scene and the restrictions it imposes on the music and musicians. This has indeed happened in other cultures. In Ireland for instance, the competition circuit, under the auspices of the organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, is the initial public platform for young musicians. However, by the time they have reached their mid-teenage years, many have become disillusioned with that particular context, and refrain from competing while enjoying the music in all other situations. This too may have been the case in Cape Breton. Although the fiddlers of the 1920s and '30s had many opportunities for playing, the contest was one way of establishing just how good they are. Fiddlers today use other media as a yardstick, such as their album sales and numbers of invitations to perform both locally and abroad.
Another reason for the current disinterest in contests among Cape Breton fiddlers is linked to the fact that today the term old-style fiddling has very definite implications in that it refers to a specific genre of fiddle playing. In the past the term was used generically to include all those old world styles being played in a new world environment. Thus the Cape Breton fiddler was quite comfortable under this categorization. In 1933 for example we know that Angus Allan Gillis played a march - strathspey - reel at a contest in Ontario. These are the tune types most common in the Cape Breton repertory. Today, however, the criteria required for a similar contest is explicitly outlined, and calls for a style and repertory that is not typical in Cape Breton. Furthermore, as Wilfred Gillis suggests, "the style and interpretation [of Cape Breton fiddlers] are so varied that it's nearly impossible to judge a winner" (MacGillivray 1981:105).

Nevertheless, there are a few Cape Breton fiddlers who continue to partake and succeed in contests throughout the Maritimes and further afield. These deserve special mention. Lee Cremo has had phenomenal success in competition. For example he won the title of Maritime Old Time Fiddling and in 1974 he was placed 5th in the North American Fiddling Championship held in Nashville, Tennessee. In total he possesses some 82 trophies which testify to his success in competition. Another fiddler particularly noted for competition success is the late Tara Lynn Tousenard. Regarding both these individuals a couple of important points should be mentioned. First and foremost is the fact that both are from ethnic backgrounds which are non-Scottish. Cremo is of Micmac Indian stock while Tousenard is French Acadian. This is highly significant when it comes to establishing their identity as Cape Breton fiddlers. It is a fact that they are often not given credit as Cape Breton fiddlers at all. This is highlighted in a letter by Rod MacDonald published in a Nova Scotian newspaper. Referring to Lee Cremo and some of the other Indian fiddlers the writer states:
these boys, although very competent in their own class, are definitely not in a class with the Cape Bretoners ... The boys are still trying to learn how to play good Scottish music. (MacDonald 1993b)

This illustrates two important points. Firstly, these fiddlers are not regarded as true Cape Bretoners, and secondly, they are certainly not regarded as exponents of the true Cape Breton style. Certainly they may be recognised players in their own chosen styles, but these are totally distinct from the pure Cape Breton sound. Coming from a French background Tara Lynn Tousenard commented on how she did feel discriminated against to some extent because of the fact that her roots are not Scottish, or simply because her surname is not Mac (LD#13/ST#13). Such players have found that they do not get all the invitations to perform at many of the events open to the so-called Scottish fiddlers. Their escape into the milieu of competition might be one way of carving out a reputation for themselves, and thus preserving their self-esteem. On this note it is interesting to observe that among those fiddlers who turned to the competition platform until relatively recently were Joe Cormier and Elmer Briand - again Cape Breton fiddlers of non-Scottish extraction. Is it an inherent insecurity on the part of these fiddlers due to their ethnic backgrounds, that has led them to concentrate on the contest as a potential channel for establishing their musical worth? Unfortunately if this is so, it remains true that the fact that these individuals are so involved in these contests and have perfected their styles to suit this environment, may be the very factor which sets them apart from the others more than their name or ethnicity ever could.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that today's Cape Breton fiddler has chosen to ignore one of the platforms so important in the past, that of the contest. The reasons behind this are manifold, although it does not appear to have been a conscious decision at any point in time. While the contest is a useful outlet in several capacities, namely as an opportunity for exposure and to ascertain the best performer at a given time,
hence affording them an important reputation, for the Cape Breton fiddler today's environment allows all these advantages to be achieved through other media. The negative aspects of the contest such as the rivalry created, and the restrictiveness encouraged, can thus be avoided. In 1995 the Cape Breton fiddler has opportunities to play in public at events such as dances and concerts all over the island. Invitations to attend national and international festivals allow exposure and chances to forge a reputation. This is also increased by press attention, the recording of albums, and radio and television appearances. The Cape Breton fiddler therefore has access to all the areas which success in a contest usually brings, without having to actually undergo the contest process. This is not to imply that there is no rivalry apparent between the local fiddlers. Although it is generally well disguised, there is definitely a certain amount of unofficial competition going on in the fiddlers' circle, to see who gets the most and the best gigs, the most novel tours, the most lucrative album deal and so on. Of course it could be argued that this constitutes a healthy stimulus in any living tradition.

(f) The Picnic

After the long harsh winter months the summer in Cape Breton was a time marked by many outdoor festivities. From late June until the start of September practically every community held an important event of one type or another. Today, while the events themselves may be different, the summer months are still marked by a variety of outdoor festivities which celebrate the Cape Breton culture. Times might have changed, but the elements still dictate what happens and when.

One of the popular outdoor events that is no longer carried on was the garden party. These were in full swing when Archie Neil Chisholm (b 1907) was a young boy. He
recalls that garden parties were held usually once a year in several communities, particularly in Inverness County around the areas of Margaree and Mabou. These would take place on a designated evening, perhaps in the church grounds or close to the school-house. A stage would be erected and the entertainment would consist of fiddle music and of dancing. The garden party, as a social event, began to decline in the middle decades of the century.

Another extremely popular event was the box social. Sometimes these were outdoor events held in conjunction with the local picnic. At other times they were independent events, held in the local hall. In Memories of a Cape Breton Childhood, Earle Peach describes a typical box social, and its importance as a social occasion:

The box social, evidently a carry over from early pioneer days, had its own traditions as serving as a pairing agency among young, marriageable men and women. In preparation for it the girls (and their mothers) worked diligently in their kitchens on cakes, cookies, and other choice tidbits. A collection of those was then assembled in a square cardbox decorated gaudily with coloured paper and ribbons to constitute a lunch for two people. On the night of the social, each maiden brought her box and delivered it unmarked and unidentified to the auctioneer at the hall. At the close of the evening’s festivities this individual assembled his treasures on to a table on the platform and with gusto and subtle innuendo proceeded to auction off each to the highest bidder. If she already had a swain, he was expected to identify her work of art and, regardless of price, to outbid all competitors, thus entitling him to sit with her and eat the lunch ...for unattached maidens the box was a hope chest, and they waited in agony of acute anticipation as the auction proceeded. (Peach 1990:96-97)

Although this pairing off was the ultimate entertainment at these occasions, music and dance were also important. No vestiges of this social event are to be found in Cape Breton today. Although the exact date of the last of these is not known it seems that they at least continued into the 1950s. Minnie MacMaster remembers box socials being one of the activities at some of the first outdoor picnics she attended. She
herself never had the opportunity to be involved in one of these since "it was kinda
dying out by the time I got old enough to have dates" (LD#38/ST#38).

Another outdoor event held occasionally was the bridge dance. Such dances could
happen spontaneously, perhaps when a group of young people were returning home
after some other social occasion such as a wedding. Otherwise they were organised
events, with a hired fiddler to provide the music for the square-sets. Donald John
MacKinnon was one player who held such dances on the old wooden bridges around
the Gabarus area (MacGillivray 1981:138). It appears that these bridge dances were
held most often in areas outside Inverness County. Inverness County seems to have
been the area with the greatest number and variety of organised events involving the
fiddle music and dancing. The smaller-scale affairs like bridge dances were held in
parts of the island where the choice of events was limited, and which were located
too far from Inverness County to make the events there accessible.

The outdoor picnic was unsurpassed as the highlight of any community's social
calendar - "it was the second Christmas Day of the year" (Rod C. MacNeil
LD#18/ST#18). The picnic could be held on any weekend throughout the summer
months. It usually began on a Sunday afternoon and continued until the early hours of
the following morning. Some communities made a two-day affair of it, with
proceedings taking off on Saturday. Neighbouring parishes would choose different
weekends so that people were free to attend not only their local picnic, but also that
in nearby communities. Archie Neil Chisholm outlines the picnic circuit which himself
and other Margaree parishioners followed:

Sometimes we'd have our picnic in July. Then you could leave that
and go, the next two days to Inverness, go to another picnic in
Mabou, go to one in Judique, go to one in Lower River Inhabitants,
that was a place, Lower River was a great place to go to a picnic.
And ah, then they would always have a big, big one for two days in
Cheticamp. (LD#31/ST#31)
Holidays such as Labour Day were popular choices for picnics. In the Iona area the local picnic was held for several years on a Wednesday in August, since this was the day when the stores in the industrial area around Sydney closed for the afternoon.

Picnics were essentially community fund-raising occasions. In Iona, for example, some early picnics were held to raise funds to build a new church, after the old one had burned down (Rod C. MacNeil, LD#18/ST#18). In Margaree, finances raised from a number of picnics were used to build local schools (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). Winston Fitzgerald played frequently at picnics in order to help pay the teacher's wages for the year. Money was raised through various games and events such as the box social, or by actually charging the dancers:

You were charged 5c for a square-set. If I took you for a square-set I paid 5 cents. And there was a fellow going around collecting. Great big pockets or bags full of money. Nickels... and there'd be as many as six, eight square-sets going on a stage at one time. (Archie Neil Chisholm LD#31/ST#31)

Food, prepared by the local women, was also available for a fee. The picnic was a family oriented event, catering for all ages. During the day there were different games organised for the children. Later in the evening would be the adult games and events such as bingo and crown and anchor (LD#31/ST#31 and LD#18/ST#18). The evening would end with an outdoor dance. Throughout the day music and dancing would be held constantly. There was always a share of boot-legging that went on, and, inevitably some alcohol induced fighting, because "the French and the Scotch and Irish couldn't get along" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31).

In a personal interview with Archie Neil Chisholm he reminisces about some of the picnics he attended:

The picnic would last for two days see. Oh yes. You started to dance around 10 o'clock in the morning and you danced 'til midnight. And
ah, there would be two great big stages built outside ... I saw at S. W. Margaree two stages going together. Angus Allan Gillis and my brother Angus were playing on one stage, and Sandy MacLean and Malcolm Beaton on another stage. And you didn't know which stage to go to to hear the best music. (LD#31/ST#31)

In Archie Neil - *A Triumph of a Life*, he tells:

Angus and I were in the same boat. At the early picnics there would be 4 or 5 of the very best fiddlers from all over the county. Angus and I were real amateurs then, just learning. And yet it would devolve upon us to do the heavy work. The big fiddlers would play a square-set or two, then go roaming around for a couple of hours. We were the go-fers, the storm-troopers who filled in hour after hour after hour. (Ducharme 1992:114)

At the first picnics fiddle players and, of course, pipers would have been featured. Later, around the 1920s, the organ or piano appeared regularly. Before the community hall owned a piano, a local resident would loan one for the picnic. For a two day event the piano would be covered up at night and usually someone was appointed to keep watch over it until the next day. It was the 1940s before a PA system was introduced at a picnic.

The earliest picnics were held in the parishes of Inverness County such as Mabou, where the first picnic took place in 1897, and Brook Village, where picnics were being held from the early 1900's. As migration from the west coast to the industrial areas around Sydney began in earnest from the turn of the century, the idea of the picnic began to spread and by the 1930's picnics were being held in areas such as Glace Bay. As a social event the picnic lasted in parts of the island until well into the 1940s.
The parish picnic was the forerunner of one of the biggest events in several Cape Breton communities today - the outdoor concert. Each parish might have a number of smaller concerts taking place periodically throughout the summer, such as the one-day Last Crossing Concert held at Iona, as well as numerous indoor concerts held throughout the year. The annual outdoor concert, however, is the pinnacle of the community's social calendar. Like the picnics before them, these concerts are held on weekends between late June and late August. Again they are carefully planned so as not to coincide with a similar event happening simultaneously in another community, although in the recent past the increasing numbers of concerts being held has meant that this is not always possible. Nevertheless, a regular summer concert schedule has inadvertently established itself, with particular times of the summer being associated with particular concerts. The first Saturday in August for instance is Highland Village Day, and the third Sunday in July is Big Pond Concert day. Figure 8 shows the summer concert schedule for 1993. Most concerts are one-day affairs, taking place typically on a Sunday from around 2pm. Exceptions to this would be the Gaelic College Scottish concert which spans two days. The concerts usually go on until the early evening and are followed by a dance in the local hall. Again the Highland village concert differs in that the dance is usually held on the stage, outdoors. Their daily schedule is also unusual in that two separate concerts are planned, one for the afternoon and the other for the evening.

The spread of concerts throughout the island is more diverse than the picnics were. Spatial distribution is more even over the whole island, although Inverness County still has a marginal lead on the number of events held (See Figure 8). The concerts held between the period 1992-1995 have varied histories. The first Broad Concert was held in 1958, Highland Village Day at Iona began in 1962, the Big Pond Concert started in 1964, and the first Glendale Concert was in 1973. Concerts such as the
Shriners Field of Dreams held at Baddeck, and that held at the Ben Eoin Ski Hill are relatively recent events.

Location for the concerts, as with their predecessors, the picnics, is often on the grounds of the local church or hall. Concerts held in these locations include the Glendale concert. At times alternative venues are chosen, perhaps because of lack of space or facilities near the church or hall. For the Big Pond concert MacIntyre's field is the traditional site. The Iona concert uses the grounds of the Highland Village. The choice to hold these events out of doors means that the weather is a principal factor in ensuring it's success. Generally concert days have fortunately been fine. This has not always been the case, and it is not uncommon to have a concert ended abruptly because of rain as was the case in Glendale in 1993, St. Joseph De Moine in 1995, and at Big Pond on more than one occasion. The worst scenario is to have to cancel the whole event which happened in 1994 in Iona.

The concerts are organised either by a local committee, much as the picnics were, or by an organisation such as The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association which organises the annual Gaelic College concerts, the Shriners which organise the concert at Baddeck, or An Tullochgorm Society which organises the Ben Eoin concerts. Again they are fund raising events. Today however the usual procedure is to charge an admission fee at the gate. This is the only way of collecting money as none of the other games and events are part of the day's activities. Commercial aspects are certainly to be found. Food for instance is always available. Rather than being a supper prepared by the women of the parish, the fare is now of the fast food variety, with stalls being operated by individual entrepreneurs. Another concession to the times is the stand or stands where a selection of merchandise can be purchased - cassettes and CDs featuring the fiddlers, or teeshirts and baseball caps advertising the concert. More recently stands offering face-painting, beer tents and so on are to be found.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Big Pond, Cape Breton Co.</td>
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<td>Sat. July 24</td>
<td>Shriner's Field of Dreams Festival</td>
<td>Big Baddeck, Victoria Co.</td>
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<td>Sat. Aug. 7</td>
<td>Highland Village Day</td>
<td>Iona, Victoria Co.</td>
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<td>Sat. Aug. 14</td>
<td>Gaelic College Scottish Concert</td>
<td>St. Ann's, Victoria Co.</td>
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<td>Sun. Aug. 15</td>
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**Figure 8 Outdoor Concert Schedule, Summer 1993**
Whereas the picnic was a multi-faceted event offering a variety of entertainment, the focus of the concert is on the music and dance - "it was mostly a cultural thing like; they went for the concert part moreso than anything else" (Rod C. MacNeil, LD#18/ST#18). Furthermore, the concerts were consistently known as Scottish concerts, and were very strongly associated with the cultural traditions of that ethnic group. Since the 1970s and the whole revival movement concerning the traditional music in Cape Breton, those long established concerts began to drop the Scottish reference in their official titles. Also, the concert format was adapted by other groups, not necessarily of Scottish descent, with such events occurring at St. Joseph De Moine and Eskasoni for example. Such concerts, while still allowing for a strong fiddle music content, also reflect aspects of culture from some of the island's other ethnic groups. Interestingly, more recently established concerts have followed this pattern, and while the emphasis may be on the fiddle music - which, as already observed, has become increasingly identified as Cape Breton rather than Scottish since the 1970s - the wider cultural fabric that is Cape Breton is represented. The organisers of the Ben Eoin concert for example have chosen to present all these musical strands on a single platform. Examples of the diversity of their programme is obvious from the 1995 line-up which included The Carlton Showband, The Men of the Deeps and Slainte Mhath, along with fiddlers such as Rodney MacDonald, Glen Graham and Billy MacPhee. In the case of Big Pond, a week-long festival which covers many other angles of entertainment has grown up around the annual concert. This week of games, strawberry fests, dances etc. culminates on the Sunday afternoon with the concert. Festival week in Big Pond is also used to showcase some of the other musics popular in Cape Breton. For example over the years there have been concerts given by local hero, singer-song writer Rita MacNeil, and by Celtic rockers Rawlins Cross. This is one way of acknowledging the different musical strands that make up Cape Breton today without diluting the "Scottish-ness" of the Sunday afternoon concert. It is interesting to note firstly that those concerts which accommodate different musical tastes happen outside of Inverness County, and
secondly that they are located within easy access of Sydney, which suggest that the diversity inherent in them is designed to cater for the cosmopolitan audiences of the urban population.

The concerts are still very much family affairs, with all ages attending. Again differing from the picnics is the fact that both performers and audiences are not necessarily from the immediate or neighbouring communities. Certainly the local population constitutes the core of the attendance. In fact supporting the local concert is a matter of honour among Cape Bretoners. The typical concert audience nowadays therefore consists of locals, Cape Bretoners from any part of the island (although they are quite choosy as to which concerts they attend, and tend to take in the same few all the time rather than checking out the others), emigrants returned home for the summer, and visitors "from away", ie. from outside the island. The same applies to performers. Whereas in the past the picnics involved a few fiddlers from the parish or the county, today's concerts feature huge numbers of performers - singers, dancers, pipers, and piano players, as well as fiddlers - from all over the island, and at times from other Maritime areas, or even from other traditions such as Irish. The concerts vary as regards attitudes towards the programme for the concerts. Each concert committee will have invited and advertised a certain number of musicians. In the case of the Big Pond Concert for example, this list is strictly adhered to. At other concerts a more flexible approach is condoned. At concerts at Broad Cove and Glendale for instance their quota of invited players is supplemented by others who turn up on the day and wish to perform.

Another distinguishing factor between the present-day concert and the picnic concerns payment. Certainly every attempt in the past was made to ensure that the fiddlers got paid. Today's standard procedure is to ensure that all participants get a minimal fee, in keeping with the regulations of the musician's union.
Incentives for organising a concert are varied. In the past they were naturally going to be held wherever the majority of fiddlers were living - hence their importance in Inverness County. A surplus of local talent is no longer a prerequisite. Concerts may be held in places such as Ben Eoin where there are not many fiddlers today. A well known concert with an unusual incentive was that held at Glendale in 1971. The concert was essentially a response to the CBC television documentary, *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, in which the claim was made that the days of the Cape Breton fiddler were numbered. This raised quite a controversy in Cape Breton, where there was a call to arms to refute this nonsense. The Glendale Concert of 1971 was basically a platform for all the contemporary fiddlers, whose sheer numbers testified to the strength of the tradition which had been living in less public circumstances. The festival of '71 was a remarkable event, at which over 200 fiddlers took part, many of them performing *en masse* at the end of two days of music. The festival continued on a bi-annual basis until 1979, after which it became an annual event, albeit on a reduced scale, and in a new location.

(h) **Other Occasions: Cape Breton and Beyond**

In the past, music was an integral part of social events that were essentially food oriented, such as pie socials and clam bakes. Today similar occasions would be barbeques or lobster boils - outdoor events where good weather and good food are combined with good music and dancing. One platform for music which was found occasionally in the Cape Breton of the '20's, but which is now redundant, is the cinema. A pianist was often employed to improvize along with the film to enhance the action (Peach 1990:102). Fiddlers too had their role however. Sandy MacInnis, for instance, tells how his brother, "Murdoch Angus, used to play his fiddle at the
theatre in Sydney during the time of the silent movies in the '20's. He'd play Scotch music at the intermissions" (MacGillivray 1981:124).

One of most popular and frequented domains for the contemporary Cape Breton fiddler is the tavern or pub. In comparison with Ireland, however, the number of these public houses is small. Again unlike Ireland where the pub is the focal point of musical social activity, in Cape Breton, although these venues are becoming increasingly popular, they still exist on the periphery. The most popular such event is the long-standing Saturday afternoon matinee at the Doryman Tavern, Cheticamp, which continues all through the year. In this French-Acadian village fiddle music is extremely popular, and there appears to be nothing incongruous about the clientele of the Doryman speaking French, while playing Cape Breton music and dancing Cape Breton style. The audience at the Doryman is predominantly local. Other musicians frequent it on a regular basis however, and, particularly during the summer months it is a popular meeting place for musicians. Since hard liquor is served, Canadian law stipulates that the clientele must be 19 years of age and over. This is strictly observed, particularly after a few under-age fiddlers had been reported to the authorities for playing there. Until that time though, The Doryman was an important platform for young aspiring fiddlers, and for individuals such as Howie MacDonald and Dougie MacDonald it was in fact numbered among their first public performances. Today, younger fiddlers from the Cheticamp area now go to The Doryman on a Saturday afternoon, and spend a few hours listening outside the door, wishing they were two or three years older. The Doryman matinee starts at 2pm and continues until around 6pm. There is a host fiddler and piano player who are employed to ensure the continuity of the music. Since 1977 the fiddler has been Donny LeBlanc, and piano players have included Hilda Chiasson and Joel Chiasson. These resident musicians get the proceedings underway, after a brief check to ensure that the PA system is in working order. Throughout the afternoon, other musicians who have dropped in are invited to play. So to are step-dancers, and there are usually
a number of square-sets of the local Cheticamp variety executed during the afternoon. All this is watched appreciatively by an audience which may number up to a few hundred, drinking huge jugs of beer, and encouraging the performers with their "hootin' and hollerin'."

Another tavern in Cheticamp, Le Gabriel, has recently followed the example of The Doryman and has introduced Saturday afternoon matinees. Here, rather than having a resident fiddler and piano player, different musicians are invited to host each afternoon. As in The Doryman, other fiddlers who are present get the opportunity to play during the afternoon, as do piano players and step-dancers. The other similar venues where Saturday matinees have taken place during the time of my fieldwork (1992-1995), although on a less regular basis, included Billy's Tavern in Port Hawkesbury, The Bonnie Prince in Sydney, The Elks Club in Sydney, and Piper's Pub in Antigonish. It is interesting that these venues are either in the French areas of the island, or in the industrial areas such as Sydney, rather than in the more traditional Inverness County areas.

Night-time events are also often scheduled for these same venues, particularly at Le Gabriel, where during the summer of 1993 Tuesday nights followed a pattern identical to Saturday afternoons. Other night-time events centred around the fiddle music and dance traditions are held in clubs such as the Capri Club in Sydney. This is a venue chosen frequently by fiddlers for album release parties, with both Ashley MacIsaac and Jerry Holland hosting these occasions there in December 1993. The Capri Club holds Friday evening sessions of music under the title of TGIF (Thank God it's Friday). Wendy MacIsaac was resident fiddler for the 1994 series of these. The traditional St. Stephen's Day concert played by the Barra MacNeils, which was associated with Daniel's (another Sydney tavern/club) is now hosted by the Capri Club, where the show now runs for a few consecutive nights.
Cape Breton musicians are also involved in the various indoor concerts that take place throughout the year in different parish halls all over the island. Groups of fiddlers in areas such as Scotsville, Cheticamp, and Richmond Counties, assemble on a regular basis to play and to learn new tunes, in an extension of a practice that was, towards the beginning of the century, associated with the home environment. Today such gatherings take place in a local hall. The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association meets once a month at the Gaelic College at St. Ann's for rehearsals of a similar nature. Fiddlers are also involved in a multitude of other events, ranging from hockey games, celebrations such as those for Canada Day, talent shows (Cheticamp), variety shows such as the Cape Breton Summertime Revue, and events to entertain tourists or shows to promote tourism. Media related events also provide performance opportunities for the Cape Breton fiddler.

Until the early part of the twentieth century, the Cape Breton fiddlers performance platform was limited to the local community. This gradually widened to encompass the home county, once transport in the form of the horse and buggy appeared on the scene. With the advent of the motor-car, from the 1920s, a whole new environment presented itself, with the entire island becoming accessible to the fiddlers. This had many ramifications on both social and musical levels, opening up a multitude of new opportunities and sounds. Today musicians, music lovers and dancers think nothing of crossing the length of the island for an event. Carloads of dancers and Buddy MacMaster fans are known to leave Sydney on Thursday nights during the summer to attend the dance at Glencoe Mills, and then making the return trip home. The musicians themselves are used to playing in all corners of the island, often on consecutive nights. A schedule which sees a fiddler playing a matinee in Sydney from 2pm - 6 pm and a square-dance in West Mabou from 10pm-1am is not remarkable. Certainly, transport is vital to any fiddler, and aspiring young fiddlers are always anxious to get their first car which allows them so much more freedom on the gig.
circuit. Otherwise they need understanding parents willing to drive them on their performance circuit.

A further extension of the performance opportunities afforded the Cape Breton fiddler since the middle of this century has been that of travelling outside the island, initially to other parts of the Maritimes or to Cape Breton enclaves across North America. Since the late 1970s and as a symptom of the emerging global village such travels have extended across the world. The extent of the travels of the Cape Breton fiddler, and its ramifications on the music, will be discussed further in section 5.8.

5.5 Radio and its Influence

Radio holds a special place in the hearts of Cape Bretoners. That's because Marconi himself did many of his experiments there. (Bill MacNeil 1982:292)

The history of radio in Cape Breton dates back to the late 1920s and played a significant part in the process of social and musical awakening which characterised that time. The first local radio station, CJCB, had its first broadcast on February 14, 1929. Its inception, by Nathan Nathanson, was essentially economically inspired:

we were in the music business. We were selling gramophones and sheet music and eventually these 'radio boxes' came on the market and we were asked to sell them ... the only reason I started a radio station was to give people something to hear with the boxes they were buying. (MacNeil 1982:47)

The other radio station which was significant in the promotion and development of the fiddle music was based outside of Cape Breton, in Antigonish, on the Nova Scotian mainland. CJFX was founded in 1943 by a group of priests:
it served as a propaganda organ for the co-operative crusades of Father Moses Coady and the St. Francis Xavier Extension Department. St. F.X. was the original licence holder, and Father Ernest "Smiley" Clarke, a physics professor, built the first transmitter. (Barss Donham 1981:15)

Both CJCB and CJFX radio stations have had a tremendous influence on the Cape Breton fiddle music tradition throughout this century, particularly in the earlier part of it when exposure to fiddle music from other parts of the island was still regarded as something of a novelty. The first shows promoted on CJCB for instance were an important tool in the dissemination of tunes and techniques, and introducing fiddlers to musical activity at the wider community level. Certainly Buddy MacMaster absorbed much from the music he heard over the radio:

he learned as much from the ... radio as he did anything else. You could go to the parish picnics ... but the radio had that constancy. (The Clansman April/May 1993:3)

As other media such as the reel-to-reel recorder and, later, the cassette recorder became available, the constancy of the radio was further extended as fiddlers began to record the programmes featuring fiddle music and replay them ad infinitum (See Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7 and Donny LeBlanc, LD#44/ST#44). Minnie MacMaster encapsulates the significance of the radio right up until the 1950s, when she tells of how she had heard Winston Fitzgerald playing on the radio long before he ever travelled to Inverness County to perform live (LD#38/ST#38). Others were first introduced to the sounds of the fiddle music through the radio, suggesting the beginning of a new type of home environment in which, in the absence of active participants among the older generations, the music could essentially be transmitted to the younger members of the family via more artificial media (See Fr. Francis Cameron, LD#53/ST#53). According to Cameron Chisholm "only for CJFX I don't believe there'd be as many fiddlers as there are today" (MacGillivray 1981:96).
Certainly the radio became regarded as dictating the 'star' performers - "if a local fiddler ... displayed their talents over CJCB, they instantly became the talk of the town: 'he must be good. He played on CJCB'" (MacNeil 1982:292).

The decision to incorporate fiddle music into the programming of the first radio shows was an obvious one - "we played an awful lot of Scottish music, because Cape Bretoners never seemed to get enough of that" (MacNeil 1982:51). Fiddlers of course played live over the radio at this time. Percy Peters claims that his family group, The Peters' Square-Dance Orchestra, was the first to play Cape Breton music on CJCB radio. Among the first popular shows featuring fiddle music on CJCB was Cotters Saturday Night which ran for 76 weeks over 1935 and '36. This show, directed by Bob Wright, was broadcast coast to coast across Canada over the Canadian Radio Commission Network. It featured a popular mix of music and song delivered by The Prof. Bernie MacIntosh Orchestra, of which fiddler Tena Campbell was a prominent member. While it was unusual for women to play the fiddle at this time, and even more unusual for this to happen in a public context, Tena Campbell was a prominent figure throughout the '30s and '40s, due largely to the opportunities afforded her through the medium of the radio. She featured regularly on other CJCB shows such as Celtic Ceilidh, and in the 1940s, on the MacDonalds Tobacco Company show. Again broadcast on Saturday evenings at 6pm, this show was hosted by a variety of fiddlers, such as Dan Joe MacInnis, who played on it for over five years, and Winston Fitzgerald, who along with his Radio Entertainers was associated with it for most of the 1950s. Winston featured regularly on another show at around the same time, Highland Lassie. Another fiddler, Johnny Wilmot, was a regular member of the cast of a show which aired in the 1930s again on CJCB, The Irish Serenaders. Piano player Lila Hashem had a fifteen minute show - "just piano

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13 This format, embracing all aspects of Cape Breton life was revived later in the century in Archie Neil's Cape Breton, which featured Gaelic songs and story-telling along with the fiddle music.
solos, all Scottish" (MacGillivray 1988:185) - around 1936, which was sponsored by Brook's Grocery Store. Bill Lamey, with his groups The Radio Entertainers and the Butt-Ender Boys, John Neil MacLean and John Willie Campbell were among the other fiddlers who performed regularly on CJCB radio over these decades. For the Cape Breton fiddler, playing on these various radio shows was not a directly lucrative venture. In most cases opportunities for such performances were gladly accepted and regarded as promotional tools for other events which the fiddler might be involved in:

people jumped at the chance to perform on radio and we had a waiting list of groups and artists who wanted to display their talents. (MacNeil 1982:51)

This was typical of the wider North American society of the time:

most bands were not paid for their broadcast services. Yet they were glad to accept the jobs because they provided the bands with the exposure essential to establishing a regional reputation and helped them get dance and concert jobs at local schools and picnics which provided their basic support. (Spielman 1975:244)

Increasingly through the '30s and '40s commercial recordings on 78 rpm records received exposure through the radio stations. The live performance was not immediately eliminated however, and typically a balance was achieved between the continuation of this practice and the introduction of the commercial recordings. Fiddlers Malcolm Beaton, Angus Allan Gillis and Dan J. Campbell were among the first to feature on the CJFX programme Kismuil Castle:

the first two programs were done at the CNBA Hall in Inverness with Jessie Maggie MacLellan as pianist. Neil A. recalls that they were connected to Sydney via telephone for broadcast throughout Cape Breton. Later the show moved to Antigonish. 'We used to go across on the ferry about once a week for seven or eight weeks and we'd do the show live in a part of the college. Mrs. Willie Hector MacDonald was our accompanist and we'd go to her home to practice before we'd do the show. (MacGillivray 1981:12)
The procedure of performing over the telephone from Cape Breton to the radio station in Antigonish was continued for the programme *Celtic Ceilidh* (I. MacKinnon 1989:89). Other fiddlers who performed live on this station in its early years included Donald Angus Beaton, Hector MacKenzie, Buddy MacMaster, Wilfred Gillis, Joe Cormier, and Elmer Briand. The early 78 records which has appeared for the first time in 1928, also got much exposure on CJFX. By the 1960s the emphasis had shifted from the balance between the live and the recorded to concentrate, for the most part, on the latter. Gus MacKinnon, who had inherited the job of hosting the programme *Scottish Strings* on CJFX, undertook many field recordings in Cape Breton assembling tapes that provided a more typical sound than was available on some of the commercial recordings:

> I would go into the communities to record the Scottish music. I would carry the big awkward reel-to-reel tape recorders and set them up at concerts. *(The Clansman* January 1994:19)

CJFX has, until the present day, remained one of the most diligent promoters of the fiddle music tradition:

> fiddle music was being played from day one ... it was being promoted by CJFX when that wasn't the popular thing to do. It was only when [CBC] began dabbling in it that people began to think that it was more permissible. But [CJFX] never varied from when they started. *(The Clansman* April/May 1993:3)

From the pioneer work of J. Clyde Nunn, through Gus MacKinnon, and continued today with Ray MacDonald, CJFX has certainly been an important factor in the promotion of and preservation of Cape Breton music.

Other radio stations which broadcast Cape Breton fiddle music included WVCM, an Irish station in Boston, where Bill Lamey, who moved there in 1953, had a regular half-hour show which he used to promote his dances in Roxbury. Others were
WMEX from Boston and CFCY from Charlottetown, all of which could be picked up in parts of Cape Breton.

The radio continued as a popular medium for Cape Breton fiddle music throughout the century, although increasingly functioning as an entertainment only, its earlier role in disseminating the musical style and repertory having somewhat stabilised. Nevertheless, fiddlers regularly tuned in to the local stations. In the Beaton household in Mabou for instance, *Scottish Strings* was listened to "more faithful[ly] than the news" (Kinnon Beaton, LD#23/ST#23). Over the period 1992-1995 the radio shows featuring Cape Breton fiddle music included *Celtic Fringe* and *Scottish Strings* on Saturday evenings on CJFX, and *Ray's Ceilidh* on the same station every weekday from 6-7pm; *Celtic Serenade* hosted by Donnie Campbell on CKPE FM, *Mainstreet* and *Island Echoes* on CBC, and *Highland Fling* with Bob MacEachern on CIGO. Most recently, CJCB broadcasts a weekly Sunday morning show, *Wake Up to Cape Breton*, featuring the current top twenty traditional music hits. Certainly the number of radio stations has increased. Also, the music featured on these particular shows is no longer strictly confined to the Cape Breton fiddle variety but typically includes singing and other music types, for example Irish, as well. The music played is usually from commercial recordings, although the shows on CJFX continue to intersperse these with home recordings. Rarely does a fiddler perform live over the air, although towards the end of 1995 Natalie MacMaster hosted a show which was recorded live every week and featured a wide selection of fiddlers and other Maritime musicians. Shows may include interviews with different musicians perhaps promoting a new album, and they generally provide up-to-date information pertaining to local music related events. While Cape Breton fiddle music continues to receive exposure on radio, it is important to remember that it is confined to these particular shows. The majority of air time is devoted to more popular music types and formats - an "homogenized, pasturized, made in Los Angeles format" (Barss Donham1981:14). Today, while the radio remains an important tool for the commercial viability of
fiddlers albums in particular, and has certainly been one of the most significant additions to the environment of the emerging Cape Breton fiddler of the twentieth century, it is no longer the important transmission vehicle it was in the late 1920s, '30s and '40s, but is rather accepted as one of many channels for exposing the music to a wider audience.

5.6 Television and its Influence

The advent of television to Cape Breton Island happened as late as the 1950s. Since that time it has provided the Cape Breton fiddle tradition with another channel for exposure to a wider audience, both internally, but probably more significantly, beyond Cape Breton itself. At a local level, television was particularly useful for providing an insight into the musical tradition for those not exposed to it in the home environment. Joel Chiasson from the French Acadian village of Cheticamp, for instance, cites the television show broadcast in the early '80s, *Up Home Tonight*, as being the primary incentive which initially encouraged him to become involved in music and dance (LD#25/ST#25).

Among the first shows to feature Cape Breton fiddle music was *The Cape Breton Barn Dance* on CJCB TV, Sydney, a weekly programme sponsored by the Goodyear Company and Robin Hood Flour on which Winston Fitzgerald and Estwood Davidson appeared regularly over the period 1962-1969. Other guest fiddlers were featured each week, among them Buddy MacMaster and Carl MacKenzie. This show was broadcast live "until the last year when it became possible to pre-record it" (I. MacKinnon 1989:91). *Don Messer's Jubilee* was another television show of the 1960s which, although concentrating primarily on the Down-east style of music, did feature one Cape Breton fiddler, Winston Fitzgerald. In the 1970s John Allan Cameron hosted *The Ceilidh Show*, broadcast nationally on CBC on Saturday nights.
In 1975 he moved to the CTV network where he hosted *The John Allan Cameron Show* which became an important platform for introducing Cape Breton fiddlers to the wider Canadian audience. The group of fiddlers, with piano and a rhythm section, known as The Cape Breton Symphony, emerged from this context as a viable channel through which to make the fiddle music accessible to a wider audience. Certain progressive musical changes, such as the changing of keys within a single medley, were introduced, again with a view to this. The association with tartan, and indeed the kilt, for a brief period, links into this time when Cape Breton music and musicians were struggling to assert an identity as they moved for the first time onto the world stage.

Other television shows over the years which have promoted the Cape Breton fiddler include those hosted by Irish group Ryan's Fancy, who did a special feature on the MacKenzie family from Washabuck for example, *On the Road, Ear to the Ground*, and the recent series *The Rita Show*, hosted by Big Pond singer-songwriter Rita MacNeil. Televised Award shows have featured successful Cape Breton artists such as The Barra MacNeils and The Rankin Family. Telethons such as *Christmas Daddies*, for example, are other popular shows highlighting Cape Breton talent. More recently, the emerging breed that is the professional Cape Breton fiddler has extended the association with television into the area of videos, with Ashley MacIsaac releasing a video, which incidentally received much airplay, to coincide with his latest album for example. A number of home videos featuring Cape Breton music have also appeared over the last few years such as *Buddy MacMaster - The Master of the Cape Breton Fiddle*, released by SeaBright Productions.

Where the Cape Breton fiddle tradition is concerned, television has been a particularly beneficial medium in introducing it to a much wider audience than ever before. At a local level, while isolated examples have occurred where an individual was enticed towards the music through seeing it performed in this context, there has
been one very significant contribution which must be not overlooked. This is the CBC documentary which I have already referred to - *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* - produced by Ron MacInnis and broadcast in 1971. Claiming that the fiddle tradition was on the verge of extinction, mainly since the chain of transmission from generation to generation had been severed, this television show provoked an immediate reaction within the Cape Breton community. A move towards revitalising the tradition was generated and realised through the organising of festivals, the establishment of a Fiddlers' Association, and the inauguration of classes to pass this music on to the young of the island. Cape Breton fiddle music is still riding on the crest of the wave that resulted from that single documentary. Even were it limited to that sole example, it must be recognised that the medium of television has had a profound and lasting effect on the Cape Breton fiddle tradition.

5.7 The Recording Industry

One of the most important industries to emerge for the Cape Breton fiddler of the twentieth century has been that of the commercial recording. Certainly the practice of recording music on a more private level has also been significant, and Cape Bretoners have shown a particular penchant over the years for amassing collections of privately recorded tapes from ceilidhs, concerts and dances, initially on reel-to-reel machines, and later on cassette recorders. The first commercial recordings of Cape Breton fiddle music appeared in 1928, through the New York based Columbia Record Company, and featured the Columbia Scotch Band and the Caledonia Scotch Band, both of which included fiddlers Dan Hughie MacEachern and Charlie MacKinnon. Other U.S. based record companies such as Decca, Rounder, and Shanachie, also became involved in the promoting of Cape Breton fiddlers, usually marketed of
course as Scottish music (See Chapter Three) and as part of their targeting of specific ethnic groups. In 1935, Bernie MacIsaac of Antigonish established the first local record company which concentrated largely on Cape Breton fiddlers. This was incorporated into Rodeo Records in the 1950s. In the 1950s Cape Breton fiddlers first ventured into the area of independent production, a procedure which was instigated by Winston Fitzgerald with the Mac label. It was not until the 1970s, however, that this became a popular option, and opened up the possibility of recording to increasing numbers of fiddlers. The revival period the music was enjoying from that time, and the emergence of local recording studios, also contributed to the potential of such a venture. Over the past few years however, the commercial viability of Cape Breton music has moved onto another plateau as the music gained recognition and success at an international level. Beginning with bands with a more wide ranging appeal such as The Rankin Family and The Barra MacNeils, major record companies have become interested in the product that is Cape Breton music, probably as part of the burgeoning interest in what is commonly referred to as world music. The Rankin Family for instance signed with EMI Music in the early 1990s, followed by The Barra MacNeils with Polygram in 1993. Fiddlers in a solo capacity have also caught the eye of the record company moguls, resulting in Ashley MacIsaac signing with A&M Records and Natalie MacMaster with Warner.

The fluctuations of popularity in the fiddle music at a local level over the period 1928-1995\(^\text{14}\) is aptly mirrored in the quantity of commercial recordings issued at any given time. Based on data presented in Ian MacKinnon's MA thesis (1989) which focuses on the role of commercial recordings in the Cape Breton fiddle music tradition, it emerges that the 1930s-'50s saw much activity in the area of recording.

\(^\text{14}\)This period has also witnessed the journey of the recorded media through 78 rpm discs, 10 inch 1/3 rpm LPs (a format on which Winston Fitzgerald was the first Canadian musician to have his music recorded in 1953), cassette tapes, to compact discs.
This coincides with the musical activity already discussed (See Chapter Three) as Cape Breton awakened from the stagnation of the previous century. Interestingly the 1960s shows a decline in the number of recording projects undertaken, and in fact no releases occurred between 1967 and 1974. Again this corresponds with a particularly bleak period in other aspects of the musical life of Cape Breton, which culminated in 1971 with the television documentary *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*. From the early 1970s on until 1987 (the last year surveyed by MacKinnon) the number of commercial recordings has escalated as Cape Breton enjoyed a period of revival and revitalisation. As is evident from the list of albums released between 1987 and 1995 presented in Appendix C this has continued to be expanded upon.

For the recording artist the possibilities inherent in this medium have expanded manifold. There is little to compare between the recording situations of today and the early experiences of the first Cape Breton fiddlers, recording essentially live to tape in a small room and perhaps sharing a microphone with the other fiddlers or accompanists. The possibilities of the modern recording studio, combined with the pressures and expectations resulting from the more diverse audiences being targeted, have done much towards creating a new Cape Breton sound. Throughout the century the medium of the commercial recording has done much to disseminate the fiddle music. Initially this happened at a local level, as individual communities became aware of the wider Cape Breton musical community. The homogenisation of style and repertory, a reality from the late 1920s, was greatly facilitated by the availability of recorded material. The perception of 'star' performers was another consequence of the recording industry which has had lasting implications in the evolution of a generic Cape Breton musical sound. Such processes are still operational in 1995. While commercial recordings continue to be highly significant within Cape Breton, increasingly being integrated into or indeed substituting for the tradition transmission process, their impact has stretched beyond the Causeway, and brought the sound of Cape Breton to other countries.
5.8 Onto the World Stage - A Changing Audience

At the turn of this century, the Cape Breton fiddlers performance arena was confined largely to the local community, and hence before local audiences who were often musicians themselves, or at least had an intimate knowledge of the music and often the accompanying Gaelic words to the tunes. Dramatic changes have affected this situation over the past seventy or so years. Advances in transport and communication increasingly allowed the fiddler to venture into the wider Cape Breton community, and eventually beyond this, so that by 1995 Cape Bretoners have performed in many countries across the world. Bringing the music to new audiences directly in this manner, and indirectly through the progressions in the Cape Breton recording industry (which has moved from an essentially local enterprise to an international market) has led to the adoption of the Cape Breton sound by musicians all over the world. Furthermore, catering to such diverse audiences has, particularly over the last decade, influenced the music itself, and is likely to continue to do so, possibly even more drastically, in times to come.

The concept of travelling outside the island to perform began as early as the 1920s when fiddlers attended contests in other Maritime areas and even further afield in places across Canada and the United States. Such trips were occasional occurrences and even by the 1950s were quite unusual. John Donald Cameron, who has travelled quite extensively with the Cape Breton Symphony, recalls little travelling outside the island when he was a youth:

There was no such thing as going to a folk festival in Philadelphia ... or going away like that. One time in the 1950's someone did come down and mention taking us up to New York to play for something there ...it didn't transpire. But, ah, we weren't that excited about it because we didn't think that anything like that would ever happen anyway. We couldn't imagine playing this music outside of Cape Breton. (LD#37/ST#37)
Besides the contests, other trips away were usually to areas, again across Canada and the U.S., where substantial numbers of emigrant Cape Bretoners had settled. Emigration has long been a fact of life in Cape Breton. Typically, different time-periods are marked by an influx of emigrants to a particular area, and certain centres have become noted as destinations for Cape Bretoners. Some of these principal depots over the years have been Halifax, the 'Boston States', Detroit, and Toronto - major industrial centres all - and various cities 'out west'. Where large bodies of Cape Bretoners have congregated together, retaining the music and dance traditions has been a priority, practiced with much the same dedication as their Scottish ancestors showed before them. Music is preserved in the home environment. Buddy MacMaster, for instance, was first exposed to Cape Breton music as a child in Timmons, Ontario. It has often also been maintained in a more formal or institutionalised context, through the establishing of Cape Breton Clubs in centres such as Halifax, Detroit, Boston, and Toronto. These provide a forum where emigrant Cape Bretoners can get together for social occasions such as dances. The usual procedure is for the local Cape Bretoners to provide the music. For special occasions however funds would be organized to bring musicians from home, and so, particularly since the 1950s, these Cape Breton Clubs, scattered across North America, became recognized as regular and important performance opportunities for the Cape Breton fiddler, and later the fiddler/piano player team. These Cape Breton Clubs remain a viable platform today.

Invitations from non-Cape Breton sources were rare prior to the 1970's, when the first invitations from Scotland and Ireland arrived. These were indications that Cape Breton music was becoming known in these overseas locations, mainly as a result of

15"As the decades moved on a reversal of attitudes occurs, usually as economic security was attained. Then it became fashionable to refer to one's family origins and to form social clubs where the Gaelic could occasionally be heard, where no stigma was attached to the enjoyment of Scottish violin music or to other cultural traditions" (Campbell and MacLean 1974:186).
recordings making their way there, often of course, from shared emigration centres such as Boston, connections made during and since the war, when Cape Breton fiddlers found themselves posted in Scotland, and so on. The album releases by Shanachie Records of the music of Angus Chisholm and Bill Lamey, for example, did much to promote Cape Breton fiddle music in Ireland. Some of the earliest fiddlers to perform in these locations were Bill Lamey, Winston Fitzgerald, and Mike MacDougall. Both Scotland and Ireland have become increasingly popular as locations for tours undertaken by Cape Breton talent - understandably so given the musical and historical links between them. The Cape Breton Symphony, The Barra MacNeils, The Rankin Family, Natalie MacMaster and Jerry Holland, have all done independent tours in both countries. Several musicians and dancers have visited Irish festivals such as Éigse na Laoi, hosted annually by the Music Department of University College, Cork. In 1992 in fact the entire festival was devoted to Cape Breton music and dance, and featured sixteen performers. These were fiddlers Buddy MacMaster, Carl MacKenzie, Dave MacIsaac, Natalie MacMaster, Jerry Holland, John Morris Rankin, Howie MacDonald, Dougie MacDonald, Dwayne Cote and Brenda Stubbert; pipers Paul MacDonald and Jamie MacInnis; piano players Hilda Chiasson and Tracey Dares; step-dancer Harvey Beaton and singer Jeff MacDonald. This particular event was recorded and a CD entitled *Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island* subsequently released by Nimbus Records Ltd. Royalties from this recording have been used to establish a new organisation, based in University College, Cork - The Cape Breton/Ireland Musical Bridge - which aims to promote musical relations between the two islands. Cape Bretoners have been invited to partake in Scottish Festivals and events such as the summer school held at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye where Buddy MacMaster and Harvey Beaton are on the staff of instructors, and the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow.

Celtic music events across Canada and the U.S. have also become important performance venues for Cape Breton players, particularly since the 1980's. John Allan
Cameron was actually the first Cape Breton fiddler/singer/guitar player to be invited to perform at folk festivals such as Mariposa, Newport, Winnipeg and Vancouver from the 1960s onwards. Festivals such as that held at Wolftrap in Washington D.C., and those at Edmonton and Vancouver are some of the Celtic music extravaganzas which bring Cape Breton artistes together with Irish, Irish-American and other performers. Cape Breton fiddlers have also been included as instructors at fiddle camps such as Valley of the Moon in California. As already mentioned, similar festivals on the other side of the Atlantic have also begun to include Cape Breton performers. More unusual invitations have seen Cape Breton fiddlers tour in such far-flung places as Japan (Natalie MacMaster), China (Joe Cormier), and the Scandinavian countries (Jerry Holland).

The musical consequences of such travels, and the subsequent exposure to new musical traditions which they promote, has certainly contributed to the changing sound of Cape Breton music. From the earliest travels of fiddlers such as Dan R. MacDonald during the war years, to the present day, the fiddlers repertory has been both expanded and diversified through experimentation with other sources, oral or literate. Aspects of style associated with other traditions, such as the Irish music tradition for example, have also infiltrated the Cape Breton sound. Furthermore, performance practices have also been affected, as the Cape Breton fiddler has adapted to increasingly diverse performance contexts.

The move from the local onto the world stage has obviously been paralleled by the Cape Breton fiddler being exposed to increasingly larger audiences. The insular situation of Cape Breton prior to the 1920s ensured that the music was confined to the local community and to an audience which was intimately knowledgeable of it. As Cape Breton society became increasingly homogeneous from the late 1920s onwards, the familiarity with the music on the part of the audience was retained. Most significantly, the Cape Breton audience was often a participatory one, in that the
dance played an important role. However, even in the more specifically 'listening'
contexts which emerged around the 1940s, the listeners showed an indepth
knowledge of the music, and even at this time many were familiar with the Gaelic
words which accompanied the older repertory. Today, although the connection with
the language is no longer prominent, Cape Breton audiences continue to exhibit a
keen knowledge and awareness of the fiddle music. This is audibly externalised
through the 'hoots and hollers' and spontaneous applause that marks their
appreciation of certain favourite tunes, acknowledgement of new tunes, tonal shifts
and so on.

Performing before audiences where this familiarity with the music is absent must have
some effect on the Cape Breton fiddlers performance. Significant in this respect is
that often fiddlers performing abroad do so in isolation from the dance, which
immediately removes an important and vibrant part of the tradition from the picture.
Fortunately, the ability of many of the younger performers to play the fiddle and
dance simultaneously, allows them to present this aspect of the tradition and thus
contextualise their performance to some extent. Perhaps the most significant aspect of
the progression of the Cape Breton fiddler onto the world stage has been the
increasing expectation to present Cape Breton music in a format which is more
accessible to a wider audience. For many non-Cape Bretoners, the fiddle/piano
combination which has become the norm since the middle of this century, is regarded
as monotonous. This is an opinion I have heard frequently expressed among Irish
musicians, accustomed of course to a wider array of instruments and instrumental
combinations, as well as a more flexible approach to the music itself (See Chapter
Eight). In response to this those Cape Bretoners who perform most regularly at an
international level, besides offering a more eclectic repertory and exhibiting great
musical versatility, have also increasingly embraced the group or band format, thus
introducing variety in terms of instrumentation and arrangement of tunes, and
frequently adding a singer to the line-up. Often this develops out of their experiences
with musicians from other backgrounds. Natalie MacMaster has performed frequently with the tenor, John McDermott, and with the Irish-American band The Green Fields of America. Ashley MacIsaac has worked with The Chieftains, Phillip Glass, and Paul Simon among others. Of course bands such as The Rankin Family and The Barra MacNeils originated in such a format. It is those individual fiddlers who have recently moved onto the international platform - namely Ashley MacIsaac and Natalie MacMaster - who, having established themselves as solo performers, have made the decision, no doubt under some pressure from their respective record companies, to move towards the band format. For Ashley MacIsaac this has corresponded with a move into a more experimental sound, heavily influenced by contemporary popular musics, and as such represents an embryonic stage of the development of a Cape Breton popular traditional music.
SECTION THREE

THE MUSICAL DIMENSION
Central to the issue of the changing Cape Breton fiddler, a reality in both social and musical terms since the early twentieth century, lies the area of repertory. Indeed, some of the most significant changes have occurred in this field. The two key words concerning the development of repertory from the late 1920s to 1995 are expansion and diversification. Certainly the size of the repertory has increased dramatically within that time frame, coinciding with the emergence of audio and literary sources in Cape Breton and the increasing reliance of the fiddling community upon them. Likewise, the style of the repertory has been altered, both on the level of actual tune-types accepted, and more specifically on the musical style of those tunes themselves. Without doubt the years c1928-1995 have witnessed a transformation from a repertory almost exclusively rooted in Highland Scotland, to one which, while retaining this at its core, has evolved into a more eclectic entity. Also significant in an overview of the changing Cape Breton fiddler is the fact that repertory changes have both stimulated and conceded changes in other aspects of the tradition, most notably where the elements of style and the contexts of performance are concerned.

6.1 The Oral and the Literate: A Dualism in the Cape Breton Tradition

According to the International Folk Music Council "folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission" (See Breathnach 1986:1). Oral transmission, in this context, may be understood to apply to music which is "transmitted without scriptural means" (Stockmann 1986:393), i.e. music which has been passed down from generation to generation, without recourse to written equivalences.
Twentieth century conditioning has challenged the inherent simplicity of oral transmission processes in many musical traditions. In tandem with social and technological developments, the traditional method of handing the music down to the next generation has been extended by artificial criteria. The phenomenon of the tape-recorder and other reproductive devices have become significant additions to the process of oral transmission, reducing and often negating the need for personal contact and the immediacy of the "musical moment" (Benitez 1986:457). The oral experience may now be recreated *ad infinitum*, even when removed through time and physical space, making *delayed oral transmission* possible. The institutionalisation of traditional music has also been an important factor in redefining the process of oral transmission. Traditionally, the oral transmission process happened on a specific, person to person level, in the family or immediate community environment. For the learner, the process was often one of observation and absorption rather than direct instruction. Many cultures have allowed this informal mode of transmission to be replaced by, or augmented with, a more formal teaching arrangement, with the classroom replacing the home as the centre for the continuity of the tradition. This reality is in effect a process of *surrogate* or *substitute oral transmission*. A corollary to this is that a background in the immediate tradition is no longer a prerequisite; individuals from non-traditional music backgrounds may now be included in the transmission process, which before, due to its very nature, was hereditary.

The situation is further complicated when a literate strand is introduced into a tradition that has been actively regenerative in a purely oral capacity. Nevertheless, it is generally recognised that most "oral traditions ... are no longer immune from some aspect of literacy" (Bohlman 1988:28). The decision to introduce notation into a musical tradition may be borne out of necessity, in order to maintain the repertory and/or style of a tradition bordering on extinction. Edward Bunting's role at the Belfast Harp festival in 1792 is a case in point, allowing some of the ancient harp music of Ireland to survive through his transcriptions. Where an oral music tradition
is in a more healthy state, the consequences of introducing notation will depend on the function which it is intended to fulfill, the function it actually fulfills, and the level of its acceptance among the practitioners of that tradition. Will notation be used in a prescriptive or a descriptive capacity, to inform musical performance or to create a representational model of a single performance? Will it function as a tool to enhance the oral transmission process, or as a replacement for it? Will its role be simply to afford repertory expansion? Or will it serve as a record or representation of the musical tradition? When an actively reproductive oral tradition embraces literacy the answers to all these questions may vary. In Ireland for instance, the introduction of notational systems into the transmission process, or the advent of published collections of traditional music, have certainly not detracted in any way from what remains essentially an oral tradition, albeit augmented with various reproductive devices. Conversely, in Scotland, this century has witnessed a move from a predominantly oral tradition to one which relies heavily on the written note in performance contexts.

Looking at Cape Breton with Irish eyes, one is struck by a greater appreciation of, and dependency upon, musical notation as it exists in the form of written sources. Despite displaying a strong literate strand however, the tradition is firmly grounded in orality. Proof of this exists in the continuity of the tradition through several generations of numerous families (See Figure 5) and in the fact that until the 1970s the music made its way from one generation to the next in the home environment and through informal, non-structured absorption processes. Solid evidence also points to the fact that, until as late as the 1940s, there was little available in the way of published tune collections, and therefore little need for an understanding of musical notation. The reasons behind the introduction of the written note into a tradition that was surviving orally, and the impact of this on that tradition will be discussed later. Given, however, that since the middle of this century the Cape Breton tradition has embraced the dual strands of orality and literacy, it is important to understand the
balance both have established within the tradition. Certainly, for the vast majority of practitioners, little of the oral tradition has been sacrificed to accommodate the newer literate element. In fact notation has actually helped "to reinforce and sustain the oral tradition" (Seebass 1986:414). What we have in Cape Breton effectively is an oral tradition which is supported, not threatened, by literacy.

(a) Introducing Published Collections

There was little book reading among the Cape Breton populace because often they weren't even literate in their language, let alone in their music. (Allister MacGillivray in Caplan No.29)

According to Allister MacGillivray, the concept of literacy had no place in the musical life of the early generations of fiddlers in Cape Breton. It was very much an oral tradition, with the music being retained and transmitted from memory. MacGillivray postulates that the isolation of Cape Breton, coupled with this practically total dependency on orality, allowed for a very pure maintenance of the traditional music of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. While it is certainly probable that some of the published collections of Scottish music such as The Skye Collection (1887) had made their way to Cape Breton, and there is evidence that Ryan's Mammouth Collection was being used in Inverness County in the 1920s, the rarity of literacy right up to the middle years of this century, has been testified to. In The Cape Breton Fiddler for instance, Johnny 'MacVarish' MacDonald, who died 1934, is acknowledged as "an avid note-reader", which was considered "somewhat of a rarity at that time" (MacGillivray 1981:41). Alexander Beaton (1835-1923) of Black River is remembered as "one of the first note-reading violinists in that area of Inverness County" (MacGillivray 1981). Similarly John Donald Cameron recalls 'Red' Johnny Campbell who taught himself and his brother John Allan the rudiments of note-
reading in 1953. Even at that time "he was one of the few fiddlers around there who played by note" (MacGillivray 1981:88). Certainly it appears that musical literacy was not prevalent in Cape Breton until well into the twentieth century.

Existing evidence points to the early 1940s as the period when an understanding of the written note became a valuable asset to the Cape Breton fiddler, although not a necessity. Interestingly 1940 itself was the year in which the first collection of indigenous Cape Breton compositions was published - *The Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies for the Violin*, edited by Gordon MacQuarrie. It seems that the door to literacy opened for the Cape Breton fiddler once access to printed collections became possible. Since such collections were extremely rare in Cape Breton, this opportunity only came about as people began moving outside of Cape Breton, and most significantly, travelling back to Scotland. For some individuals this happened through the second World War, and their service with the Canadian regiments in Scotland. Dan R. MacDonald from Judique, one of the individuals responsible for initiating an interest in acquiring collections of Scottish music, found himself in this position:

> When he went overseas in the '40s, in the second World War ... he made a lot of contacts over there, as to where to find the old books. He found a lot through J. Murdoch Henderson in Aberdeen. And he bought the books and sent them back over here. (John Donald Cameron in Caplan No. 53)

The 1940s also saw substantial out-migration from Cape Breton to other parts of North America, in response to an increased awareness of heightened opportunities elsewhere. This facilitated the accumulation of published collections, which emigrant Cape Bretoners could send home from 'away'. In particular, many collections of Irish music such as those by Captain Francis O'Neill, infiltrated Cape Breton through this channel. Contacts were established all over Scotland and North America, allowing those interested Cape Bretoners to order books by mail. Occasionally new collections
were advertised in other collections or newspapers and also ordered by mail. Stories of books arriving from Scotland, and the excitement surrounding them, are still heard from time to time: "At one particular time, I think there was ... five or six, maybe seven Skye Collections ... came over in one carton of books" (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1). Nevertheless, the quantity of books available throughout the 1940s, '50s and '60s did not meet the increasing demand, and were thus regarded as being very precious - "If you had a Skye Collection you had gold" (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1). Most of the Cape Breton fiddlers who were fortunate enough to own these books were generous when it came to sharing them among the fiddling community. Individuals like Dan R. would happily pass on a book he had gone through. Others would lend their copies to fiddlers who, according to Peter Porier, would then carefully copy out the tunes by hand, there being no xerox machines available. By the 1950s (if not earlier) the Celtic Music Store in Antigonish was stocking some collections of Scottish music. John Donald Cameron tells of making a trip to the mainland in 1953 to get his first pair of spectacles. The more important business of the day however was stopping at the music store to buy Skinners Scottish Violinist and the MacQuarrie Collection (MacGillivray 1981:89). Access to printed collections of music has become increasingly easy for the Cape Breton fiddler in recent times. More and more Cape Bretoners are travelling across the world and picking up new books at their various destinations; a wider selection of mail order services is also available; a local music publishing business, Cranford Publications, has reprinted editions of The Skye Collection (1986), The Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles by Captain Simon Fraser (1986), and A Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, Marches etc. by Alexander Walker (1991), and these are readily available; local and provincial music stores such as John Donald Cameron's store in Port Hawkesbury and the Halifax Folklore Centre stock a selection of Cape Breton, Scottish, Irish and other collections; and organisations, for example An Tullochgorm Society, also stock some books, which are on sale at the outdoor summer concerts.
Acquiring substantial numbers of printed collections became a hobby - indeed almost an obsession - with certain fiddlers. Among those first noted for their enviable collections were Dan R. MacDonald (whose collection is now in the possession of Alex Francis MacKay), Joe MacLean, Bill Lamey and Dan Joe MacInnis. Today the penchant for collecting any available printed sources is continued in a similar fashion, albeit with greater ease, by Doug MacPhee, Dave MacIsaac, Kyle MacNeil, Carl MacKenzie, and Buddy MacMaster in particular, although most fiddlers would own the 'standard' collections such as *The Skye* and Cole's *One Thousand Fiddle Tunes*. It seems however that the period from c1940 through to the late 1960s saw the greatest concern with gathering books. For the majority of fiddlers in the 0-39 age group (with the notable exceptions of Kyle MacNeil and Dwayne Cote), other means of accessing music have taken priority over the written note. The variety of cassettes and CDs on the market are more appealing to this generation than the book format, and since these are widely available in Cape Breton, the countries they travel to, and through mail order services, it tends to be their first choice. Although Cape Breton music was available in recorded format since 1928, the variety of audio material now available was not there for the fiddler of the 1940s, '50s and '60s. A much wider selection of music was offered by the printed collections, thus the interest in them is understandable. Another important factor was that while the recorded music available featured Cape Breton musicians almost exclusively, the printed collections were often coming from the old country. I believe that the initial fascination with the printed collections links into a deeper side of the Cape Breton fiddler, the side that recognised these as a very real connection with Scotland, allowing them a firm grasp on a tradition from which they were removed geographically and through time. In an emigrant community, in this instance Scots in Cape Breton, printed collections of tunes provide a tangible link with the old country, assuming a much greater significance than at the source. These concrete manifestations of the culture offer the emigrant a glimpse of the homeland, here, an insight into the concurrent state of music in Scotland. Ironically since no audio equivalences seemed to make their way
to Cape Breton along with the books – an interesting fact, given that Dan R. and others would more than likely have had access to the recordings of James Scott Skinner for example – the Cape Breton fiddler gained the newest tunes without adopting any of the new stylistic trends which characterised their rendition in Scotland. Throughout my fieldwork I have not been able to come across any solid evidence that the early recordings of Scott Skinner made their way to Cape Breton at the same time as the printed collections. Nevertheless there have been unsubstantiated stories to this effect. The fact that certain Cape Breton fiddlers would have met with Skinner at contests in Boston (See Chapter Five) suggests that there would have been some awareness of his style. This however had little initial impact on the Cape Breton sound. In contrast, the early recordings of Irish fiddler Michael Coleman are known to have made an immediate impression on the style and repertory of the fiddlers on the Northside of Cape Breton.

During the period 1940 to 1995 the number and selection of tune collections on the market expanded greatly. Over this time the Cape Breton fiddler, initially concerned with books by Scotland’s fiddle-composers, welcomed pipe collections, the collections of James Scott Skinner, Irish music collections, locally composed tune collections, and still more recently, Shetland and other music collections. These varied sources will be discussed in more detail in section 6.2.

(b) The Impact of Literacy

Understanding musical notation became important to the Cape Breton fiddler when printed sources became accessible. One fiddler learning to read musical notation had a knock-on effect and so, beginning in the 1940s, there was a marked interest in the numbers of fiddlers learning to read. Once acquired, this skill was often passed on
from one fiddler to the next, one outlining the notes of the stave for another. Women frequently played a role in teaching the rudiments of notation - a skill many had picked up in school or through piano lessons - to the fiddlers, still predominantly males. Occasionally fiddlers who lived in larger urban centres, away from Cape Breton, got some formal instruction; others struggled with printed music tutors. For the majority of Cape Breton fiddlers a knowledge of the notes on the stave was sufficient; no understanding of rhythms or accidentals was deemed necessary. The most significant point about the process as it emerged on any significant level in the 1940s was that those learning to read were already accomplished fiddle players; notation played no part in the transmission process, which remained essentially oral. It was not until the early 1970s in fact that notation began to be integrated into the transmission process. Around this time Cape Breton saw the introduction of the formal class setting for the instruction of fiddle music. To counteract the absence of one-to-one transmission, teachers such as Stan Chapman introduced notation into the learning process. Standard notation however was not ideally suited to his purpose - his primary objective being to encourage the beginner to start playing tunes as soon as possible - so he developed a more appropriate tablature system (See Figure 9). Simpler tablature notations have become part of the transmission process in other traditions also. In Ireland for example, fiddler Pádraig O'Keefe from the Sliabh Luachra area was particularly renowned for the quantity of tunes he translated into the system he had devised. Such modes of visual transmission allow the beginner to familiarise himself with the instrument while actively participating in the music of the tradition. Once a student becomes more fluent, Stan introduces them gradually to standard notation. Interestingly, when a tune is being taught to a class from the printed page, he does not insist on accurate rhythms being followed, and encourages the addition of embellishments in the traditional mode. His teaching methodology also encourages the development of the ear. Once a student knows their way around the instrument he will alternate teaching them tunes by note and tunes by ear. Crucial
Old Time Wedding Reel - 'Hamish The Carpenter'

Figure 9  Example of the Tablature System Used by Stan Chapman
to the whole process however is his insistence on the book being disposed of once the tune is learned:

I treat a music book ... like going to the library and looking up a reference book for knowledge. Once you get it, you get rid of it, put it away. (LD#22/ST#22)

Other teachers, such as Carl MacKenzie, would support this attitude, confirming that literary skills have never been, and are still not, a prerequisite for becoming a Cape Breton fiddler. Certainly printed sources have never served as guides in matters of style. Likewise, the written note has never been used to inform a performance (Winnie Chafe will encourage it in certain instances; however she is working to a different agenda than the typical Cape Breton fiddler, leaning heavily on literacy and aspiring to the sound of contemporary Scottish fiddle groups). Even in situations such as the mass fiddling finales at the annual concerts hosted by The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association, the large numbers of fiddlers perform from memory, in spite of the fact that the original dissemination and learning of select settings of tunes has usually involved recourse to literate sources.

The integration of orthodox and non-orthodox notation into the transmission process since the 1970s has resulted in a much greater percentage of fiddlers on the island having this facility. Nevertheless, of all those those who have acquired the skill, a smaller percentage choose to use it on a regular basis. In the 0-39 age group for instance, fiddlers such as Natalie MacMaster, Jackie Dunn, Wendy MacIsaac, John Morris Rankin and Dougie MacDonald only rarely learn tunes from a printed source. The ease with which they have attained this skill has allowed them to be flexible in their choice as to whether or not to use it. For others who may have had some difficulty in securing initial instruction in music literacy a greater value is placed on it. In the words of John Donald Cameron "once we learned to read ... that's the only way that I would want to learn a tune" (LD#37/ST#37).
Without doubt, the area of the tradition most affected by the introduction of literacy, via published collections, was the repertory, which immediately and continuously diversified and multiplied in size (See Sections 6.2 and 6.3). New tunes were introduced into the repertory; tunes from outside the Scottish tradition were played; newly composed tunes, both local and other were easily disseminated, with the added advantage of proper recognition being afforded the composers. During the '40s, '50s, and '60s fiddlers such as Winston Fitzgerald, Bill Lamey, and Dan R. MacDonald were praised on account of their vast and varied repertories, and producing uncommon tunes became a trend among them and the wider fiddling community. This activity certainly served to entice others to master the skill of reading music. Those who chose not to, however, were still able to benefit, picking up on some of these new tunes that were suddenly being played. Learning a new tune no longer had to be an immediate experience. John Donald Cameron tells of jotting down the names of particular tunes he heard and liked on the radio as they were announced; he would later consult the appropriate collections and learn the tunes at his leisure (LD#37/ST#37). Likewise a tune once learned now would never be forgotten, the printed sources serving as a system of mnemonics or an external memory which could be consulted again and again.

The introduction of musical literacy into the fiddling community created a distinction between 'ear' and 'note' players ie. those who learn aurally as opposed to those who learn from written sources. This division was particularly apparent from the 1940s to the 1970s, when literacy skills became more widespread. Still, every player does not necessarily read today. Examples of contemporary 'ear' players include Brenda Stubbert, Willie Kennedy, and Arthur Muise. Since so many of those who can read music today choose generally not to do so, those who do not read are not considered to be disadvantaged, or inferior in any way. In the 1940-'70 period however, although there was no direct controversy, there seemed to be a certain superiority attached to the role of 'note' players. Much of this no doubt was bound up with the Cape Breton
concept or discipline of playing correctly. This aspect of the tradition will be discussed at length in Chapter Eight. Suffice to say that printed sources offered a tangible yardstick against which levels of correctness could be measured; those following the music in these sources were by implication, and often in reality, more correct. Incidentally the whole issue of correctness is one which the older Cape Breton fiddling community feel is being disregarded by today's younger generation. Perhaps this links into the fact that they are not "digging into the collections" any more (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1).

6.2 Sources Past and Present

The increase in diversity of the Cape Breton repertory has occurred in tandem with an increase in accessibility of sources, both aural and literate, local and international. The rapid growth in quantity and range of sources began in the late 1920s, with some initial dabbling in published collections (a trend which escalated with dramatic effect from the 1940s) and with the emergence of both radio and commercial recordings. The outcome has been the evolution of a repertory which is no longer exclusively Highland or Gaelic. Indeed, the primary sources for the earlier generations of fiddlers - puirt-a-beul and the Highland bagpipe repertory - are rarely referred to directly. Several tunes introduced from these sources have been retained, but now the process is one of re-generation directly from fiddler to fiddler, often through the medium of recordings. Hence the original sources are redundant. While I have not been able to identify many instances of these sources being employed directly by today's younger generation of fiddlers (ie. 0-30 years), with some notable exceptions such as Kyle MacNeil, there is evidence that they had remained in vogue as valuable sources with certain players until quite recently. The style and repertory of Donald Angus Beaton (1912-1982) for instance, was shaped to a large extent by the playing of his relatives,
pipers from the Mabou Coal Mines area. Kyle MacNeil acknowledges puirt-a-beul, as practiced by his mother Jean MacNeil, as his initial source of tunes - "she would jig them to me" (LD#12/ST#12). In both cases, and in other similar instances since c1928, the pipe and mouth-music sources were no longer used in isolation, but were merely two possibilities in an increasingly diversified range of sources.

(a) Aural Sources

My brother ... he'd pick a tune up pretty fast. [He'd] get home from a dance maybe three o'clock in the morning, he'd go to bed, he'd think of the tune, get up and take the violin and he'd go play the tune. (Mary Morrison, LD#50/ST#50)

We used to go to the dances and we'd be listening to see if we could hear somebody playing a new tune, eh; somebody would come out with something ... all the next day we'd be trying to get it. (Mary Maggie Vernier, LD#27+28/ST#28)

The practice of learning tunes by ear is central to the process of oral transmission, and for the vast majority of Cape Breton fiddlers up until around the 1940s, was the sole conduit for learning tunes. Even with the emergence of 'note-players' around this period, the ear has maintained its important role, since note-reading skills merely accessed repertory, and had no influence on style. Until the 1920s, Highland fiddle tunes were retained in the collective Cape Breton memory from the 18th century; other tunes were heard through the Gaelic song and the piping traditions, and were transferred holistically (ie with aspects of style included) to the fiddle. From the late

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16 The idea of embracing style along with repertory learned orally has not been confined to this early period in Cape Breton. The changing style of the Cape Breton fiddler is due in large part to this type of holistic transmission which has become extended to include tunes of non-Cape Breton origin. The practice of using slurred bowing patterns and the ornament known as the roll in tunes learned from Irish musicians is a case in point. Consider too Natalie MacMaster playing the group of tunes 'Blackberry Blossom', 'The Red-Haired Lass', 'Paddy O'Brien's', and 'The Dawn'
1920s however, the range of opportunities for acquiring repertory from aural sources has increased dramatically. The emergence of radio, and the establishment of local stations such as CJFX (Antigonish) and CJCB (Sydney) had direct consequences on several aspects of the music tradition, one of which concerned the repertory. Suddenly a plethora of new material, initially local but increasingly from outside Cape Breton, was available via this medium. Likewise, the advent of commercial recordings had profound ramifications on the repertory of the Cape Breton fiddler, introducing again new material, but perhaps more importantly, making this available in a format that did not require immediate absorption, but rather could be returned to later. As well as facilitating a more homogeneous Cape Breton repertory, the channel of commercial recordings opened the door to other music traditions. Johnny Wilmot's mother for instance was one of a few individuals who availed of opportunities to have recordings sent from the States, via Cape Bretoners who had moved there for economic reasons. Irish music was easily accessed in this way:

she [Mrs. Wilmot] had them all [Michael Coleman and James Morrison 78s], she had the O'Learys Irish Minstrels, Dan Sullivan and his Irish Shamrock, the Hannifan Brothers ... and the Flanagan Brothers. (Tommy Basker, LD#33/ST#33)

Later, albums by The Bothy Band and The Chieftains helped shape the musical sound of The Barra MacNeils; Seán Maguire albums influenced Doug MacPhee's repertory. Particularly since the 1970s, Irish and other musics have increasingly infiltrated Cape Breton through the medium of commercial recordings. Availability through music stores remains quite limited, although the Halifax Folklore Centre and the music store appended to CJFX Radio in Antigonish have quite impressive stocks. Nevertheless, Irish, Shetland, American and other recorded fiddle musics are easily obtained

(4 on the Floor, Side B, Track 8). The style very strongly resembles that of Eileen Ivers playing the same group of tunes, on an unofficial recording of a live gig from The Turning Point Tavern, Philadelphia, in 1984, which was Natalie's source of the tunes.
through the travels of Cape Breton performers, but also through mail-order services such as that operated through Green Linnet records in the U.S. or locally, Silver Apple News, a subsidiary of Cranford Publications.

(b) Puirt-a-beul

The close association between the oral and the instrumental music traditions that existed in Gaelic Scotland at the time of the migration has continued in Cape Breton...violin and pipe tunes are frequently associated with funny or nonsensical rhymes, called puirt-a-beul, and these could be sung unaccompanied if musical instruments were not available. (Shaw 1977a)

Puirt-a-beul, or mouth music, is essentially a combination of Gaelic words of a "nonsensical, ludicrous, humorous or satirical" nature (Collinson 1966:94) usually with vocables or nonsense syllables. The genre is believed by some to have originated in the Scottish Highlands as late as the 18th century in direct reaction to the widespread religious opposition to and destruction of musical instruments, which reached its zenith in the 19th century (Ross 1957). Emmerson considers it to be of a much more ancient origin (Emmerson 1971:6). Puirt-a-beul (obviously connected to the word 'port' meaning dance tune) is essentially a verbalisation of instrumental dance music, or as Emmerson describes it, "dance music of the mouth" (Emmerson 1971:5), created in response to "the desire of instrumentalists to perpetuate their favourite tunes after the destruction or banning of instruments" (Ross 1957). As a source for transferring tunes to an instrument it has been compared with the pipers' canntaireachd (Campbell and Collinson 1969). Collinson believes:

17The term 'jigging' refers to a practice resembling puirt-a-beul, although generally consisting of nonsense syllables only.
the use of puirt-a-beul for dancing, though it is a genuine enough tradition ... never seems to have been used extensively for the dance, and the music of an instrument has always been preferred when it is available. (Collinson 1966:93)

This was indeed the case in Cape Breton. Mouth-music is known to have functioned for the dance, in the absence of an instrument. Puirt-a-beul however functioned more significantly as a source for repertory and as a stylistic guide. (See Chapter 9.2(c))

Several tunes are believed to have passed orally into the Cape Breton repertory through the medium of puirt-a-beul. Many of these have become staples of the standard repertory, although their continued re-generation happens from fiddler to fiddler, without reference to the original, vocal form. The lapse in 'correctness' in the rendition of such tunes, is believed by some to be the consequence of this indirect transmission process (See Chapter Eight). There is no evidence to indicate that new puirt-a-beul versions of tunes were constructed in Cape Breton, and so it seems likely that all the tunes derived from this source are of Highland Scottish origin. Examples of tunes from a puirt-a-beul source which are maintained in the current repertory of Cape Breton fiddlers have been compiled by Jackie Dunn in her paper entitled Tha Blas na Gaidhlig air a h-Uile Fidhleir (The Sound of Gaelic is in the Fiddler's Music). These include 25 slow-airs, 15 marches, 35 strathspeys, 28 reels, and 10 jigs (J. Dunn 1991:72-77). Among the most popular are tunes such as 'Tullochgorm', 'Christie Campbell', 'Calum Crubach', 'Bog an Lochan' (strathspeys), 'Muilean Dubh' and 'Caber Feidh' (Reels).

(c) The Highland Bagpipe Repertory

The Highland bagpipe arrived in Cape Breton alongside the fiddle, as part of the cultural resources of the settlers of the late 18th and 19th centuries (See 1.3). Like
the fiddle tradition, piping was essentially part of an oral tradition, and was practiced in a functional capacity, for the dance:

the dance went on vigorously ... the most impressive figure of all was the piper ... one of the pipers, a very tall, very dark, very shaggy man, sat straight up with a rigid neck, stiff figure, puffed out cheeks, and looked like the presiding genius of some awful heathen rite. (Farnham:1885)

Vestiges of this tradition, largely diminished through a pre-occupation with the later military-style piping, are to be found today with players such as Alex Currie for example, described by Hamish Moore as "one of the best dance pipers to have lived and played in Nova Scotia" (Moore 1994). Likewise, attempts to revive that same tradition have been implemented by younger pipers such as Jamie MacInnis, Paul MacNeil, Barry Shears of Nova Scotia, and Dr. Angus MacDonald and Hamish Moore of Glenuig and Perthshire respectively.

It is widely recognised that the old-style piping tradition has had a tremendous influence on the fiddle tradition of Cape Breton. This influence, covering both aspects of style and repertory, is particularly evident in certain players, the late Donald Angus Beaton of Mabou for instance. Such an influence is regarded as being synonymous with the older, pure Cape Breton sound, and indeed, none of today's younger generations of fiddlers consciously include piping traits in their styles. The influence of the pipes on the fiddle tradition will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.2(d). The influence of the pipes specifically on the fiddlers' repertory will be the focus of this section.

"Each district had its own piper, fiddler and bard. In many cases the musician would be accomplished on both the bagpipes and the violin" (Shears 1991:2). The fact that there existed a large number of musicians in Cape Breton who were proficient on both the fiddle and the pipes substantiates the claim that the style and repertory of the Highland bagpipe were highly influential on the fiddle tradition. Such bi-instrumental
musicians included Angus Campbell Beaton (1895-1971), Angus Ranald Beaton (1866-1933), Kenneth MacKenzie Baillie (1859-1925) and Malcolm Gillis (1856-1929). Others were James D. Gillis, Gordon MacQuarrie, and Neil R. MacIsaac. Today Francis MacDonald of Inverness and Gordon Cote are proficient both on fiddle and on pipes (after the military fashion). The sharing of personnel points to the inevitability of a cross-over in repertory. Gordon Cote for example is reputed to have some 500 marches in his repertory which he could play on both pipes and fiddie (See Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). In any case, there exists a large body of tunes which may be easily transferred from pipes to fiddle. These are easily recognisable within the fiddlers' repertory, being limited in range (a maximum of 9 notes is possible; many tunes use gapped scales such as the five-note pentatonic) and restricted in modes. These restrictions have occasionally been used as a framework for the creation of recent pipe-style fiddle tunes. See Jerry Holland Collection of Fiddle Tunes, Reels nos. 8/9/27/29/31.

Printed collections of pipe tunes were among of the earliest sources to arrive in Cape Breton. Today reference is still made to pipe collections - "a fiddler is just as liable to buy a pipe book as a fiddle book to learn tunes out of" (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). Interestingly, the majority of pipe music collections continues to be of Scottish origin. Appendix B (i) contains a sampling of some of the primary pipe...
collections employed by those fiddlers who have chosen to use literate sources to supplement their repertorys. It is important to remember though that, increasingly since the early decades of this century, consultation of published pipe collections by fiddlers happens without consultation of the style.

(d) Published Sources: Scottish Fiddle Collections

Both pipers and fiddlers arrived with the first immigrant ships bringing with them a great store of traditional tunes from the West Highlands, and whose scope can be inferred from the late 18th and early 19th century printed Scottish Collections. (Shaw 1977a)

Published collections of fiddle tunes are believed to have made their appearance in Cape Breton possibly towards the end of the last century, and positively by the 1920s. Such collections obviously had little initial impact, being scant in number, and beyond the scope of the majority of fiddlers in the essentially non-literate environment. As already discussed, a fetish for amassing printed collections of Scottish fiddle music began around the 1940s, initiated by individuals such as Dan R. MacDonald, Joe MacLean, Bill Lamey and Dan Joe MacInnis. The various opportunities for accessing such sources, ranging from direct contacts to mail contacts, both to Scotland and centres of Scottish settlement across North America, have already been mentioned (See Section 6.1 (a)). Scottish newspapers, like *The Oban Times*, and magazines provided another such opportunity (Joe MacNeil, LD#34/ST#34). The sudden availability of such sources had immediate and long-lasting ramifications on several aspects of the Cape Breton tradition, encouraging 'ear' players to acquire some reading skills, and promoting the rapid growth and diversification of the repertory. The concern with accumulating vast numbers of published collections continued intensely for certain fiddlers from the 1940s to the '60s, becoming, it seems, more moderate after that time. Nevertheless, there are still
some players who are noted for their interest in this particular aspect of the tradition, among them Dave MacIsaac and Dougie MacPhee (pianist). Today, as in the past, such individuals are particularly noted for their generosity in sharing their collections with the wider fiddling community.

The direct consequences affecting the Cape Breton fiddle tradition through the introduction and increasing availability of published collections of Scottish music will be examined in the next section. The purpose at this point is to investigate what exactly these sources were. A sample list of Scottish fiddle music collections, known to have been utilised Cape Breton up to, and including the present day, is found in Appendix B (ii). These date from as far back as the 18th century. There is no existing evidence that such collections made their way immediately to Cape Breton; based on existing evidence it seems that the majority arrived from the 1940s onwards. Certainly, all the literate fiddlers may not have had access to all of the collections listed. While the more avid collection gatherers would have been in possession of more unusual collections not given here, 'standard' collections such as *The Skye Collection*, popular among a wide number of fiddlers, did exist. The popularity of this collection in Cape Breton may be inferred from the fact that it was reprinted there in 1986 by Cranford publications.

(e) Published Sources: Non-Scottish Collections

Increased access to published collections from music traditions outside of Cape Breton have led to the infiltration of a wide variety of tunes into the repertory. Commercial recordings, and direct exposure to such traditions, have also been responsible for this trend. Scottish collections from the late 1700s to the present time have already been acknowledged. The concern at this point is that body of printed sources which have filtered into the tradition from outside the Cape Breton-Scotland
axis and which are certainly responsible, to some extent, for the continuing shift in style of the repertory. The origins of these sources, a sampling of which is presented in Appendix B (iii), vary from Ireland to Shetland to American to Canadian Old-Time. With the exception of the Irish music collections, believed to have appeared in Cape Breton at least as early as the first Scottish collections, arriving from the U.S. as opposed to directly from Ireland, the majority of the others have been found in Cape Breton only since around the 1950s onwards. Their continued acceptance within the tradition, has nevertheless been eclipsed by an increasing proliferation in the number of commercial recordings arriving from the same areas, since the 1970s. The combination of both these audio and visual sources however have provided a firm basis for a continued strength in the already noticeable eclectic inism in the repertory of the current Cape Breton fiddler. Interestingly, given the range of printed collections available in all these traditions, only those which concentrate on the fiddle have appeared in Cape Breton.

(f) Published Sources: Indigenous Tune Collections

The published collections of local Cape Breton compositions are listed in Appendix B (iv). While 1940 is widely recognised as the date of the inaugural publication of local tunes it seems that at least one tune had appeared in print before this time - "there was a bagpipe march. It was published by Bailey and Fergusson in Glasgow in the '20s" (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37). No evidence exists however to contradict the fact that the first complete collection dedicated to the tunes of Cape Breton fiddler-composers was indeed The Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies for the Violin issued in 1940 by Gordon MacQuarrie.

Composing tunes had long been an important part of the Cape Breton tradition, especially since the turn of the century (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#6/ST#6). It is of
course possible that this practice may have been widespread before this period, but that the tunes would have been assimilated into the oral tradition and the composer not credited as a result. One suggestion as to why composing is such a recognised and integral part of the tradition may be linked to the issue of correctness, which imposes certain restricting boundaries on the creative processes which may be introduced in the rendition of a tune (See Chapter Eight). Limits on this potential area of creativity being enforced, the Cape Breton fiddler has chosen to turn to the composition process as an alternative channel for tapping their creative resources. The practice of composing tunes is believed to be more widespread than ever today with the majority of fiddlers, and increasing numbers of piano players, 'making' tunes. Some composers are quite prolific, Dan R. MacDonald for example supposedly having 2,000 original tunes to his credit, while John MacDougall of Mabou is reputed to have 'made' approximately 8,000 to date.

The practice of publishing collections of indigenous compositions, begun in 1940 and becoming more widespread since the early '70s, has had some very positive effects on the repertory. Prior to the advent of such published sources, original tunes tended to be the sole domain of the composer, with the exception of a few absorbed aurally by other fiddlers. Otherwise, new tunes were passed from the composer directly to another fiddler, usually in a written format, and entered the repertory in this way. Dan R. MacDonald, for example, frequently delivered new tunes to any of a select number of fiddlers. As these tunes were regenerated eventually among the wider fiddling community, the composer's name - although interestingly, rarely the tune's name - was dropped, many new tunes inevitably coming to be referred to as traditional:

Dan R. had given a lot of his music out you know, to people along the way. And a lot of his tunes seemed to fall into the category of traditional. They were referred to as traditional. So I felt that they shouldn't be forgotten, they were Dan R.'s tunes. (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37)
This carelessness on the part of the average fiddler towards appropriate tune credits encouraged John Donald to publish two collections of Dan R.'s music - *The Heather Hill Collection* in 1986, and *The Trip to Windsor Collection* in 1994. While both of these were initiated by someone other than the composer, and published posthumously, other similar Cape Breton publications have been the result of the composers own ambition (although often involving an editor) and as yet have been mostly personal enterprises. Locally published collections are usually devoted to a single composer, with occasional tunes by others being included. This is somewhat exaggerated in *The Jerry Holland Collection of Fiddle Tunes* where 63 of the total number of 282 tunes are identified with other composers. Given that there are 81 'traditional' tunes included, this amounts to almost 46% of the total of newly composed tunes coming from others than Jerry. A point of interest here is that both this collection and that of Brenda Stubbert (1994) do not claim to contain only their own compositions but to offer a representation of their respective repertories. These however are still heavily weighted in favour of their own tunes. The 1940 *Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies* issued by Gordon MacQuarrie, is constructed in a somewhat similar fashion. This time, while not being identified specifically with a single composer, the collection contains several tunes by the editor, Gordon MacQuarrie, supplemented by those of several others, namely Dan R. MacDonald, Vincent MacLellan, Allan MacFarlane, J.D. Kennedy, Ronald MacLellan, Pipe Major A. MacDonald, Rory MacDonald, Sandy MacLean, Dan Hughie MacEachern, Ronald Beaton, Vincent MacGillivray, Peter MacPhee, and Kitchener MacDonald.

Following the publication of the 1940 collection no further local collections appeared for several years. Perhaps this was a consequence of the sudden and intense obsession with gathering Scottish and other music sources which marked that period; in light of this activity local sources of tunes would have been considered superfluous. Also it is possible that, given the dramatic increase in repertory potential, active composition of new tunes may have declined somewhat (although
certain individuals such as Dan R. MacDonald of course were in no way restrained as regards the quantity of their tune output). Likewise, the flourishing recording industry offered another, alternative source for the amassing of new tunes, without the need for new compositions. Since the idea of publishing local collections of tunes re-emerged in the 1970s, activity in this field has continued to expand (See Appendix B (iv)). Supplementing the practice has been the recent inclusion of new Cape Breton tunes in collections conceived elsewhere. Tunes by Margaret MacPhee, Brenda Stubbert, Elizabeth Beaton, Kinnon Beaton, Natalie MacMaster, Hector MacKenzie, Carl MacKenzie, and Donald Angus Beaton for instance are included in a generic collection entitled simply *Canadian Fiddle Music, Volume I*, edited by Dr. Ed Whitcomb (1990).

### 6.3 The Parameters of Repertory

Earl V. Spielman, in an outline methodology for the comparative study of instrumental traditions refers to "the type and choice of tune permitted or accepted within a tradition" as marking what he calls the "restrictiveness continuum", ie. the parameters of repertory (Spielman 1975:39). Based on my own interpretation of "type" and "choice" in this context, the repertory of the Cape Breton fiddler and the fluctuating parameters of this repertory over the period c1928-1995 will be assessed.

(a) **Type**

Tune types are essentially tunes of similar metre, tempo, structure, accent and function, which are grouped under established umbrella terms such as jig, reel, strathspey, march etc. Under these 'type' labels each individual tune normally has its
own title eg. 'The Trip to Windsor', 'Caber Feidh', 'Christy Campbell', 'The Way to Mull River'. Frequently within music traditions which are transmitted essentially through oral processes, the title and origin of the individual tune is overlooked, with identification being limited to tune type and its musical incipit. Within the Cape Breton tradition such negligence is not present to the same extent as it is in the case of Irish music for instance. The higher (although by no means comprehensive) level of awareness of tune titles and origins is no doubt related to a greater utilisation of printed sources which marked certain stages of Cape Breton's musical history (See Section 6.1). For those younger players who prefer to accumulate tunes through aural sources, there is a certain inherited onus on them to familiarise themselves with tune titles. In any case many of them are frequently involved in recording and producing albums - a procedure in which the knowledge of titles is mandatory - and performing in situations where verbal introductions to the tunes is appreciated. Likewise, they are often acquainted with the composers of the newer Cape Breton tunes in their repertories, and thus somewhat obliged to give their tunes proper credit. Uncommon tunes or sources are also liable to stick in the mind. All these factors combine in helping the current generations of Cape Breton fiddlers make a conscious effort to be aware of tune titles and origins.

The Cape Breton repertory is at its most conservative where tune-type is concerned. As was already outlined, the repertory of the Cape Breton fiddler up until the 1940s, was small and local. Certainly the repertory had not been completely static prior to this date. In the 1920s for instance, the waltz was introduced as a new and distinct tune type, specifically to accommodate the new and popular couple dance. Nevertheless, evidence points to the fact that until around the 1940s the number of different types of tunes involved in the Cape Breton fiddler's repertory was limited, and dictated largely by the requirements of the dance.
Dancing has probably been the most crucial factor in shaping the repertory over the years. According to Rhodes

the dances taken to Cape Breton Island by the Scottish settlers seem to have consisted only of 4-handed reels, 8-handed reels, and a group of solo dances, and a few of the old Gaelic dance-games. (Rhodes 1964:270)

Obviously certain tunes were required for each of these. The 4-handed reel for instance was

begun to a strathspey, and in the course of the dance the music changes to quick tempo. These quick tunes were normally reels, but Scotch measures and jigs were also played occasionally. (Rhodes 1964:276)

It may be presumed that such substitutes were rarely used. According to Joe Neil MacNeil jigs were not practiced in abundance:

I don't think they played, didn't go for playing jigs...they only went with the strathspey or reel...most of the dances, that's what they'd be dancing like...I think that was all, strathspey and reel. (LD#34/ST#34)

The Scotch measure as a tune-type is practically defunct today, being played very rarely as a distinct type.19 The popularity of the reel was, no doubt, a major factor in contributing to the ousting of the Scotch measure. Even its description as "a double hornpipe" (Emmerson 1971:122) did little to alter its non-functional status within the repertory, since the hornpipe at that time had not established itself as a distinct category. The fact that Scotch measures did exist in a number of printed collections such as that by MacGlashan, did not serve to halt the type from receding from the repertory, which would suggest perhaps a limited dependency on printed sources at that time.

19One recorded example is 'MacLachlan's Scotch Measure', found on the Highland Village Ceilidh album.
According to Rhodes, the 8-handed reel "is in quick tempo and is performed to either reels or Scotch measures" (Rhodes 1964:279). Regarding the dance-games, he does not comment on the relevant tune-types. He does however list several solo dances such as the 'Fling', the 'Swords', 'Seann Triubhas', 'Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Jacky Tar', 'Duke of Fife', and 'The Girl I Left Behind Me', each of which requires a distinct tune. Other solo dances which existed in Cape Breton were 'The Irish Washerwoman', 'Princess Royal', 'Tullochgorm', and 'Lord MacDonald'. Some of these were retained in Cape Breton until relatively recently. Archie Neil Chisholm for example recalls:

about twenty years ago, maybe a little more, I was at South West Margaree for a party ... but these Gillis girls were there [Helen and Effie] and Angus Allan Gillis was playing. And he played 'Lord MacDonald' for them and they did a ... they didn't complete the thing ... it was a very long dance like, and they went through five or six of the steps of 'Lord MacDonald' and it was beautiful. (LD#31/ST#31)

The majority of these dances are long defunct, and none whatsoever are found today. Although the dances themselves may have disappeared or waned in popularity, the tunes for the most part remained in the repertory. Whereas once they would have been categorised according to function, they have been re-categorised according to type. Hence 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' becomes a hornpipe or a reel, 'Lord MacDonald' is a reel, and 'Seann Triubhas' is a strathspey.

The decade 1890-1900 witnessed the introduction of square-sets to the island in the form of Quadrilles, Lancers, Saratoga Lancers, and the Caledonians. An extension of the repertory was necessary to facilitate the new craze. Jigs were the significant new addition - "the jigs just started when these ... quadrilles or lancers ... started" (Mike MacLean, LD#34/ST#34). Today the popular square-sets are danced to jigs and reels, the number of figures for each varying with locality. In Inverness County for instance two jigs and one reel figure is the norm, whereas in Sydney, the local square-set follows a pattern of one jig and two reel figures. Polkas made their appearance as
a dance tune-type around the turn of the century also, and were initially associated with the new square-sets. Their function in this capacity was short-lived and once they no longer served the dance were relegated to the periphery of the repertory.

The hornpipe as a tune-type has had varying degrees of popularity in Cape Breton over the years. The hornpipe is actually somewhat elusive in that, while it is certainly recognised as a distinct tune-type, it seems to have no corresponding distinct musical traits. Rather it is played in the style of either the reel or the clog. In both instances however, the label of hornpipe is generally retained. Hornpipe tunes were first introduced for specific solo dances such as 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', mentioned by Rhodes as having arrived with the early settlers, and later others such as 'The Fishers Hornpipe' and 'The Sailors Hornpipe.' Archie Neil Chisholm mentions:

there were a few hornpipes like 'The Fishers Hornpipe' and 'The Sailors Hornpipe but they were used chiefly because they had dances created to go with them ... that's when you'd use them. (LD #31/ST#31)

As these dances disappeared, the hornpipe, no longer functional, did not immediately establish itself as an independent tune type, and existing tunes were re-interpreted as the more common reel. Archie Neil Chisholm has suggested that the lack of recognition of this tune type was directly connected to its non-Gaelic origins - "...the older people ... they wanted this Scottish music and that only" (LD#31/ST#31). Winston Fitzgerald rationalised their peripheral existence in the repertory as reflecting a limited technical ability - "...the old Scottish people...hornpipes and clogs, well they couldn't play...you know clogs are tough music" (in Caplan, No. 46). The mention of clogs here requires some further explanation. There exists a certain amount of ambiguity in Cape Breton regarding the terminology of the clog and the hornpipe. This is no doubt related to the inclusion of hornpipes like 'The Bee's Wing' in collections such as Cole's *One Thousand Fiddle Tunes* with the suggestion that
they "can be played as clogs." This trait can also be seen in some of the current Cape Breton Collections such as Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes where the 'Newcastle Hornpipe' is labelled as a clog, and bears all the distinctive traits of that genre. The clog is believed to have first appeared in the repertory in the late 1920s/early 1930s via Ryan's Mammoth Collection, although it did not gain widespread recognition until the 1940s. Typically the clog is in split common time with a strongly accented first and third beat, and is played in a slow tempo with dotted rhythms and often much triplet movement. A thumbprint of the final bar of each part is three accented crotchets, what Ed Whicomb calls "pom pom pom" (Whitcomb 1990:16). In contrast, the hornpipe is in common time, with a similar accentual pattern to the reel ie each of the four beats in a bar is accented. Movement is in regular quavers and semi-quavers. In Cape Breton the hornpipe is referred to as "a lazy reel" (Doug MacPhee, LD#55/ST#55) and in fact is most commonly found in combination with reels, not preceding them as the clog does. This is indicative of a wider North American habit:

in the mid-19th century the Americans adopted it [the hornpipe], speeded it up ... and that is what most American hornpipes are now. (Whitcomb 1990:16)

Apparently in the past, the usual performance procedure was to play a group of clogs and speed up into hornpipes, perhaps following this with reels. In the last twenty years however any perception of a difference between a hornpipe and a reel has become blurred. Carl MacKenzie is one of the few Cape Breton fiddlers to believe that the clog and the hornpipe are essentially the same type of tune, and should be played in the slower, dotted fashion reserved usually for clogs alone.

A tune bearing these characteristics would be regarded as a hornpipe in the Irish tradition where the term clog has no place. This is evident from the 'Dundee Hornpipe' included in Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes (1992:33), which retains its label as hornpipe, although bearing all the trademarks of what would normally be regarded in Cape Breton as a clog.
The hornpipe and clog only came to the fore as distinct categories from around the 1940s, due largely to the playing of Angus Chisholm and Winston Fitzgerald. In their hands, hornpipes became acceptable as popular substitutions for reels, while the clog stabilised as a separate tune-type. Both genres became the focus for some local composition, for example by Dan R. MacDonald. While he did not compose many clogs his output of hornpipes is quite substantial, and, making the usual association between hornpipes and technical dexterity, reputedly "made them as hard as he could" (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37). While some hornpipes and clogs continue to be composed today, by Jerry Holland and Brenda Stubbert for example, the number of indigenous compositions in these genres remains fairly small in the overall output, and some relatively proficient composers have as yet not experimented with them. Nevertheless, the hornpipe has remained popular as a tune type that, for the most part, works well in reel style. Occasionally the melodic outline of a hornpipe will not lend itself to this reinterpretation process and in such an instance is played clog-style (eg. 'The High Level Hornpipe' in Bb). Where this occurs the tune-type may be referred to as either a clog or a hornpipe. Meanwhile the clog remains uni-operational and a firm favourite among players such as Carl MacKenzie and Dwayne Cote, who prefer to perform in contexts removed from the dance.

The introduction of the waltz has already been dated to the 1920s. Inextricably associated with the dance, this particular tune type has had mixed fortunes in Cape Breton, appearing in the repertory to a greater or lesser extent depending on the popularity of the dance at a given time. The popularity of the 1920s was repeated during the '40s through to the '60s, as Round and Square Dances - social occasions which allowed for both types of dancing - became the norm. Interestingly, the fiddler providing the music for the square-sets did not initially play for the waltzes too, suggesting that even as late as the 1940s there were not many such tunes known among the fiddling community. Music for these round dances was provided by
gramophone recordings, other instrumentalists such as saxophone players, or by a singer. It was again the maverick-type individuals who began to experiment with playing these tunes on the fiddle. Winston Fitzgerald in particular was noted for his repertory of waltzes, mostly derived from songs, and often Irish in origin. While he did on occasion perform these with a full band, The Radio Entertainers, he certainly became accustomed to performing them with his regular piano and guitar accompaniment. Since then, the waltz has very firmly established itself as part of the Cape Breton fiddlers repertory. Today, both Square Dances proper, and Round and Square Dances, are part of the Cape Breton social scene, the latter requiring the playing of waltzes. Occasionally music for the dancing of these will be provided by a singer such as Buddy MacDonald or Blanche Sophecleus, hired specifically to cover this aspect of the proceedings. It is more usual however for the fiddler and piano player to provide this music. In any case, the fiddlers have become more experienced at 'playing back-up' to the singers, and so will be involved in providing the round dance music in this capacity.

The slow air or pastoral air as a distinct tune-type had a very inconspicuous role in the Cape Breton repertory until as late as the 1970s. Certainly many of the airs which are being played today in this form were part of the inherited Cape Breton tradition, but were very definitely practiced as Gaelic songs. The earliest known recording of a slow air by a Cape Breton fiddler is that of "Little" Jack MacDonald playing 'Our Highland Queen' dating from the early 1940s. "Little" Jack (1887-1969) was in fact regarded as unique at the time for his interest in and ability to play this tune type. Interestingly he had lived away from Cape Breton for several years, during which time he became fascinated with the music of classical violinist Fritz Kreisler. No doubt this had some influence on his decision to concentrate on the more expressive slow air. His technical proficiency and consequently his mastery of the slow air, combined with the fact that he was respected generally among the fiddling community, certainly lent itself to the acceptance of the tune-type. A varied selection
of airs was gradually discovered, as fiddlers began to peruse the published collections which were becoming increasingly available from the 1940s. "Once in a while you'd hear Angus Chisholm play ... or Bill Lamey, a very small amount of something from maybe Skye Collection or Athol Collection that would have one slow air in it" (Winnie Chafe, LD#54/ST#54). This coincided with a marked change in musical style, initiated largely by Winston Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm, which favoured a very clear and precise tone, and challenged technical dexterity. This period also witnessed the division of players according to context preferences and/or abilities - essentially a divide between 'dance' players and 'listening' players. Although the functional role of the fiddler as a dance player was still regarded as the more important, the new 'listening' player gradually came to be recognised. In this capacity, the fiddler had much more scope for experimenting with tune types not directly related to the Cape Breton dance tradition, and in this environment the slow air began to increase in stature. Dan Hughie MacEachern was one player who developed an interest in this genre and composed several tunes accordingly. Visits of contemporary Scottish fiddlers such as Ron Gonella to Cape Breton around the early '70s did much to promote interest in the slow air as a tune-type. Since that time, the slow air has moved from being a tune associated with a small number of almost peripheral players, to being a tune type which the majority of fiddlers have in their repertories. Fiddler-composers such as Elmer Briand began to write this type of tune; Winnie Chafe has shown a particular penchant for this aspect of the repertory; Jean MacNeil of Sydney Mines organised violin lessons for her son Kyle with Professor Jim MacDonald specifically so that he would receive training that would enhance his slow air playing; the Big Pond Summer Festival offers a concert of Pastoral Airs on an annual basis at St. Mary's Church. Today the majority of fiddlers include the slow air in their repertoire, to greater or lesser effect. The normal practice is to play such a tune as the opening to a medley of dance tunes, although the most recent and as yet not widely practiced trend, is to play the slow air in isolation (Kyle MacNeil does this on some of the Barra MacNeils albums for example). Typically the slow air is accompanied by
the piano which may account for the very definite beat to which it is played. Dan Hughie MacEachern though has composed some original airs in which he indicates a flexibility in metre. One such example is 'The Valleys of Mabou' (1993:1) which moves from common time, through 3/4 and 2/4. "Little" Jack MacDonald employed a certain amount of rubato in his rendition of certain airs, as did Winston Fitzgerald, most notably when he performed unaccompanied (eg. 'Bovaglies Plaid' on *House Parties and '78s*), and as Lloyd MacDonald does today.

Proliferation of the number of tunes being played in Cape Breton coincides with the increase in access to sources, particularly published collections, and is thus associated with those fiddlers who had acquired music reading skills. Inevitably as well as expanding on the tune-types regarded as standards within the tradition, fiddlers began to experiment with other tune-types uncommon in Cape Breton. Fiddlers such as Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald and Dan R. MacDonald were renowned for the variety of tune-types exercised in their respective repertories and were recognised as being responsible for the sudden boom in repertory size and variety which marked the 1940s and '50s. As well as having the facility of reading musical notation, both of these individuals were exposed to outside influences, Dan R. through his travels which brought him to Scotland, Ontario, and Detroit, and Winston through his association with musicians from other backgrounds, for example in the Hank Snow Country Band. According to Fr. Francis Cameron,

> Winston would be playing, you know, reels, strathspeys, hornpipes. Then later on in the evening he'd get into playing 'Annie Laurie', you know, and ah, music like that. (LD#53/ST#53)

Polkas too were a common addition. Dan R., whose repertory equalled Winston's in diversity, is reputed to have contributed some 2,000 original compositions to the Cape Breton tradition. Interestingly he rarely "made" tunes of an uncommon type ie. outside of the accepted norm.
Since the revival of the 1970s, the repertory of the Cape Breton fiddler has certainly continued to expand in terms of size and has increasingly been experimented with in matters of choice. Nevertheless the area of tune-types has seemed to stabilise. Certainly the number of tune-types accepted as standard today is greater than in the period prior to 1940-'70. However it is definitely more restricted than during the '40-'70 period. There is a definite waning of interest in the introduction of different tune-types into the repertory. New compositions are always within the standard categories. Dougie MacDonald, for instance, makes mostly reels. With the exception of the late Tara-Lynn Tousenard, known for her eclectic musical experience, which embraced Western Art Music alongside traditional Cape Breton and 'Down-East' styles, none of the younger generation of fiddlers tend to include uncommon tune-types in their repertoires. Perhaps this can be perceived as a direct consequence of their move away from literate sources. In terms of tune-type then, the repertory has remained relatively stable since the 1940s, in that no substantial new tune-type category has been introduced since then. The prominence of certain types has varied over the years. For instance, the category which could be labelled broadly as Miscellaneous, has become less prominent and less varied. Its heyday coincided with the boom in published collections during the 1940s-'1960s. Likewise the slow strathspey has diminished in importance as the divide between 'dance' players and 'listening' players has become increasingly blurred:

there are few slow strathspeys played today; everything is in stepdance time ... the slow strathspey is now in combination with the stepdance - a lot of them play the two types in same timing. (Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16)

The March too is less common today, possibly a consequence of the waning influence of the pipes on the overall fiddle tradition.

The repertory of individual fiddlers today will generally embrace all the acceptable tune types. There are some exceptions to this - "you rarely hear Arthur [Muise] play
a slow air" (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). Likewise Buddy MacMaster comments on Robert Stubbert - "he's a good player, but maybe he doesn't play strathspeys so much" (LD#19/ST#19). The album of Johnny Wilmot's music, *Another Side of Cape Breton*, contains no strathspeys. Commonly a fiddler is commended for his playing of a particular tune-type. Winston Fitzgerald, for example, was respected for his playing of hornpipes and clogs, Kyle MacNeil for slow airs, Buddy MacMaster for jigs, and Theresa MacLellan for marches.

(b) Structuring the Repertory: Tune-Type Categories

The Cape Breton fiddler's repertory typically constitutes several tune-types. It has already been suggested that all the types suggested above as the staple components of the current repertory had been introduced by the 1940s, and that they have remained constant, albeit fluctuating in popularity at different periods. The most recent survey of the Cape Breton repertory, prior to the present work, was completed by Ian MacKinnon in 1989. Based on an analysis of commercial recordings over a 60-year period (1928-1988), he recognised 13 distinct tune-types within the repertory - reel, strathspey, jig, hornpipe, march, air/lament, clog, waltz, polka, slow strathspey, schottische, breakdown, and slow march,21 and acknowledges a further body of tunes as "unidentified" (I. MacKinnon 1989:33). The discrepancy between MacKinnon's classification of the repertory and that illustrated in Figure 10 involves those tunes which in Figure 10 come under the label of Miscellaneous. By his own admission, MacKinnon recognises these as being peripheral to the repertory.

21 Unlike the dance strathspey and slow strathspey where a difference in function is implied, no functional discrepancy exists between the slow march and the march proper as they are practiced by the Cape Breton fiddler. The difference concerns the realm of performance practice and hence does not merit their division into two distinct categories.
Nevertheless, his purpose is not to assess the relative importance of each tune-type in the repertory, but simply to specify the various types recorded.

Tune-type categories are essentially conceptual notions imposed upon tune-types. The criteria for establishing these categories can be based on function (eg. is it for dance or listening purposes), origin (eg. Irish jig, Shetland reel), or instrumental source (eg. pipe march). For the purpose of this work, the Cape Breton repertory is best categorised according to type frequency. Theoretically, it could be categorised according to function. However type frequency provides a more practical basis, since many tunes fulfill the dual functions of dance and listening music. Hence a single tune may be eligible for the listening category and for the dance category. Tune-type categories have therefore been established on the basis of the frequency of tune-types in the repertory, irrespective of function. Tune function does influence the hierarchical arrangement of the categories however, with those categories which are bi-functional (for example the dance strathspey and reel) assuming a greater significance in the overall repertory than those whose function is more restricted.

Ambiguity may arise regarding terminology, since the tune-type category label is usually synonymous with that of the predominant tune-type within that category. Hence the tune-type dance strathspey will be found under the category labelled dance strathspey, reels will be found in the reel category etc. Obviously this lack of distinction between type and category terminology is not consistent, or the need for identifying categories would be redundant. The category normally labelled Miscellaneous, for instance, embraces a variety of tune-types which, for multiple reasons, concerning mainly function and quantity, exist on the periphery of the repertory. A polka for instance, is a definite tune type with its own metre, tempo, structure, emphasis and function. In the Cape Breton repertory it is not considered sufficiently significant for the creation of a tune-type category, and so is relegated to the Miscellaneous category. This does not deny its existence as a tune-type but rather
its status within the repertory. The other tune-types which are treated in a similar
fashion include the schottische, breakdown, quickstep, two-step, slip-jig, Shetland
reel, fling, song, and barndance. Their categorisation under the single label of
Miscellaneous points to their relative insignificance in the overall repertory.
Significantly, none of these in their original forms, are functional for the dance as it
exists in Cape Breton.

The more directions involved in the categorisation of a repertory, the more
fragmented that repertory becomes. Metre and rhythm become common
denominators spanning several categories. Since the notion of category is conceptual
in essence, it follows that it is dispensable, either by personal choice or by necessity
ie. when a category becomes non-functional. Tunes from a defunct category may be
assimilated into another category of similar metric or rhythmic disposition.

As was already discussed, the process of categorising tunes within the Cape Breton
repertory for the purpose of the present work, is based on type frequency. This has
led to the identification of 10 distinct categories.\textsuperscript{22} Any tune within these categories
however may require re-categorisation if subjected to a process of metamorphosis.
This has already been alluded to with regard to the bi-functionality of the hornpipe as
a reel or as a clog. Figure 11 shows the complete list of tune-types existing in the
Cape Breton repertory, as they have been re-categorised according to the 10 primary
type categories.

\textsuperscript{22}The hornpipe has been included here as a distinct tune-type category, although, as
already discussed, it is generally combined with either reels or clogs in performance
practice. The frequency of the type in the repertory, plus the retention of the hornpipe
label, whether the tune is interpreted in reel or in clog style, merits its identification
here as a tune-type category.
Dance Strathspey
Reel
Jig
March
Slow Strathspey
Slow/Pastoral Air
Hornpipe
Clog
Waltz
Miscellaneous

Figure 10  Tune-Types in the Repertory of the Cape Breton Fiddler, 1995
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tune-type Category</th>
<th>Metre</th>
<th>Tune-Types Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance strathspey</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Dance strathspey / schottische</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reel</td>
<td>Split C</td>
<td>Reel / hornpipe, polka, Shetland reel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jig</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>Jig / 6/8 march, 6/8 quickstep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2/4 or 4/4</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow strathspey</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Slow strathspey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow air</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Slow air / slow strathspey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornpipe</td>
<td>Split C</td>
<td>Hornpipe / barndance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clog</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Clog / hornpipe, schottische</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltz</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>Waltz / song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Polka, schottische, breakdown, quickstep, 2-step, slip-jig, Shetland reel, fling, song, barndance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11  Re-Categorisation of Tune-Types within the Cape Breton Repertory
(c) Re-Categorising Tune-Types

In the printed collections which provide a rich resource for the Cape Breton fiddler, the repertory is generally sub-divided into a wider array of categories than those recognised in Cape Breton. *The Harp and Claymore Collection* for instance, includes Pastoral Melodies and Heroic Airs, Pipe Marches, Strathspeys, Reels, Hornpipes, Irish Reels and Hornpipes, Pibrochs and Laments, Melodies and Songs; *The Skye Collection* presents Strathspeys, Reels, Solos, Country Dances, Hornpipes, and Jigs; *The Kerrs Collection of Merry Melodies (Books 1-4)* collectively contain Scotch Reels and Strathspeys, Irish Reels and Jigs, Irish Airs, Scotch Jigs, Highland Schottische, Country Dances, Flirtations, Hornpipes and Clogdances, Highland Airs and Quicksteps, Waltzes, Polkas, Negro Sandjigs and Plantation Dances, Guaracha Waltzes, Marches, and Operatic Melodies. A single tune may appear in several printed collections inserted in a different category. Ample instances of this occur. For example 'The Hills of Glenorchy' is categorised as a march in *The Logan Collection* and as a quickstep in *Kerrs Caledonian Collection*. 'The Inverness Gathering' appears as a quickstep in *The Caledonian Collection* and as a march in *The Harp and Claymore*. 'The East Neuk of Fife' is classed as a Country Dance in several collections including *Hunters* and *Kerrs* whereas it comes under the category of Strathspey in *The Harp and Claymore*. 'Mrs Hamilton of Pencaitland' is a slow air in *The Hunter Collection* and a strathspey in *The Gow Collection*. Further ambiguity arises when a single name is bestowed on different and unrelated tunes. Compare for instance 'Blue Bonnets Over the Border' in *The Skye Collection* and in *The Gow Collection of Scottish Dance Music*. Also, tunes referring to a particular type in their titles may be actually belong to a different category. For example 'The Marquis of Huntley's Highland Fling' and 'The Lonach Highland Fling' are both found as strathspeys.
The metamorphosis process involves transformation in any or all of the areas of metre, rhythm, and tempo. These creative methods will be referred to henceforth as trans-metre, trans-rhythm, and trans-tempo. Often the processes do not occur in isolation. Rather, the conscious initiation of one process may indirectly activate one or both of the others. Application of any or all of these processes will involve recategorisation, which may occur directly (eg when a hornpipe is played as a reel), or indirectly (eg when a change of tune-type is also implemented). In such a case, recategorisation is a prerequisite.

The process of metamorphosis is by no means peculiar to the Cape Breton tradition. It may be perceived as an extension of the concept of tune family, as defined by Bayard:

>a group of melodies showing basic inter-relations by means of constant melodic correspondence, and presumably owing their mutual likeness to descent from a single air that has assumed multiple forms through processes of variation, imitation and assimilation. (Bayard 1950:33)

Emmerson acknowledges:

>the relationships between the various categories of dance-tunes lead to the easy conversion of tunes from one rhythm to another and many Scots and Irish tunes can be discovered in different guises because of this. (Emmerson 1971:118)

Similar processes have been operational within the related fiddle traditions of the Shetland Islands and County Donegal. The fundamental reasoning behind the instigation of such a metamorphosis process is common to all three traditions. Its primary function is the adaptation of tunes to fit the existing repertory, or more specifically, the local dance. It may occur as a matter of necessity (ie. if a sufficient

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23 In each case the infarhythmic structure is also affected. This will not be discussed here however, since the primary concern is simply the effect of these transformations on the structure of the repertory.
number of suitable tunes did not exist), or of choice. For a Cape Breton fiddler playing consistently for dances for instance, where jigs, reels, and the occasional strathspey or waltz are the only requirements, the only opportunity for playing tunes such as hornpipes arises when they have been adapted or re-categorised as reels. This indicates a basic conservative attitude within the tradition and a reluctance to establish 'foreign' tune-types, although in each case this has been the ultimate outcome. Strathspeys, for example, are now played and even composed by Shetland fiddlers. According to Tom Anderson however

when the strathspey came in nobody knew anything about it in the country districts - it was a strange type of rhythm. But the gramophones were invariably playing at a higher speed [than the original performance], and it became a reel and they adapted it to their own dances. (Alburger1983:197)

Evidence of the process in operation in Co. Donegal is attested to by fiddler Francie Mooney - "they slowed down the reels to suit the highlands...and jizzed up the highlands to the reels" (Nic Suibhne:1987).

Exercising the tools of metamorphosis - trans-metre, trans-rhythm and trans-tempo - has, to all intents and purposes, always been a conscious undertaking in the Cape Breton tradition. For the most part it involves tunes which, in the printed collections, appear in categories which are not recognised within the Cape Breton tradition, generally since they do not correspond with local dance requirements. To a lesser extent it involves tunes which originally belonged to a category acceptable within the tradition, the metamorphosis processes being introduced in such cases through matters of choice.
(i) Trans-Metre

In the process of metamorphosis this is the least practiced of the creative methods - understandable since it is the most radical. Trans-metre involves change in the actual metre or time-signature of a tune. This pre-supposes a change of rhythm (trans-rhythm) and of tempo (trans-tempo). It results directly in a change of tune-type, and indirectly in a change of type-category (re-categorisation). Joe Neil MacNeil acknowledges the trans-metre method as it operates within the Cape Breton tradition:

> take for instance 'The Hundred Pipers'. Play that as a march. Oh yeah, they play it fast enough and, ah, they dance to it, they play it for a 6/8 jig for the square-sets [trans-tempo]. But then "Little" Jack [MacDonald] plays it as a 3/4, as a waltz. (LD#34/ST#34)

Other instances of the trans-metre process include the re-interpretation of a hornpipe as a clog, necessitating a shift from split common time to common time.

(ii) Trans-Rhythm

The methods of trans-metre and trans-rhythm compare in that both result in the evolution of one tune-type from another, thus indirectly necessitating re-categorisation. Trans-rhythm, as a methodology for the implementation of the metamorphosis process, entails alterations in the rhythmic character of a tune. Usually the metre is changed, and some melodic transformation is also common. Nevertheless, a certain amount of melodic similarity must be retained in order to substantiate the claim that one tune-type emerged from the other through a consciously applied process of metamorphosis. The Set Accented Tone theory postulated by Micheál Ó Súilleabháin may be introduced at this point in co-ordination with a number of case studies, to highlight the fact that tune identity may be retained throughout trans-rhythmic modification, even allowing for some melodic diversification.
In the Cape Breton fiddler’s repertory trans-rhythmic modification is applied to hornpipes as they are re-interpreted as clogs. It is also frequently found in connection with strathspeys and reels, with no concrete evidence existing regarding their generation order. For the purpose of the following case studies the reel has been chosen as the parent tune, this admittedly being a somewhat tenuous decision, based solely on the primacy in historical terms of the reel over the strathspey. Perhaps this is justifiable to some extent, since the strathspeys and reels subjected to trans-rhythmicism which are found in the Cape Breton repertory are never indigenous tunes, but are generally Scottish in origin. Thus there is a greater likelihood that the reel was conceived of first. It is worth noting also that tunes subjected to such transformation exist in the Cape Breton repertory in both rhythmic guises both as a reel and as a strathspey. As is highlighted by the two case studies used it is normal to retain the same title for both types.

Set-Accented tones have been defined as "individual tones which occur at important accentuated points. It is the occurrence, or deliberate non-occurrence, of these tones which appears to provide the necessary point of reference for the performer" (Ó Súilleabháin 1990:123). Illustrations 1(a) and 1(b) are transcriptions of the reel and strathspey 'King George IV' as played by Howie MacDonald. In Illustration 1(c) both have been reduced to their set-accented tones, these occurring on the first and third beats of each bar. It is important to note here that where the rhythm occurs in a strathspey, it is the second and longer note which is regarded as the accented tone, the initial semi-quaver bearing the status of a crushed note. The analogy between the strathspey and reel is well exemplified by the application of this theory (Compare with Illustration 1(d) where in the delineation of melodic contour - a theory dismissed as "elusive" by Adams (1976) - these same tunes seem vaguely related). With the exception of the returning phrases i.e. the last bar of each 8-bar turn, the first beat in every bar is identical. None of the third-beat tones correspond however. In the case of 'Miss Lyle' Strathspey and Reel (Illustration 2(a), 2(b) and
(c) a greater number of the third-beat tones correspond. Corresponding first beats however are not consistent. The high level of set-accented tones common to the two strathspey-reel pairs examined justifies, to some extent, the fact that one did indeed evolve from the other through the combined forces of trans-rhythm and melodic variation, and that therefore their identical titles, plus the fact that they are frequently played together, is not merely coincidental.

(iii) Trans-Tempo

Of all the methods required in the process of metamorphosis, the transformation of tempo is the one most widely applied to the Cape Breton repertory. Trans-tempo involves simply altering the tempo of a tune. While this subsequently may affect the emphasis or accent it does not necessarily impinge upon metre or rhythmic character (eg. when a slow strathspey becomes a dance-strathspey) and therefore may not instigate a change of tune-type. Rather, it is confined to the concept of re-categorisation. At other times the metre and rhythm are affected. This process of trans-metricism is alluded to on several occasions in various printed sources. Tunes such as 'The Miller O'Hirn' and 'The Laird O'Drumblair' have been specified as either a schottische or a strathspey. This practice has been extended in Cape Breton where any tune specified as a schottische is interpreted as a strathspey. Other tunes such as 'Duntroon' may be played as a march or as a reel. In The Scottish Violinist 'The Devil in the Kitchen' is classed as either a fling or a strathspey, while according to The Harp and Claymore Collection 'The Athole Highlanders Farewell to Loch Katrine' may be interpreted as a quickstep or as a march.
'King George IV Strathspey'

Illustration 1(a)

'King George IV Reel'

Illustration 1(b)

Illustration 1 (a) and 1 (b)
Illustration 1(c) : Set-Accented Tones

\[ \text{Reel} \]
\[ \text{Strathspey} \]

\[ \downarrow = \text{corresponding set-accented tones} \]

Illustration 1(d) : Melodic Contour

Illustration 1 (c) and 1 (d)
'Miss Lyall Strathspey'

Illustration 2(a)

'Miss Lyall Reel'

Illustration 2(b)

Illustration 2 (a) and 2 (b)
Illustration 2(c): Set-Accented Tones

Reel

Strathspey

\[\downarrow\text{ corresponding set-accented tones}\]

Illustration 2(d): Melodic Contour

Reel

Strathspey

Illustration 2 (c) and 2 (d)
As already discussed, tunes which appear in printed Scottish Collections under categories which are foreign to Cape Breton, are assimilated into one of the locally recognised categories. Thus 'The East Neuk of Fife' - a country dance in Kerr's Caledonian Collection - comes under the strathspey category in Cape Breton, 'Haste to the Wedding' - a country dance in Harding's Collection - is under jigs, and so on.

Within the Cape Breton tradition, tunes which are categorised as miscellaneous may occasionally be played as tune-types in their own right, either in isolation (eg. Winston Fitzgerald playing a medley of polkas), or preceding a more standard medley arrangement (eg. Dan R. MacDonald playing 'King of the Fairies', an Irish barndance, before a reel: Doug MacPhee playing a quickstep in duple-time before a strathspey: Scumalash following slip-jigs, 'Give Me a Drink of Water' and 'My Mind Will Not Be Easy', with two 6/8 jigs; and Winston Fitzgerald opening a medley of strathspeys and reels with a fling, 'Stirling Castle'). It is more common however for such tunes to cross the tenuous boundaries into a more recognised category, simply through a transformation of tempo. This allows marches and quicksteps in 6/8 to be assimilated into the jig category (eg. 'Lord Dreghorn's Quickstep' is played by Carl MacKenzie in a jig medley). Similar opportunities are possible between other tune-types. Mike MacDougall includes 'James Gannon's Barndance' in a hornpipe medley; Joe Cormier follows a hornpipe with a polka in a similar tempo. According to Paul Cranford "there are a lot of examples of slow airs and songs picked by dance musicians, sped up and re-arranged to suit the dancers" (in Caplan, No. 47:66). One example of this involves the air 'Bonnie Strathmore' which frequently appears as a jig.

In Cape Breton, the transformation of tempo is particularly significant in the context of hornpipes being played alongside reels, a practice brought to the fore, if indeed not instigated by the playing of Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald. According to Estwood Davidson, Winston's long-time accompanist:
Winston would use hornpipes in a set in the same way that others would often use a reel. For square-dancing he'd sometimes mix them in medleys with reels. (Caplan, No.39)

This affiliation of hornpipes with reels is not peculiar to the Cape Breton tradition. According to Peter Cooke a similar attitude existed in Shetland:

many of these pieces [hornpipes] have been played...for dancing the Shetland reel (eg. Andrew Poleson's playing of 'The Fisher's Hornpipe'). (Cooke1986:93).

In Ireland too, tunes such as 'The Scholar', classed by O'Neill as hornpipes, are altered in tempo and played as reels.

The ease with which a hornpipe may be re-categorised as a reel is facilitated by the similarities in style of hornpipes and reels in Cape Breton. Both are in split common time and move generally in flowing quavers. It has already been mentioned that the hornpipe is regarded as simply a more relaxed version of the reel; in fact increasingly no difference is perceived - "there's no difference between the reel and the hornpipe" (Doug MacPhee, LD#55/ST#55). To prove this point consider Jerry Holland's composition 'Garfield Vale', originally a hornpipe, but recorded by Jerry himself as a reel. Conversely, he composed 'Aubey Foley' as a reel, yet recorded it as a hornpipe. It is unusual however for a single tune to vacillate between categories as such. The norm is to accept a tune either as a hornpipe in its own right ie. played in a slower tempo and dotted rhythms which in Cape Breton terms equal clog-style, or as a hornpipe to be played as a reel. Decision as to which direction a tune should follow is governed by strictly musical characteristics. For a hornpipe to satisfy the requirements of a reel, the melody will consist of steady runs of quavers and contain no technical challenges that would interfere with the flow of the reel. Consequently such tunes as 'The Banks' and 'The Newcastle' remain as hornpipes, while 'The
Fishers Hornpipe', 'The Rights of Man' and 'The Saratoga' are popular conversions. Interestingly, I have been unable to identify any examples of the process in reverse, i.e. of reels becoming hornpipes. This is consistent with the tendency in re-categorisation to transfer tunes in a single direction, this being from non-functional to functional.

Within the context of re-categorisation, a point to note is the classification of tunes. Two strands of classification exist, the first, whereby tunes are referred to by their type, irrespective of category (most consistent where the hornpipe is concerned), and the second, where the tunes are classified by their new category. No standard seems to exist in this regard. A single player might use both systems of classification for different tunes. Natalie MacMaster for example acknowledges 'The Saratoga' as a hornpipe being played as a reel. She also classifies 'Garfield Vale' as a reel although this was composed by Jerry Holland as a hornpipe. I believe that the classification used is related to the source of learning the tune, whether aural or literate. Where a literate source is utilised, the player will be aware of the original categorisation of the tune and has the option of acknowledging or ignoring this. When a tune is learned from an aural source, the learner has no way of knowing if the tune has been subjected to re-categorisation and has actually evolved into another type. This was the case with Natalie learning 'Garfield Vale'. Although this exists in printed form as a hornpipe, she learned it from an aural source where it was played in a reel medley. This is one instance of how a move away from literacy is affecting the present Cape Breton tradition.

(d) Choice

The greatest changes within the Cape Breton repertory have been implemented through an increasing flexibility in matters of choice. While Cape Breton has shown
itself to be relatively conservative in the area of tune-types, greater freedom is exercised where choice is concerned. The result has been an appreciable change in the style of the repertory, albeit within the limits pre-determined by tune-type. Extension of the parameters of choice, resulting in an increasingly diverse repertory, have occurred in tandem with extensions within Cape Breton society itself. In both social and musical fields the underlying process involves a move away from Gaelic roots to a more recognisably eclectic approach, made possible as Cape Breton became increasingly exposed to other cultures and musical traditions. As Cape Breton musicians become more and more familiar with other musics their choice selection expands. This is indulged in all the more given their restrictions in matters concerning tune-type. Expansion in matters of choice began with the appearance of radio in the late 1920s and later the widespread availability of commercial recordings, continued through the avid assembling of published collections from increasingly diverse sources, and is very much in evidence today through the eclectic interests of the younger fiddlers. Prior to the 1920s however, the repertory was essentially local and of a clearly defined Highland and Gaelic provenance. Issues of choice were limited; tunes were learned almost exclusively through an oral transmission process; these tunes were either fiddle tunes which originated in the Scottish Highlands or tunes adapted from puirt-a-beul or Highland bagpipe sources. Local Cape Breton tunes tended to be the sole domain of the individual composer.

Accessibility of sources, both oral and literate, has resulted in the repertory becoming much more diverse. The components of choice have become increasingly numbered and varied, ranging from tune source (oral, literate etc.), origin (indigenous or external) and date (old or new), through to more disparate musical criteria, inevitably becoming more technically demanding. Old tunes and newly composed tunes co-exist; Scottish tunes sit alongside Cape Breton, Irish, Shetland, and American tunes etc. The practice of mixing tunes from different backgrounds is believed by some to be one of the factors behind the current compromising of the Cape Breton sound.
However this is not a practice which emerged with the youngest generation of today's fiddlers. Johnny Wilmot for instance favoured the inclusion of Scottish and Irish tunes within a single medley - "Johnny would play a Scottish strathspey and an Irish reel. That's the way he always wanted it" (Tommy Basker, LD#33/ST#33). Interestingly all the fiddlers who choose to integrate tunes of different provenance in this fashion are conscious of their decision to do so. Natalie MacMaster enjoys the process - "I get a great charge out of it. For me it gives the music a little extra excitement" (LD#15/ST#15). Generally the combining of tunes is not accompanied by corresponding combinations of style, although concessions such as adding rolls in Irish tunes are frequently made. Rather, the 'foreign' tunes are assimilated into the individual style of the player. Mick Moloney refers to this with regard to reciprocal musical interchange between Natalie MacMaster and Irish musicians Eileen Ivers and Seamus Egan:

Acculturation takes place on the level of repertory not style. Some stylistic features may be consciously introduced into the performance of certain borrowed tunes but the basic style of the musician will not be affected. This represents non-structural assimilation. The process of change occurs at the level of repertory and the process of continuity operates at the level of style. (Moloney 1992:562)

The incorporation of old and new tunes into a single medley again does not sit easily with those who are concerned about the current state of the Cape Breton tradition. Certainly there exists quite a discrepancy between the style of the older modal tunes with their narrow ranges and gapped scales, and many of the newly composed tunes (from Cape Breton and elsewhere) which constitute the repertory. The arrangement of these into medleys will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. While some fiddlers such as Wendy MacIsaac, Dave MacIsaac and John Morris Rankin actively combine older and newer tunes, many choose to focus primarily on one or the other. Willie Kennedy and Kenneth Joseph MacDonald for instance
don't play the popular tunes ... [they] play the good old tunes all the time ... [they] almost don't want to learn those newer tunes. (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41)

Dave Maclsaac refers likewise to the older tunes he learned from his father, which he in turn would have learned in the 1920s:

these tunes were kind of forgotten over the years by different players ... I thought everybody played these tunes. But as it turns out everybody didn't. (LD#7/ST#7)

In most cases however, the choice favours newer compositions above the old. This has created another cause for concern, namely that the older traditional repertory is not being played and will, inevitably, be forgotten.

The practice of having a body of tunes which are central to the overall repertory - the so-called 'standards' - is another aspect of the tradition governed by factors of choice. In this case individual choice is consolidated by the wider community ie. a tune which was the choice of a single individual (through selection or composition) is taken up by the wider community. Certain tunes are therefore recognised at various times as being popular among the majority of practitioners within the tradition. Today for example, older traditional tunes such as 'Miss Lyall', 'King George IV', and 'The Devil in the Kitchen' would fall into the category of 'standard' tunes, as would newer compositions such as John Morris Rankin's 'Jack Daniel's Reel' or Jerry Holland's 'Stan Chapman's Jig'. Choice, at the community level, as at the individual level, remains flexible, and 'standard' tunes are constantly in a state of flux:

It goes in circles, in cycles ... when a tune wears out they stop playing it, and then somebody starts playing it again. Then it comes back in and they go through it again. (Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12)
Tune composition is a prominent part of the Cape Breton fiddlers activities, and embraces several aspects of the issue of choice. Since the level of improvisation accepted within the tradition is minimal (See Chapter Eight), the creative energies of the Cape Breton fiddler are channeled into the area of new tune composition. The majority of fiddlers (with some notable exceptions such as Buddy MacMaster) 'make' some tunes. Some of the more prolific composers include Dan R. macDonald, Dan Hughie MacEachern, Jerry Holland, Dougie MacDonald, and Brenda Stubbert. This is certainly an aspect of the tradition which is becoming more widespread. Dougie MacDonald claims that he would sooner 'make' a new tune than learn an old one (LD32/ST#32). Since 1940 and the publication of the first collection of indigenous fiddle tunes, *The Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies for the Violin*, original compositions have been shared among the fiddling community, whereas prior to this such tunes would have remained exclusively the domain of the composer, until picked up by ear by another player. Certainly the original composer will feature his/her new tunes in their own repertory. Other fiddlers however actively choose whether or not they wish to include a certain composers tunes in their own repertoires.

When a new tune is being created, the composer has a wide choice in terms of the musical features he wishes to employ. These have become increasingly diverse, and have often been inspired by tunes incorporated into the repertory from traditions outside Cape Breton. Tunes have become more complex - Dan Hughie MacEachern's tunes for example have been described as being "twisty as a bad road" (Dan MacDonald, LD#2/ST#2); the melodic range has expanded, with all of the first position notes available being employed. This compares with the earlier tunes which, influenced by the Highland bagpipe were confined to a nine-note scale. Vestiges of this may still be seen in occasional compositions by Jerry Holland for instance. It is certainly more in evidence in the compositions of the late Donald Angus Beaton, the majority of which are narrow in range, rarely employing the G string, and never moving out of the first position, and also in marches by Dan Hughie MacEachern.
Use of the higher positions, which came into vogue in Cape Breton largely through the playing of Winston Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm was regarded as a technical accomplishment. This ability has certainly become more widespread and has been incorporated into several local compositions, such as certain hornpipes by Dan R. MacDonald. With tunes composed since the 1940s onwards, it is noticeable that the emphasis has not necessarily been on rhythm to the detriment of technical skill; this coincides with the division of fiddlers into dance or listening players and the subsequent allowance for non-functional ie non-dance tunes in the repertory. The widening of the function of fiddle music in Cape Breton from being purely dance oriented to becoming recognised as an art form in its own right has certainly been a prime factor in expanding the area of choice. Besides its obvious ramifications on tune-type it has allowed the fiddler to move away from a sole rhythmic concern and experiment with technical challenges such as position work and unusual keys, subsequently expanding the scope of choice. Similarly, a move away from the Gaelic language has fostered some degree of change in the accentual patterns of newer tunes. An increased harmonic awareness has also been a factor leading to the change in style of the repertory. Composers such as Dougie MacDonald frequently construct tunes according to harmonic progressions rather than from a melodic fragment. Tunes such as 'Donna Warner's Scissors' show a definite move away from the older, more regular chordal patterns. The decrease in influence of the pipes on the music along with the harmonic awareness that has been increasingly important as the piano accompaniment became progressively to the fore, have facilitated an expansion in choice of key.24 There has been a very definite shift away from modality into more definitively major and minor tonal areas, with tunes generally ending firmly on the tonic note. Certainly there are some recent tunes wich fall into the modal category such as Jerry Holland's 'Mutts Favourite' (1992:12) which is in the doh mode, and Otis Thomas' 'The Old Boar' in the soh mode (Holland 1992:45). The majority of

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24Cape Breton fiddlers refer to tunes being 'on' a key, rather than 'in' a key.
tunes by both composers however are either in the major or minor modes, a tendency which was already obvious as early as the 1940 collection. Gapped scales, a prominent feature of the old Scottish tunes which came to Cape Breton, are used only occasionally in new compositions. Likewise, the double tonic, a recognisable thumbprint of the older repertory is only found occasionally in today's compositions, mostly in jigs (Examples are to be found among the jigs composed by Dan R. MacDonald and Dan Hughie MacEachern). Occasionally a tune will move to a related key for the second part of the tune. Keys that once would not have been attempted on the fiddle such as Bb and F# minor are a relatively common choice now. While the style of newly composed tunes has indisputedly been changing, there exists a fine line between what is acceptable and what is not. While there is a certain expectation that new composition may be progressive in nature, the more radical are not assimilated into the repertory at the wider community level, but tend to remain with the original composer. Stewart MacNeil strives to be innovative in his tune composition, and has certainly achieved this in pieces such as 'Frostbite', which he describes as having "a Flamenco type of feel" (LD#49/ST#49), and 'One for Jeffy', which he refers to as a jazz-strathspey (LD#49/ST#49). Neither tune (or any of his other similar tunes) has been taken up by any fiddler. Possible reasons for this may be the difficulty of adapting these tunes to the fiddle (Stewart is a non-fiddle player) and their chromatic nature, which as yet is not an accepted part of the Cape Breton sound.

Tunes which may be described as "exhibition pieces" (Nic Suibhne 1987) or "novelties" (Cooke 1986:92) are perhaps the most extreme products of choice, their inclusion in the repertory being due primarily to the technical challenges they present. Tunes of this nature are invariably for listening purposes only (See Chapter Seven). In both Donegal and the Shetland Islands exhibition pieces or novelties such as 'The Hens March Over the Midden' and 'The Four Posts of the Bed' are played as independent pieces. Either of these could justifiably be labelled under one of the more
standard categories, march and reel, respectively. The Cape Breton repertory includes a small number of tunes which, although non-programmatic, merit the description exhibition tunes. Many of these are in multiple variation form (eg. 'Tullochgorm', 'The East Neuk of Fife'); all require a certain level of technical skill and dexterity. The presence of these tunes within the repertory does not impinge upon the standard tune-types or categories. Generally they are either hornpipes ('The Banks') or strathspeys ('Tullochgorm'), and less commonly reels ('The Mason's Apron') or slow airs. I propose therefore that each exhibition tune be categorised according to type, since type is in essence a basic structure which is exposed to choice. Categorization of these tunes according to type is consistent with the perception of these tunes in performance practice. Rarely are they played in isolation, as pieces in their own right. A single exception would be 'The Hangman's Reel'. However the only fiddler I ever heard perform this particular tune was Shawn MacDonald as is featured on the album by the group Scumalash. Rather, the norm is to include them alongside less exhibitionist tunes in a standard medley or group of tunes.
CHAPTER SEVEN
PERFORMING THE REPERTORY - CONTEXTS AND PRACTICES

The changing performance environment for the Cape Breton fiddler, both on a local and more international level, has been discussed at length in Chapter Five. In this chapter I propose to examine the changing demands on the fiddler from the late 1920s to the present day. Both the changing social reality and its implications on the music will be explored.

7.1 Changing Performance Contexts

There always seems to be a time to listen and then a time to dance.
(Fr. Eugene Morris in MacGillivray1988:143)

Cape Breton fiddle music today may be considered tri-functional, as music for solo step-dancing, music for social or square-dancing, and music which does not function for the dance in any capacity. This tripartite division was not always in evidence. Fiddle playing in Cape Breton, until the early decades of this century, was a purely functional activity, facilitating the dance. The dance itself began to emerge in different forms, from the beginning of the century, with the traditional old-reels and the solo-step dancing derived from them being augmented with Quadrilles imported from the north-eastern United States. These were adapted according to local taste, and quickly rose in popularity, while the old-reels declined. From the 1930s onwards, stimulated by external forces, mainly the burgeoning media and the establishing of new, alternative venues for social activity, a transformation in the role of the fiddle music began, with an alternative, non-functional strand emerging. This essentially created a distinction, not always explicit, between those players most inclined towards dance-oriented contexts, and those who preferred to perform independently of them. Inevitably this division in contexts led to a distinction in style and repertory between the 'dance' players and the 'listening' players, the one characterised by a rhythmic style
and a limited number of tune-types, the other by a more refined sound, a higher technical capability, and an increasingly diverse repertory. The current Cape Breton scene is characterised by an amalgam of these two types of player. While the dance-listening player dichotomy always allowed for some crossing of boundaries, division based on this criteria has become essentially blurred, so that today retention of these labels is largely superfluous. The fusion of the dance-listening player has been suggested ever since the dual contextual strands gained recognition in the 1930s, although it was not until after the 1970s and the successful revival of the fiddle music, that it became predominant, creating a fiddler qualified to participate in any context with or without the dance. While vestiges of the older perception are retained the majority of today's players happily embrace all contexts be they dance or performance oriented. This raises an interesting point on the issue of style. Typically the younger generation of players is branded as being exclusively dance oriented - "everybody you listen to has to be a dance player" (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37). It seems to me though that it is a style that is being implied here rather than a function; a lively, up-tempo style of playing that once would have distinguished a dance player from a listening player, is now being confused with function; simply because "the young ones that are playing, they're playing lively music" (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37) should not automatically suggest that their sole function is as dance players. What I am suggesting therefore is that certainly dance and listening contexts have been maintained in Cape Breton to the present day. Simultaneously however, the style of playing and, as far as it allows, the repertory associated with both contexts, has become synthesised, with much of the tempo and rhythmic propulsion being maintained in contexts removed from the dance, supplemented by a technical dexterity previously associated exclusively with listening players. Hence while specific dance and listening contexts continue to exist, the notion of dance and listening players, with its implicit implications on style and repertory, has been dissolved in the contemporary scene. Changing performance contexts have therefore demanded essentially three types of Cape Breton fiddler since
the early 20th century - the singularly dance player, the co-existing dance and listening player, through to the more syncretic fiddler of today. Each type has exercised its own demands on style and repertory. More importantly however is the fact that throughout these transformations, the dance has retained its central hold on the musical sound, albeit increasingly through indirect means. This will be explored further in Chapter Nine.

As already mentioned in Chapter Six one possible method for analysing the current repertory would have been according to function. However, since a great many tunes span the various function categories in the current scene, the initial classification of the repertory based on tune-type frequency seemed most sensible. At this point it is possible to review that repertory as classified in Chapter Six in terms of function. In other words, which tune-types function as dance music, as listening music, or as both (See Figure 12).

The function of the music is dependent on and determined by the context at any given time. In Chapter Five the expansion of these contexts over the period c1928-1995 has been outlined. In Figure 13 below the contexts for music-making, past and present, are given with the functional requirements of the music included, in order of prominence. Further cross-over is possible of course. The sound of dancing feet for instance has featured on recent commercial recordings by fiddlers Natalie MacMaster, Ashley MacIsaac and Rodney MacDonald.

(a) 'Dance Players'

The fiddling just makes you dance, that's for sure.  
(Alex Angus MacIsaac in MacGillivray 1988:103)

The fact that Cape Breton music has, to the present day, consistently functioned for the dance, has been one of the chief factors which has allowed the music to retain
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Dance</th>
<th>Square-Dance</th>
<th>Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance Strathspey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Dance Strathspey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reel</td>
<td>Reel</td>
<td>Reel</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Jig</td>
<td>Jig</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Slow Strathspey</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Slow/Pastoral Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornpipe (In Reel style)</td>
<td>Hornpipe</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Clog</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>[Waltz]</td>
<td>Waltz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12  Function of the Repertory of the Cape Breton Fiddler, 1995
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Function Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceilidh/House-Party</td>
<td>Listening/Step-Dance/Square-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square-Dance</td>
<td>Square-Dance/Step-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round and Square-Dance</td>
<td>Square-Dance/Round-Dance/Step-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>Square-Dance/Round Dance/Step-dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contests</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnics</td>
<td>Square-Dance/Step-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerts</td>
<td>Listening/Step-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pub-Matinees</td>
<td>Listening/Square-Dance/Step-Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venues outside Cape Breton</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording/Radio/Television</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13  **Contexts and Functions of the Repertory of the Cape Breton Fiddler, 1995**
much of its traditional style and flavour. The significance of the dance in sustaining the music is nowhere more evident than when compared with present-day Scotland. From the common germ that was the music of 18th century Highland Scotland, the musical paths of Scotland and Cape Breton diverged. In Cape Breton the step-dancing tradition which had shaped the music in the homeland was retained and was the measure against which all changes were tempered. In Scotland however, the step-dancing quickly became obsolete, and the music, no longer functional in this manner, was subjected to radical change. Today in Scotland the old Highland dance tradition is largely forgotten, although there have been some recent endeavours at its revival, instigated largely by Maggie Moore and a few other individuals who have visited Cape Breton. In general though it remains so unfamiliar in Scotland that Cape Breton step-dancing is often dismissed there as being of Irish origin. In *A Cape Breton Ceilidh* Jean MacNeil recounts:

> we went down to Maine to the harp camp this year, and there was a lady there who came from Scotland to teach the harp. We had little ceilidhs in the evenings, and of course Lucy and I step-danced. Well, that lady was saying, 'now you needn't tell me that that's Scottish! That's Irish dancing.' (MacGillivray1988:126)

In Cape Breton, dancing exists both as a solo art form and in the more social square-dance form. Solo step-dancing is frequently described as being "close to the floor" in that all the movement comes from the knees down and a minimum of floor space is utilised. Typically a solo step-dance exhibition involves a strathspey moving into a reel - the crucial combination in the fiddlers repertory and one which has traversed the dance/listening divide. However, in a medley which may begin with a march or slow strathspey, for instance, it is not uncommon for a step-dancer to take to the floor spontaneously once the dance strathspey tempo has been established. The

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25Certainly comparisons may be drawn between Cape Breton step-dancing and the sean-nos step-dancing tradition in Ireland, particularly the style found in the northern counties.
dancer may request a specific number of turns or rounds for the strathspey, normally two, or even a particular tune, 'King George IV' being one of the popular favourites. A recent development has been an increase in pressure being exerted by the dancer on the fiddler to meet such specifications (See Willie Kennedy, LD#39/ST#39).

According to step-dancer Margie Dunn "there are some strathspeys that are good for step-dancing and others that are no good at all" (MacGillivray 1988:53). This raises an important issue concerning the suitability of the music to the dance. This exists both on the level of repertory and of style. In Cape Breton terms, the principal stylistic requirements of a good dance player are 'drive' and 'timing', essentially the internal rhythmic lift and the tempo. Both of these will be examined further in Chapter Nine. The various tune-types appropriate today for the dance in Cape Breton have been given in the previous section. Several of these such as the dance strathspey, reel, and jig, may also function independently of the dance. The shift in direction from dance to non-dance or listening context can happen with little difficulty. However, a sharing of repertory coming from the opposite direction, ie: from a non-dance to a dance context, is not always feasible. In other words, every reel may not suit the dance. The situation is further complicated by the presence of different dance contexts, so that what may be appropriate for a square-dance may not be for a solo step-dance. Such a distinction is based solely on musical criteria, mainly concerning the rhythmic flow of the tune; this in turn may be determined by other musical factors, such as the range employed or the position work implied. Ultimately, it results in certain tunes being considered most appropriate for dancing. Combining tunes and steps that complement one another has always been an important consideration in the Cape Breton tradition. Margaret Gillis claims to change her arrangement of steps every time she performs "according to the tune" being danced to (MacGillivray 1988:63). Similarly, Anna MacEachern Grechnuk admits that "sometimes I have a step in mind but it just won't fit the tune. And if I don't know the piece of music I don't get as many steps out" (MacGillivray 1988:76). Interaction
between the music and the dance on this level is further commented on by Flora MacDonnell. In praising the step-dancing of Mrs. Mary Hughie MacDonald one point of merit she noticed is that "when the fiddler made that little 'cut', well she would do that with her feet" (MacGillivray 1988:92). Aggie MacLennan believes that "with a real step-dancer you could tell the tune he was dancing to by just listening to the sound of his feet" (MacGillivray 1988:119). Perhaps this intimate dance-music relationship has been responsible in part for the resistance to improvisation shown within the tradition? The institutionalising of the fiddle tradition first introduced in the 1970s has extended to include the dance. This has had some significant ramifications some of which impinge on the music-dance interaction. With the increase in official step-dance classes, for instance, fixed routines of steps have become the norm, these being performed in a set pattern, irrespective of the tunes being played, thus diminishing the energy generated when the interaction is of a more extemporised nature. The notion of the dance following the tune closely however has not totally disappeared yet however. In an interview, fiddler Wendy MacIsaac spoke of step-dancer Tammy MacDonald of Port Hood:

she was telling me that she, she likes having a fiddle player play for her who plays good lively tunes that she can kind of do steps to, to the tune, that kinda sound like the tune. (LD#40/ST#40)

Nevertheless such an attitude does seem to be held only by those increasingly few individuals learning to dance in the natural home environment.

The importance of the fiddler-dancer relationship cannot be underestimated in Cape Breton and is one aspect of the tradition which has remained fairly constant, the greatest threats to it emerging only in recent times. According to step-dancer Harvey Beaton:
with the dancer and the fiddler it's teamwork. I always say that the
dancing is only as good as the music because the music determines
how well you dance. (MacGillivray 1988:33)

This opinion has been verified again and again. Maggie Moore believes that "the
coming together of a good dancer and a good fiddler produces something greater
than the sum of the two parts" (Moore 199?:20). Step-dancer Margie Dunn believes
that "as far as the fiddler goes you rely 100% on him or her to drive you"
(MacGillivray 1988:53), while Alex Angus MacIsaac sees the fiddler and dancers
"very much as a team and meshed together." He continues, "if ... the fiddler was
doing his performance and you were doing yours, it wouldn't work" (MacGillivray
1988:103). Although as yet it has not reached a critical point, the reality today is that
many of the younger players and dancers are doing exactly that - concentrating on
their own performance exclusively. This has already been alluded to in connection
with the current generation of step-dancers and their automatic routines of steps
which may be churned out irrespective of the music being provided. The parallel to
this on the part of the fiddler is summed up in a statement by Jackie Dunn - "I never
really notice dancers, like, unless they're really off" (LD#41/ST#41).

While the fiddler has definitely inspired the dancer over the years, and indeed
continues for the most part to do so, the stimulus definitely works both ways, with
the dancer, solo or in a group situation, being a vital source of inspiration and
encouragement for the fiddler. This is highlighted in a tale told by Fr. Eugene Morris:

When we began the first Glendale concert, Frankie MacInnis and I
drove around the country to see as many of the fiddlers as we could
find. We went to see this older gentleman who lived outside of
Inverness - Ranald Smith. He was 97 years old. He used to play the
fiddle and we asked him if he would come to Glendale, and he
answered, 'well, I hardly play at all now'. He had a dark coloured
fiddle on the wall and we asked him if he would play and he took it
down. He was bent over and playing a little bit, but you could hardly
distinguish the tune. Then I got up to dance and I just remember that
he straightened right up in his seat and played a strathspey and reel as
well as he could play them. I think that he felt he would be letting me down if he didn't play well. He almost looked as if he had gotten an injection or something like that you know. He was a different man when he came to play for somebody who was dancing. (MacGillivray 1988:143)

Such an intense fiddler-dancer relationship can also have its negative aspects. Archie Neil Chisholm told me this story:

Angus Allan Gillis was at, playing at a dance...at Strathlome one night. And Angus Allan, when he was really in the mood, he was a terrific player. He would ah, sort of close his eyes and you would just, he would be just banging those tunes out. And this terribly awkward looking dancer came to Angus Allan this night and said to him, 'Angus Allan', he said, 'why is it that you close your eyes when you're playing?' And this angered Angus Allan. And Angus said 'so I won't have to watch a son-of-a-bitch like you dancing!' (LD#31/ST#31)

Every step-dancer has their favourite fiddler - someone whom they feel urges them towards achieving their full dancing potential. Over the years certain names have come to be associated prominently with this aspect of the tradition. Donald Angus Beaton was one such name:

There are some fiddlers who are fantastic dance players, that's their strength. In that regard I would say that you're looking at a fiddler like the late Donald Angus Beaton of Mabou ... the only way you could really respond to that [his music]would be to get on the floor and try some intricate movements that had to be in your blood and that somehow would surface because of this marvellous music. (Sheldon MacInnes in MacGillivray 1988:98)

Today Buddy MacMaster and Kinnon Beaton are among the island's most popular fiddlers among the step-dancing fraternity. This popularity reflects a suitability on the part of their styles to facilitate the dance - "there's a certain expression that makes you dance, and every fiddler doesn't have it" (Margie Dunn in MacGillivray 1988:53). This 'expression', already identified as translating in musical terms as 'drive' and 'timing', will be examined further in Chapter Nine. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note

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that often the best dance players (e.g., Buddy MacMaster and Rodney MacDonald) are step-dancers themselves.

Many of the so-called dance-fiddlers of Cape Breton Island have generally earned their reputation from their performances at social square-dances. Often particular dance venues are associated with certain fiddlers. In the 1960s for instance, the name Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald was synonymous with the dances at Glenville. Today it is Buddy MacMaster and Glencoe Mills. The repertory required for a square-dance, while it has changed over the years, has nevertheless remained limited as far as tune-type is concerned, involving simply combinations of jigs and reels for the basic square-sets, but allowing for waltzes and strathspeys where round dancing and solo step-dance exhibitions are deemed appropriate. The square-set has evolved into the three figure format regarded as standard today. In Inverness County this consists of two jig figures and one reel figure. In Cape Breton County there is one jig figure followed by two reel figures. As already outlined in Chapter Six hornpipe tunes are freely interpreted as reels, and are considered to be particularly apt for use in square-sets.

Playing for square-dances has for many Cape Breton fiddlers been the favourite platform for performing over the years. The constant flow of energies between the fiddler and the dancers can be electrifying, making it a fulfilling experience for all concerned. Sheldon MacInnes describes this scenario as it transpires in the popular venue of Glencoe Mills which he defines as

a natural setting where the dancers, to a large extent, always have some kind of rapport with the violinist in the chair, and in most cases that violinist is Buddy MacMaster. That rapport is a give and take all evening. Buddy can't get away with playing a new tune without a good sector of the dance floor picking that up and in some way letting him know, 'hey, I like that.' It might be just a smile, it might be just a little twitch of the head, but Buddy gets that message...that folk-exchange, as we know it in Cape Breton, is very important - a mutual recognition between the dancer and the fiddler. I can't emphasise
enough how important that is and how that, to a large degree, is going to determine the quality of music and the quality of dance. (LD#4/ST#4)

Compounding this notion Thomas MacDonnell says:

Theresa MacLellan told me one night that if she's playing for a dance, but the set in front of her can't dance, well, she can't play. But good lively dancers in front of her make her play twice as good. (MacGillivray 1988:94)

Theresa herself believes that "at a dance, you're at your best! Once you get going you're relaxed" (MacGillivray 1981:149). Buddy MacMaster also admits "it makes me feel good to see people having a good time at a dance" (MacGillivray 1981:151).

In the current Cape Breton scene the majority of fiddlers play for the dance in its solo, or more regularly, in its group capacity. All the same, there are few identifiable dance players in the older sense of the word. A dance player, in the strict sense, was an individual with a certain style and a repertory which did not expand beyond the requirements of the dance, and who rarely was expected to perform independently of it. Today, a fiddler such as Buddy MacMaster, unequivocally the favourite dance player of the present, seems to me to fall into the category of the syncretic fiddler, based on the reality of his repertory, range of performance contexts, and certain aspects of his style. Nevertheless, he is one of the syncretic fiddlers most shaped by the dance. Earlier, Winston Fitzgerald would have been of a similar disposition. Todays fiddlers rarely cite the square-dance as their preferred performance platform although it may be one of their more frequent. Indeed, among those I questioned in the 0-39 age group, the general preference seems to lie in favour of platforms removed from the dance, be it of a solo or a social nature (See Jerry Holland, LD#42a+b/ST#42 and Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15). Perhaps this reflects an increasing confidence in their performance abilities; the idea of being the focus of
attention in a concert-type setting is not a daunting one. Perhaps this is why somebody like Willie Kennedy, one of today's older fiddlers, still prefers to play for the dance where he feels somewhat removed from the intense scrutiny of a concert audience - "[I] would sooner play at a dance ... it's hard going, but the spotlight is not on you" (LD#39/ST#39). Nevertheless the square-dance continues as one of the principal performance platforms for the Cape Breton fiddler and also remains one of the primary vehicles for music-dance interaction. Likewise, the continuing interest in the step-dance tradition promises that on this level too, the fiddler-dancer relation is not in danger of disappearing from the Cape Breton picture. Even given the reality of the multiple non-dance contexts available locally and internationally to the Cape Breton fiddler of today, those focusing on the dance continue to be fairly dominant, at least in number, although this may not reflect the priorities of the fiddlers. It remains to be seen whether the indifference to the dance contexts becoming evident among today's fiddlers is merely a passing phase as they are tempted by the still relatively new alternative venues, or will the non-dance contexts and ultimately a non-dance style take over?

(b) 'Listening Players'

[Angus Chisholm was] known more for his dazzling displays at concerts and private homes than for his dance playing. (MacGillivray 1981:21)

According to Allister MacGillivray, fiddle music in Cape Breton functioned for dancing long before it was recognized as an entertainment in its own right:

I think the great dance players in the 1800s were always the ones that were the heroes...you'd find around, say the 1930s onward, you'd be getting players where someone says 'he was a nice player to listen to as well as to dance to.' (in Caplan, No. 29)
There is always the danger, when the music and dance become segregated in this way, that the music will change fairly radically. This is exactly what happened in Scotland with the disappearance of the traditional step-dancing. As yet, such a crisis has not arisen in Cape Breton however. While the music has indeed become increasingly important as an entertainment in its own right, the crux of the tradition still lies in the dance-music connection, both in terms of style and of repertory. This has already been discussed in the previous section, where I concluded that even in light of the increase in contexts removed from the dance, the musical style is still informed by criteria stemming form the requirements of that dance tradition. The sole diversion from this is the class of player referred to particularly from the 1930s-1960s as the 'listening' player, where 'listening' implied a deviation in style and in repertory besides function (See Caplan, No. 29 and Billy MacPhee, LD#3/ST#3). Within the span of a few decades in the middle of this century the 'listening' player as a distinct and important figure both emerged and submerged.

The movement of the dance from the home into the school-houses and halls created a void which was essentially filled by the listening player. One of today's principal contexts for listening, the house party or ceilidh, was in the past a dance oriented event (See Chapter Five). Archie Neil Chisholm remembers this:

when we were growing up, the social occasions would be just what we'd call house-parties. Kitchen rackets we would have called them. And ah, anywhere if, if a dozen people got together and there was a fiddler, they square-danced all night. (LD#31/ST#31)

Rod C. MacNeil from Barra Glen recalls similar occasions around the Iona area, house-parties or dances where there might even be admission charged at the door. While at a modern-day ceilidh a step-dancer may often take to the floor, square-sets, on the rare occasions when they do occur, are confined to the outside deck - except in Didace LeBlanc's home where no doubt that will be the case in future, since the
kitchen floor is reputed to have collapsed under avid square-setters. Modern homes, expensive furnishings, and limited space have all been contributing factors towards the ousting of square-dancing from the house-party setting. More significant has been the establishment of first school-houses and then parish halls, and the subsequent, regular occurrence of square-dances. The home is no longer a necessary venue since a more suitable alternative is available. The house-party, kitchen-racket or ceilidh has been retained however, although now it is a social event where, for the most part the fiddler is listened to rather than danced to. Other platforms for music-making, among them the concert and the pub-matinee, have created similar opportunities for the fiddle music to merit recognition as a performance art in its own right. This has been expanded with the increase in performance activity outside of Cape Breton.

Another factor which contributed to the emergence of a distinct listening tradition concerns the mass media, or more specifically, the appearance of commercial recordings on the Cape Breton scene. For the first time fiddlers were performing their music as an entertainment in its own right and people could listen to this over and over again away from its dance context. On two levels - the actual recording process itself and the continual reproduction of it - the music was happening in a non-dance environment and gradually became recognised as a performance art in its own right.

This coincided with a development in style and with a diversification of the repertory. In fact the style and polish fostered in such an environment inevitably led to a distinction (not always absolute) between the listening player and the typical dance player, who due to the lack of PA systems and piano accompaniments at the time, was more interested in creating volume and generating rhythmic energy than in an aesthetically pleasing performance for listening only. A deeper appreciation and a greater depth of understanding of the music is one factor responsible for the establishment of a distinct listening context within Cape Breton. From the generation
of Winston Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm onwards there has been a steady increase in refined technique and a constant striving towards higher levels of technical ability. This has made the music increasingly more acceptable for listening purposes. This contrasts greatly with earlier generations of fiddlers whose limited repertory and rougher, rawer style ensured that they were purely functional. "Now we've accustomed ourselves to sitting down and listening to the guy go through his repertoire, not wanting to get up on the floor, just listening to his technique. I don't know if that would have gone down as well in the 1800s, as well as it does today. Some of those wouldn't have the finesse if you were to make a record of them or record through the p.a. system when they were playing at a dance. You would be having a wonderful time there, but they may have missed a note here or there or, because of the excitement or noise of the dance, play a little rougher than a slicker, more concert-style player." (Allister MacGillivray in Caplan, No. 29)

Another major discriminatory factor concerns the field of repertory. No longer bound by the limitations of the dance the listening player was free to experiment with different tune-types. Since the emergence of the listening context and the corresponding new type of fiddler coincided with the boom in availability of sources this was easily made a reality. Fiddlers likewise seized the opportunity to display their wider musical knowledge and their technical mastery of the instrument, often demanding total silence in order to display their talent. Jackie Dunn commented on Dan Hughie MacEachern, a fiddler whose reputation was largely based on his skill in listening contexts. Apparently, the tunes he played were of a more difficult nature than anything attempted by the average dance player. This transferred to his own tune composition, which he undertook without the dance in mind - "if I'm going to write them good enough to play, I gotta write them good enough to listen to" (LD#2/ST#2). More technically challenging tunes in terms of keys, levels of dexterity required, and exhibitionist qualities became the focus of the listening players. Certain
tune-types, such as the slow air, slow strathspey, and clog, which had no role in the
dance tradition, became established in the repertory as listening tunes.

The listening context in its various guises is now, more than ever, a prominent part of
the music scene, both in Cape Breton itself, and wherever Cape Breton music is
performed. While the context has thus been retained and expanded upon since the
1930s the listening player, as a distinct type of Cape Breton fiddler, is no longer
strictly in evidence. As with the dance player, the implications of and association with
a specific style and repertory is no longer valid where the majority of today's fiddlers
are concerned. Instead a more inclusive style and repertory is favoured. Again though
certain players may choose to lean more consistently towards contexts and
repertories removed from the dance and this may be reflected in their individual style.
The reality today is that few players (with the exception of John Donald Cameron
perhaps) are inclined to concentrate on this aspect of the tradition to the exclusion of
all else.

(c) Syncretic Players

The current Cape Breton fiddler is essentially a synthesis of the two previously
distinct types of dance and listening player, performing in contexts which may or
may not be associated with the dance, embracing a repertory appropriate to either
context, and employing a style that is largely informed by the present requirements of
the dance and supplemented with the techniques formerly associated with the
listening players. As already observed the fusion of the two was a gradual process,
stimulated ironically since the dance/listening player dichotomy was first recognised.
"Little" Jack MacDonald may have been one of the earliest players to exhibit this
fusion in his playing; certainly evidence of it was apparent in Winston Fitzgerald. For
both of these players however their dual tendencies were largely equated with the
dual styles suggested by the dance-listening divide. It was only as late as the 1970s that a true fusion began to emerge. The syncretic player however may still choose to lean more towards the dance or the listening category in terms of context and repertory. This choice will have ramifications on the individual's overall style. This style, once shaped by such factors, will be retained irrespective of context; in other words today's player does not adapt his style to suit the context at hand although these contexts may have been responsible for the creation of the style initially. Similarly the repertory of the current Cape Breton fiddler, again with some exceptions (See Chapter Six), is inclusive. Certain tune-types have suffered from the merging of the two types of fiddler however. The dance strathspey and reel combination has come to dominate both dance and listening contexts, while other tune-types, particularly the slow strathspey, have been subsequently relegated to the periphery of the repertory. The slow air, once the domain of those accomplished in the appropriate style, is now common property, with mixed results. In general though, high levels of technical ability are more common. Tunes played for dancing are no longer necessarily more basic than those played away from the dance. For some this is unfortunate, since often an increase in the level of difficulty in a tune is compensated for by a reduction in rhythmic vitality. 

Buddy MacMaster has already been identified as leaning towards the dance although he is equally adept in other areas:

    even as young fella I played with more life to it maybe that the ... players around, because I wanted to play for dancing and that they'd feel like dancing to it. (LD#19/ST#19)

Carl MacKenzie is a player who inclines towards the non-dance in his repertory and context preferences and ultimately in certain aspects of his style:

    in my own case I find it a challenge to play certain kinds of tunes and I love to play for a session where there are people who like these
kinds of tunes, and they tend to be not the normal run of tunes you hear at the dances and everything like that. They’re strathspeys or reels or maybe a little more difficulty, into the flats and that...but to go to a dance and play 'MacNabb's Hornpipe' and all those run of tunes, I don't get too much of a kick out of playing those. (LD#8/ST#8)

That he merits classification as a syncretic player is based on his regular performances at square-dances and the fact that he is the favourite dance player of many step-dancers on the island. Dwayne Cote shows a similar disposition in his choice of repertory - "he's the type that likes, he plays for the, he appreciates certain tunes, not because they're difficult, but that there's more to them" (Carl MacKenzie, LD#8/ST#8). The majority of players however seem to be happy to adopt a more balanced approach, generating a sound which transfers easily to either a listening or a dance situation.

7.2 Changing Performance Practices

His creative abilities go into expression and creating medleys, a skill involving intuitive editorial logic, for which he is justly famous. At an informal session or, especially at a dance, Buddy MacMaster's musical abilities come into full bloom. Before he hits his stride he will typically play each tune twice before moving on to the next. Like all players in this tradition, in any one medley Buddy will keep to one key or around one tonal centre, for instance, A. This allows the music to build in intensity and depth, and also creates a light trance in the listener, dancer, and player that would be broken by a key change.

Strathspeys follow marches and are tension builders. They give way to faster strathspeys that segue into reels. With the reels comes release and flight. A major tunes, A minor tunes, modal tunes with no third at all, "book tunes" such as Scott Skinner's compositions, each follows another; tunes newly composed by young Cape Breton players, old traditional reels with no names at all, perhaps with Gaelic words that only the old people remember, an occasional Irish or Shetland reel, or one of his cousin Dan Rory MacDonald's 2000 compositions - Buddy plays them all, straying no further than a side trip to C major, with the transition so smooth that you hardly notice. As each reel follows into the next the intensity of the music is
increased again, and as Buddy really gets rolling he begins to play the reels only once each. He seems to sit further back in his chair with each tune, and his eyes see less and less. Now he plays the first part of one tune but the second part of another, then the second part of a third tune followed by its own first part. One foot is tapping heel to toe, the other flat on the sole. His elbow is dripping perspiration. Now at his musical height the whole notion of "tune" has gone out the window. The linear progression has been transformed into an ecstatic flow of melody that is like no other fiddling on this earth. (Stecher 1992a:32-33)

In this extract from an article attributed to fiddler Buddly MacMaster we are presented with a very vivid and realistic description of a typical Cape Breton performance. All aspects of performance practice are presented from repertory, tune sequence and tonal structure, through to the body gestures involved. The various types of tunes accepted within the Cape Breton repertory have already been discussed in the previous chapter. The purpose here is to examine the different methods of organising and performing this repertory. Typically the tunes are arranged into 'groups' or 'medleys' appropriate to the context at any particular time. The arrangement of tunes into such medleys has been an important aid in tune retention and in the transmission process, where one fiddler might learn an entire medley from another. For the purpose of this work medleys will be analysed on two levels according to both tune and tonal sequence.

(a) Tune Sequences

A typical Cape Breton fiddle medley embraces a number of tune-types and spans a variety of gradually accelerating tempos. The only exception to this occurs where groups of tunes of a single type are played. Normally this involves either jigs or reels which are required for the social square-dance. Occasionally however groups of either clogs or hornpipes may be played in isolation in a listening context.
Ian MacKinnon in his thesis recognizes five principal medleys within the Cape Breton tradition. These are (1) jigs (2) reels) (3) strathspey-reel/hornpipe (4) slow air-strathspey-reel/hornpipe (5) march-strathspey-reel/hornpipe (I. MacKinnon 1989:33). From this it is obvious that the strathspey-reel combination, with the hornpipe as a viable substitution for the reel, lies at the crux of the typical medley structure. It may function as an independent medley sequence or may be preceeded by a slower tune-type or types. While MacKinnon only acknowledges the slow air and march as potential opening tunes the number of possibilities is actually much greater. Tunes which may precede the strathspey-reel include slow air-march, waltz (See Natalie MacMaster 4 on the Floor) and fling (See The Inimitable Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald). The significance of the strathspey-reel combination in Cape Breton music is inextrixably linked to the strong local tradition of step-dancing. Since the 1930s there has emerged a second performance context which is non-dance oriented (See Section 7.1). When the music is no longer directly functioning for the dance a greater flexibilty and variety is possible where tune-types, and subsequently tune sequences, are concerned. Medleys have become longer and more varied in the number of tune-types involved. There has also been a definite increase in medleys which are not centred on the strathspey-reel formula, although most medleys still conclude with a reel or reels. Examples of these more unusual medleys, based on a random survey of commercial recordings include march-reels (Dougie MacDonald Cape Breton Times and Bill Lamey Classic Recordings of Scottish Fiddling), clogs-hornpipes(Dougie MacDonald Cape Breton Times), clogs-hornpipes-reels (Tara Lynn Tousenard Bowing the Strings), waltz-reels (Dougie MacDonald Staying in Tune),air-reels (Natalie MacMaster Road to the Isle and Sandy MacIntyre Island Treasure), air-march-reels (Buddy MacMaster Judique on the Floor), air-clog (Doug MacPhee Cape Breton's Master of the Keyboard), and Scottish Measure-reel (Hector MacKenzie Highland Village Ceilidh).
Experimentation with medley construction has embraced still further dimensions in the recent past with musicians often seeking inspiration from outside the indigenous tradition. The Barra MacNeils, a professional band from Sydney Mines, have been among the chief instigators in this field, their principal influence being Irish music particularly as played by The Bothy Band and The Chieftains. Some of the more unusual medleys they have constructed involve jigs-reels (The Barra MacNeils 1986 and The Traditional Album 1994), jig-strathspey-reels (Timeframe 1990) and strathspey-jig-reels (The Barra MacNeils 1986). Radical in Cape Breton terms, these medleys signify the MacNeils' perception of music as a performance art in its own right, rather than merely a complement to the dance (See Stewart MacNeil LD#49/ST49). It is no surprise, given the relative conservatism of Cape Breton, that such innovative directions did not start an immediate new trend among the fiddle population. In the past couple of years however, other fiddlers have begun to show an interest in similar types of medley construction. In her 1993 recording, Fit as a Fiddle, Natalie MacMaster for instance includes a medley that switches from a jig, 'The MacNeils of Ugadale', into a group of reels.

No standard exists regarding the number of tunes of each type which may be played within a medley. In general however the tendency is to play one or two slower tunes, a greater number of dance strathspeys, and a still greater number of reels. This is another aspect of the performance practice which has changed greatly. In the past, players with their limited repertories may have played only one or two of each tune-type. This is verified by Mike MacLean:

they play them in groups, like ah, say like a slow air, strathspey and a reel setting. And they'd play usually no more than one slow air...and they may play, they could play two or three strathspeys. Depending. But average, probably two strathspeys and perhaps maybe two reels. (LD#34/ST#34)
This contrasts with a recent performance at a West Mabou square-dance where fiddler Theresa MacLellan "played 25 tunes for the square-set...they were coming out one after the other" (Marie MacLellan, LD#3/ST#3). Some fiddlers however do not favour exceedingly long medleys of tunes. Winston Fitzgerald was one such player. Today Jerry Holland agrees, believing that each tune loses its individuality when surrounded by too many others:

anywhere between two and five is more than plenty for any group of tunes. Any longer and it becomes an exercise of stamina and that's about the extent of it ... there are too many nice tunes out there to have them all run together and make a big blur out of them. (LD#42a+b/ST#42)

According to Kate Dunlay, "most Cape Breton fiddlers today tend to repeat a tune only once in a medley, so he or she has time to play more tunes. There are so many good ones!" (Dunlay 1986a:13) While indeed the tunes within a medley are often only played once, particularly once the fiddler is warmed up, it is also common for a tune to be repeated. Two rounds however is the maximum in the majority of cases. No strict standard exists - within a single medley some tunes may be played once, others twice. Musicians from other traditions often find this disconcerting. In a review of the album *Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island*, Irish musician/writer Pat Ahern commented on this practice:

they will play each tune twice -sometimes just once- in a set consisting of 5 or 6 tunes. To my Irish ear this can be unsettling. Just when you've settled into a tune, there it is - gone! (Ahern 1994)

This constant and rapid change of tune is one area where the Cape Breton fiddler's practice differs greatly from that of the Irish musician. In Ireland the norm is to repeat a tune three or more times with the emphasis each time being on variation, both rhythmic and melodic. No similar tradition of improvisation or spontaneous variation exists in Cape Breton, hence the need to repeat the tunes is redundant.
The Cape Breton medley exists as a unified entity, a seamless whole. The motion is one of continuous flow - the music progresses steadily through the various tune-types. The tension heightens as the metre changes and the tempo unwieldingly accelerates until the climax is resolved as the strathspey gives way to the reel:

it is this speed and unremitting rhythm in strathspey time which produces the excitement, and there is an almost tangible relief when the musician breaks into reel time. (Moore 199?:20)

Over the years it seems that there has been a very subtle shift at the point of transfer from the strathspey into the reel, with the change becoming the slightest bit more defined in the hands of today's younger players. In the few instances of medleys involving the juxtaposition of more unusual time-signatures eg. 6/8-C or C-6/8, the normal flow of melody is interrupted. The transition is normally made by inserting a bridge passage concocted specifically for the purpose of transition from one type to the next. This practice has been further extended to include more standard progressions. One example may be found on Natalie MacMaster's album *Fit as Fiddle*. Following a slow air 'O'er the Moor Among the Heather', there is a short piano interlude before the fiddle breaks into a strathspey. Occasionally the transition is made by overlapping or dove-tailing one tune into the next. One instance of this is found on *The Barra MacNeils*, (1986) where the jig, 'Angela Cameron' is followed by a reel, 'Mrs. George Johnstone of Byker'. Incidentally such complex transitions from one tune to the next are largely confined to recording contexts, although some may lend themselves to live performance situations. As yet, such procedures are the domain of a small number of more progressive players, interested in "sound shaping" (Stewart MacNeil, LD#49/ST#49) and keeping an element of surprise in their recordings (Natalie MacMaster LD#15/ST#15).

A common practice particularly concerning medleys in a recorded format is for the piano to play an introduction, usually consisting of the last two bars of the tune. This
introduction is becoming a more recognised part of the medley and as such is increasingly appearing in different guises, either expanded, dispensed with, played on a different instrument such as guitar, or interpreted more freely, based on its harmonic potential rather than its melodic outline. All of these interpretations are to be found on Natalie MacMaster's *Fit as a Fiddle*. Another new concept which has infiltrated the medleys of the island's younger fiddlers involves the practice of ending a tune smartly, allowing for a brief pause before the next tune is launched into. This recent trend owes its origins to Irish music and features in the playing of those particularly noted for their dabblings in this direction. Examples can be heard on Dougie MacDonald's 1993 release *Fiddle Tunes*, Natalie MacMaster's *4 on the Floor* and *The Traditional Album* by the Barra MacNeils.

(b) Tonal Sequences

As an Irish musician, I am accustomed to playing sets or groups of tunes of a single type using modulation as a tool for dramatic effect. In Cape Breton the practice is reversed. As was already discussed the Cape Breton fiddler uses constantly changing metres and tempos to create excitement. This is executed within a limited tonal structure. For the Cape Breton fiddler an entire medley is typically centred around a single tonic note, embracing only the scales in its major, minor or modal forms. Tunes in the major or minor form have become increasingly dominant in this century coinciding with a decline in piping influences and an increase in non-Scottish tunes in the repertory, although most composers in Cape Breton 'make' some modal tunes. Certain tune-types such as the hornpipe for example - a relatively recent arrival in the repertory - are rarely found outside of strictly major or minor forms. Fluctuation between the major, minor and modal forms of a single tonic is an effective dramatic tool. Occasional meandering to relative key areas occurs particularly where tunes on a certain tonic and its modes are limited. For instance, a medley beginning in C major
might eventually end in A minor and the A modes or vice versa, since tunes in the C modes are less common in the repertory. The idea of maintaining a single tonal centre throughout a medley dates back to 19th century Scotland. In The Beauties of Niel Gow published in 1819, Nathaniel Gow mentions that "the frequent changing the key more or less has been found to offend the ear" (Gow 1819:26). In Cape Breton the practice has been found advantageous as a system for organising and remembering tunes. In the words of Kate Dunlay "this practice aids the fiddler in maintaining a repertoire and instant recall of hundreds of tunes and in being able to play long spontaneous medleys" (Dunlay 1986a:13).

While in the past more extreme modulations would have been regarded as totally unidiomatic, there has been an increase in experimentation with key changes since the 1980s. John Allan Cameron identifies himself as the pioneer in this field claiming that the first instances of more distant modulations were affected by him in his days with The Cape Breton Symphony. According to John Donald Cameron, the Cape Breton Symphony employed this technique in groups of three or more tunes "because to many people it sounds like the same tune otherwise" (LD#26/ST/26). Irish music has also had an influence in this sphere and players such as Natalie MacMaster, Jerry Holland, and Dougie MacDonald frequently change key. Certain tunes and certain changes have become established. Incidentally, they often involve Irish tunes. Natalie MacMaster for example, after playing a group of tunes on G or D, will stop abruptly and launch into 'The Foxhunters Reel' in A. John Morris Rankin and Howie MacDonald play the County Donegal reel 'Dinkie Dorrian's' to create the same effect. The fiddle players and their audiences enjoy the injection of energy such a modulation creates - "I like doing it, it gives me a lift" (Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15).

Cape Breton tunes are typically firmly grounded in a single tonal area and make little use of internal modulations. This is being experimented with in some recent compositions by fiddlers such as Jerry Holland and Dougie MacDonald. 'Ciaran
Tourish's Reel', a combined effort on the part of these two composers, begins in very definite D major but moves between A major and D major in the second part (Holland 1992:30).

In the past changing key was often interpreted as meaning that the fiddler had run out of tunes or could not think of any more in the same key. Carl MacKenzie admits to changing key occasionally, but "it's usually if I can't think of a tune, I'll switch to another key or something like that, but I generally stick to the same key" (LD#8/ST#8). He also suggests two valid points which explain the recent increase in tonal experimentation. The first concerns the general increase in musical understanding; the second is in regard to the increase in the standard of piano accompaniment:

well, I suppose they're understanding a little bit more about music. Like for instance, back 20 years ago...they wouldn't understand that A minor, C were relative keys, and you could interchange...and even go from other keys. They figured that as a complete no-no. And anyway, we had very poor accompaniment generally speaking. And if you switched keys, the piano player ...so nowadays we've got pretty good accompaniment, so you can switch. Like with Dougie you could play any tune at all and he knows how to go about it. And the same with Hilda. (LD#8/ST#8)

Fiddler Neil Beaton further testifies to the role of the piano accompanist - "it really ticks off the piano player when you start throwing in crazy keys all the time and they don't know where you're going" (LD#11/ST#11). As fiddlers tend to play with a single piano player more and more, the level of musical familiarity thus fostered encourages the fiddler to relax and to experiment with key change (See Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12).
(c) Grouping of Players

The Cape Breton sound is typically associated with a solo fiddler plus piano accompaniment occasionally supplemented by guitar. Both the piano and the guitar however only became established in this capacity in the early decades of this century. Prior to this the fiddling was generally unaccompanied, although the pedal organ and some forms of percussion were occasionally used. The fiddle music, as it functioned almost exclusively for the dance until the 1930s, was typically provided by two players - a reality which no doubt did much to encourage and determine the all-important concept of correctness (See Chapter Eight). While the combining of fiddlers may have been of practical reasons essentially to create volume in the pre-PA and piano accompaniment era, the end result given the right combination, was aesthetically pleasing - "if the styles were related, close you know, it was tremendous what was the end result of that, of those fiddlers teaming up" (Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16).

In certain performance situations such as a kitchen-racket, where dancing would be happening in two rooms simultaneously, the two fiddlers might be positioned facing in different directions in order to maximise on volume. One fiddler would act as the leader and when a tune change was imminent transfer this information through physical means, either a nudge on the shoulder or a toe on the shin (Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17). The fiddler with the more limited repertory would generally dictate the tunes to be played - "It's usually the fella with the ... greater repertory will tell the second fella, 'you go ahead'. And it's not an insult, but it just means I can play anything you can play plus my own" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). When Archie Neil would have performed in these situations with his brother Angus Chisholm, Archie Neil would have suggested the tunes. One musical practice which emerged from the use of two fiddles was the playing of a tune in the lower and higher registers - the front and back strings - simultaneously, the point being to add to the
volume as much as possible. This led to the terms 'first and second fiddle'. Another practice, according to Tommy Basker, was the addition of a third fiddler -"you'd get three fiddlers playing together; two of them would play and the third fella would chord on the violin" (LD#33/ST#33).

The combination of two fiddlers was referred to in Cape Breton as a 'team'. Certain teams of players were particularly revered, among them Malcolm Beaton and Sandy MacLean, Dan J. Campbell and Angus Allan Gillis, Donald Angus Beaton and Angus Joseph MacDonald, Dan J. Campbell and Donald Angus Beaton, Ranald Gillis and Hughie Angus MacDonald, Joe MacLean and Bill Lamey, and Theresa and Donald MacLellan. The idea of teaming fiddlers together was also important for those fiddlers starting off; fiddlers such as Willie Kennedy and Buddy MacMaster got some valuable experience from their performances as part of a team with older, more able players. The need for two fiddles began to wane with the introduction of first pianos and then PA systems into the halls. In many instances this did not happen until as late as the 1940s (Donnie MacDougall, LD#27/ST#27). Once it did however, creating volume was no longer the main concern. Today the tradition is carried on only in the combination of Willie Kennedy and Kenneth Joseph MacDonald of Mabou. Otherwise the practice of two fiddlers teaming up is treated as a novelty act. The Rankin Family Band usually include a "twin fiddle feature", with John Morris Rankin and Howie MacDonald, in their live performances. Likewise Kyle and Lucy MacNeil or Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac will perform together on occasion.

Throughout this century the fiddle has been involved, to some extent, in group situations involving other instruments and catering for contexts removed somewhat from the core of the tradition. Group formations involving a Cape Breton fiddler were particularly popular from the 1930s through to the late '60s, the result of live radio shows and the popularity of round dancing through these years. Groups, or bands as they were referred to, were often regarded as being more suited to these
contexts than a solo fiddler with piano. Certainly not all the bands on the Cape Breton scene for that period would have employed a fiddle player; nevertheless there was quite a substantial sharing of personnel. The best known band of this nature which included a Cape Breton fiddler was undoubtedly the Radio Entertainers, led by Winston Fitzgerald. Along with his regular accompaniment of piano and guitar this included saxophone, bass and drums. Other bands included fiddler Percy Peters in The Peter's Square Dance Orchestra, and piano player Elizabeth Finnell who led The Liz Finnell Orchestra.

Group or band playing in contexts more directly centered on the fiddle music tradition have also been in evidence over the years, although always in a secondary position to the solo fiddle-piano combination. The first commercial recording of Cape Breton fiddle music in 1928 was actually in a group format - The Columbia Scotch Band, otherwise known as The Caledonia Scotch Band - which included Cape Breton fiddlers Dan Hughie MacEachern and Charlie MacKinnon. Another early recording group, this time featuring all Cape Breton fiddlers, was The Five MacDonald Fiddlers - Allan MacDonald, Bernie MacDonald, Dan R. MacDonald, John A. MacDonald, and Hugh A. MacDonald. The MacLellan Trio featured renowned Cape Breton fiddlers Donald and Theresa MacLellan, accompanied by their sister Marie MacLellan on piano. This was essentially the last effective grouping of traditional Cape Breton musicians until the 1970s when The Cape Breton Symphony first appeared on The John Allan Cameron Show. This group, still active today, consists of Cape Breton fiddlers, along with a Scottish-style piano vamper, guitar, bass, and drums. Although over the years, this group has featured some of the foremost Cape Breton fiddlers, among them Winston Fitzgerald, Angus Chisholm, and Jerry Holland, the sound is not typical of Cape Breton, due to the replacement of the indigenous piano sound with a less invigorating style, to the refined sound cultivated on account of the number of fiddlers, and assisted on account of the absence of the dance. In the early 1980s a group known as The Cape Breton Concerto which featured some of the
young Cape Breton talent of the day, was active for a short time. The group included John Morris Rankin, Howie MacDonald, Kinnon Beaton, Donny Le Blanc, Brenda Stubbert, Dave MacIssac, Theresa MacLellan and Joey Beaton.

The group or band, as a viable platform for Cape Breton music, has been given more attention from within the music community since the mid-1980s. A plethora of bands, most of them unfortunately short-lived, have appeared from then to the present day. Examples include The Celtic Trio, The Special Seven, The Washabuck Connection, Dal Riada, and most recently, Slainte Mhath. The fact that such bands come and go is irrelevant. What is important is that their numbers indicate an awareness of, or at most a curiosity about, the potential of the band format in the Cape Breton scene. These forays into the band idiom show a distinct pattern. Most of the examples cited include a singer (English or Gaelic language) and dancer to augment the musical core of fiddle and piano. This may be regarded as the Cape Breton interpretation of the group tradition as it has developed in Ireland since the 1960s. Interestingly however, the influence has most often been indirect, acquired through the Cape Breton prototypes of the genre, in particular The Barra MacNeils. This family band hails from Sydney Mines, an area of Cape Breton long associated with Irish music. The MacNeils began to supplement their oral inheritance of Irish and Scottish music with commercial recordings, and so became familiar with names such as The Chieftains, The Bothy Band and Planxty. This led them to firstly experiment with instruments such as the tin-whistle, bodhran, harp and accordion, uncommon in the Cape Breton tradition, and secondly to actively pursue the group sound. Their selection of instrumentation and their arrangements of tunes from local, Scottish and Irish sources were a first in Cape Breton. Initial resistance was replaced with a certain amount of acceptance. Today however, The Barra MacNeils like The Cape Breton Symphony, continue to make a greater impression away from Cape Breton. A professional outfit since 1986, the band has recently signed with PolyGram Records. Maybe it is this factor, or maybe it is the reality that as yet the group sound has not established a
niche in Cape Breton, that has prompted the band to move increasingly from their traditional dance music instrumentation and sound towards a music that is predominantly song oriented, after the mainstream popular fashion.

The Rankin Family Band is the other contemporary group from Cape Breton making an impression - arguably the greatest impression - on the world stage. Another family band, this time from Mabou, Inverness County, the line-up includes two of the finest exponents of the Cape Breton fiddle and piano styles. The focus of this band's energy is increasingly channeled into self-penned and other songs in the mainstream popular and country mould. This in light of the fact that their reinterpretations of Cape Breton's Gaelic songs, their wonderful fiddle music, and their lively Cape Breton step-dancing was initially behind their rise to fame.

It remains to be seen if the band setting, as a positive channel for Cape Breton music, will be accepted within the tradition itself. As yet this has not happened to any great effect. In fact it seems possible that the band format represents a certain amount of musical compromise for Cape Bretoners. Certainly with The Barra MacNeils and The Rankin Family the Cape Breton content of their performances which helped propel each of them towards international recognition has diminished once success is achieved. Also individuals such as Ashley MacIsaac and Natalie MacMaster, having gained international recognition as Cape Breton fiddlers, have both begun to assemble their own bands, adding various combinations of guitar, bass, drums, pipes, and vocals to the fiddle-piano sound. This raises the question whether these changes are coming from within the Cape Bretoners themselves, thus reflecting an insecurity and lack of confidence in the strength of their music to carry itself on the world stage, or from without, indicating a pressure exerted by the record companies perhaps, to tap a wider market. The latter seems more likely. The implications of this on the Cape Breton tradition remain to be seen. As yet the acceptance of the music on a widespread, international level, is a new phenomenon for Cape Bretoners. For the
generation of fiddlers just beginning today will the band format be shunned on the basis of musical authenticity, or will it be deemed the way forward, towards international acceptance? Perhaps the current thinking will be maintained, whereby band activity is tolerated and grudgingly applauded for having spread an impression of the Cape Breton sound but at grass roots level it is the more traditional sounds and practices that are being continued.

One further dimension of group fiddling exists in Cape Breton, this time in the context of concert finales. The massed fiddlers finale has its origin in the first Glendale festival of 1973 - "that's where the finale came from see, to show the people that you had these hundred fellows and that they could all play the same tunes" (Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17). The finale has continued to the present day as the concluding feature of all the summer outdoor concerts. Such an exhibition, involving any number of fiddlers present and a single piano player, may last for up to a half hour. The tunes are always pre-arranged. With one exception this is done immediately beforehand. For the annual Cape Breton Fiddlers Festival concert, now held at St. Ann's, the tunes are disseminated by The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association throughout the year and rehearsed at their monthly gatherings. The group, in this particular instance, is generally led by a single fiddler, usually Stan Chapman or Carl MacKenzie. This individual will usually position himself before the group where, visible to all, he can synchronize tempo and tune changes. In other situations involving less numbers of fiddlers, one individual will act as leader somewhat more discreetly. In the earliest finales, caught up in the triumph of the non-vanishing Cape Breton fiddler, Fr. John Angus Rankin himself would direct the massed fiddlers, calling out the names of tunes in anticipation of changes.
(d) Instrumentation

The key to the Cape Breton sound lies in the combination of solo fiddle with a highly stylised piano accompaniment. Exceptions to this format have been discussed previously. At various stages over the years other instruments have been introduced either from necessity - to create volume in an increased space - or from choice. Only rarely have these instruments made a lasting impression.

Until the early decades of this century the fiddle music was unaccompanied. Allister MacGillivray cites knitting needles and spoons as early percussive accompaniments, while jew's harps and a vocal technique referred to as 'keeping bass' acted as drones (MacGillivray 1981:3). Throughout my own fieldwork all these were referred to (LD#18/ST#18; LD#52/ST#52; LD#31/ST#31). With regard to the practice of using knitting needles Archie Neil Chisholm explained:

I've seen them ... using two knitting needles, somebody else ... using two knitting needles on the bass. And when the fiddler would come down on the bass, you'd go over to the other strings with the two knitting needles. I couldn't stand it. (LD#31/ST#31)

Margie Dunn tells how "you tapped ... not at the end of the fingerboard but on the upper part, near the top ... below the fingers" (LD#52/ST#52). Dan Hughie MacEachern's two sisters (Margie Dunn's aunts) were particularly known for providing rhythmic accompaniment in this fashion.

The pedal or pump organ is believed to have first appeared in Cape Breton musical circles towards the end of the second decade of this century. Initially these were found in the parlours of private homes but were often borrowed for dances held in the local halls, transported via sleigh (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). By the 1920s some parish halls had obtained their own pump organs and these were used to accompany the fiddle playing at dances. At certain outdoor picnics, for example at
Frenchvale, organs were also used. Many of the organ players were women, the wives, sisters, and mothers of the fiddlers. Examples include Katie Anne Campbell, Mary Ann MacLellan, Birdie Murphy and Elizabeth Beaton. Some male players were known. Donald Angus Beaton's brother-in-law Danny MacEachern, for instance, occasionally played pump organ accompaniment to his fiddle playing. One resourceful fiddle player often provided her own organ accompaniment:

Mary [MacDonald] would often supply her own chording in a unique way: she would insert match-sticks between the appropriate keys of an organ, and then would pump it with her foot. She could thus insert a two or three note drone behind her playing of pipe tunes on the fiddle. (MacGillivray 1981:117)

The piano emerged on the scene very gradually from the late 1920s, although it was not until the 1950s that it became widespread and essentially replaced the organ as the chief accompanying instrument. In fact it was not until after the second World War that pianos appeared in most parish halls; right up until the early 1940s fiddlers in halls at Lower River, Middle River, Glencoe, Bucklaw and Baddeck among others did not have piano accompaniment. Pianos were imported from various sources, usually from upper Canada or the U.S. In 1928 for example St. Joseph's Convent in Mabou obtained a Gerhard Heintzman piano from Toronto. The same make of piano was purchased by the Beaton family of Mabou in the 1950s, this time ordered through The Family Herald catalogue, and again shipped in from Toronto.

Again the piano accompaniment was largely the domain of the female population with Jessie Maggie MacLellan, Margaret MacPhee, and Lila MacIsaac being some of the first names associated with it - "they were the ones that really gave it the reputation for being a great instrument to accompany a violin" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). Since the 1970s however, the general shift in gender balance which has characterised several aspects of the tradition has also affected the
piano role, so that today there are several excellent male accompanists, among them Doug MacPhee, Joey Beaton, John Morris Rankin, and Joel Chiasson.

As pianos became more prevalent, greater attention was given to the style, to such an extent that the instrument moved from being perceived as a mere harmonic accompaniment to being accepted as an equal partner with the fiddle. This is one of the most crucial changes the Cape Breton music scene has seen in this century. It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.

The guitar, as a suitable instrument for accompanying the fiddle, was introduced around 1930, initially perceived as a viable alternative to piano accompaniment in situations were a piano was not available. The combination of fiddle with guitar accompaniment became quite a regular feature at dances for a time. "Red" Johnny MacKinnon was accompanied regularly by guitarist Johnny Aucoin, and Billy MacPhee by Danny MacCormack for example (MacGillivray 1981:55 & 153). At dances in Washabuck up until the 1940s, Johnny "Washabuck" MacLean utilised guitar accompaniment (MacGillivray 1981:140). Many fiddlers dabbled in guitar accompaniment themselves, among them Sandy MacInnis and Wilfred Prosper. The guitar, like the fiddle, was for a long time considered a male's instrument, although Marie MacLellan was one exception, beginning on guitar before she turned to the piano.

By the 1950s the piano had established itself as the preferred instrument for accompanying the fiddle music. The guitar, although rarely the sole accompanying instrument any more, did continue to have a role, although now this was alongside the piano. One renowned trio of fiddle, piano and guitar was that of Winston Fitzgerald, Beattie Wallace, and Estwood Davidon. The bass (electric or upright) has been increasingly utilized to supplement this sound. A notable exception to the standard fiddle, piano, guitar outfit during the 1950s was the popular fiddle and
guitar duo of John Donald and John Allan Cameron. A particularly exceptional feature of their music was that the guitar player, John Allan, while very capable in providing harmonic accompaniment, frequently chose to actually pick out the tunes on the guitar. This began a tradition, which although never widespread, has lasted until the present time with Dave MacIsaac, and lately Gordon Sampson, being among its principal exponents today. Only in occasional circumstances have fiddle players opted to use the guitar in place of a piano accompaniment. Mike MacDougall was one fiddler who was known to have preferred the guitar as an accompanying instrument and frequently performed with players such as Tim Donovan, Kevin Donovan, Buddy MacDonald, and Donnie Campbell (MacGillivray 1981:43). Arthur Muise prefers to play with Dave MacIsaac on guitar than with any piano accompanist (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). In this tradition Natalie MacMaster has chosen to include one track featuring fiddle and guitar on her 1993 album *Fit as a Fiddle*.

Other instruments have made occasional appearances in Cape Breton. The use of bass, drums, and saxophone, with the more standard fiddle, piano and guitar combination has already been mentioned. This arrangement of instruments had a particular role to play in the era when round dancing and live radio shows were at their peak. Melody instruments such as the harmonica have been part of the Cape Breton music scene for years. Occasionally an harmonica player would play along with the fiddler or fiddlers. Joe Pittipaw, for example, often performed with Dan Hughie and John Willie MacEachern (Margie Dunn, LD#52/ST#52). The combining of the harmonica and the fiddle seems to have been most frequent before the 1950s after which time the piano and PA systems were firmly in place. Additional volume created by other instruments was no longer required. The harmonica did retain a foothold in the music tradition however, and in fact the first commercial recording of a Cape Breton harmonica player was released in 1994 - *The Tin Sandwich*, featuring Tommy Basker.
Instruments such as the mandolin and banjo, like the harmonica, seem to have been used most widely before the introduction of PA systems and piano accompaniment. Melodic instruments other than the fiddle were often found among those strongly inclined towards Irish music. Occasional references to accordion players for instance are found in the Northside area. Dave Whalen was a noted flute player from the same place. Johnny Wilmot, renowned for his Irish music influences, included tin-whistle player Chris Langan on some of his recordings. The greatest influx of non-traditional Cape Breton instruments began in the late 1970s, specifically with the MacNeil family of Sydney Mines. Today, tin-whistle, uillean pipes, piano accordion, bodhran, and harp are some of the instruments played by various family members. As yet other members of the Cape Breton community for the most part have shown little interest in taking up similar instruments themselves. A recent trend however has been the playing of traditional tunes on the saxophone with Monica MacDougall being in demand over the past two years in this capacity. Another recent practice has been the combining of fiddle and Highland bagpipes, featured on recordings such as *Foscail an Dorus* by Paul MacNeil and Jamie MacInnis, and in live performances for example by Ashley MacIsaac and band which includes piper, Scott Long.

(e) **Body Movements**

Fiddlers in Cape Breton - they hold it wrong.
(Winnie Chafe, LD#54/ST#54)

In the eyes of those classically trained musicians the physical stance of the Cape Breton fiddler, particularly in the past, is quite simply incorrect. For the Cape Breton fiddler however, the stance adopted is always the most comfortable and, however awkward it may seem, has never impeded the creation of the true musical sound. Unconventional methods of holding the instrument can be traced back to Scotland:
The 18th century fiddler rested his elbow on his knee, leaning over in a cramped position, and in the case of Niel Gow... held his fiddle with his chin on the right side of the tailpiece... it is also apparent that 'dance' players commonly held their violins against the breast rather than under the chin. (Emmerson 1971:174)

This last trait has certainly been evident in Cape Breton over the years although it is less common today. Buddy MacMaster for instance commented on Danny Johnny Ranald Beaton - "he was one of the old-style players... I remember him playing and he was shifting the fiddle around from one shoulder to the other and he'd drop it down here [indicates chest]" (LD#19/ST#19). Likewise Mary MacDonald "held the violin down on her chest you know, she didn't hold it under her chin, like you know. Most of the time anyway, down on her chest somewhere" (Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19).

Often the fiddlers physical stance was determined by the performance situations he found himself in:

Mike MacDougall developed an interesting way of holding the violin, keeping the instrument tucked in close to him. This style was derived from his early involvement at 'kitchen rackets'. At such affairs, there wasn't much space for fiddlers once the dancers got going, so the musicians would huddle close together, often having to defend themselves with solid shoves when flying bodies came dangerously near. (MacGillivray 1981:43)

Dan MacDonald further testifies to this:

you'd sit with your legs crossed like this, playing. And there's a reason for that. It was to push the drunks away... cause they'd be playing in a school-house for example, and the place'd be crowded and they'd be tucked in a corner, there wouldn't be any stage. And the main fiddler sat behind, and the second fiddler sat in front because he played the bass and it would carry further. But not only that, because he wasn't as important as the other guy, and it was his job to block. Well, my father often told me that; he and his father played together as a team. (LD#2/ST#2)
Mickey Gillis is one fiddler who continues to adopt this cross-legged stance today.

The majority of fiddlers today hold the fiddle against the left shoulder where it is supported by the left hand rather than by the chin. Occasionally a fiddler will turn the body of the fiddle almost on its side. The neck of the fiddle generally rests in the palm of the left hand. Some of the younger fiddlers observing the techniques in other traditions have begun to adopt a more conventional approach to holding the instrument. Natalie MacMaster for instance was encouraged by Quebec fiddler, Donnell Leahy, to position her wrist outwards rather than letting it rest against the neck of the fiddle. This enables her achieve a much richer vibrato. Winnie Chafe insists on proper classical violin technique being followed in her classes. Likewise, fiddlers such as Kyle and Lucy MacNeil, who have received classical training, observe a more standard physical approach to the instrument and have been among the first to use shoulder rests as an aid. Left-handed fiddlers, although always part of Cape Breton music circles, are nevertheless a rarity. Early examples included one of the Fortune brothers of the Northside. Today, Kinnon Beaton and Ashley MacIsaac are both left-handed fiddlers.

The bow grip of the Cape Breton fiddler has traditionally been unconventional and individual. For many, such as Jerry Holland, this continues to be the case. Again however, those informed from other traditions have come to grip the bow in a more standard fashion, at the frog, and with all the fingers (See Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15).

While the Cape Breton fiddler generally prefers to sit for a performance some of the younger players are showing an increased tendency to stand. Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac are to the fore of this movement, as are Kyle and Lucy MacNeil. The occasions where these fiddlers choose to stand however are usually of the concert variety, and so it seems that standing is equated with enhancing the
performance. With Natalie and Ashley however the reason could be that at any moment, either is liable to burst into an energetic step-dance routine while playing; this of course is facilitated if standing up in the first place. The practice of standing for a performance has certainly led to exaggeration in all aspects of body gesture, from foot-stomping to bouncing hair. The idea of step-dancing while simultaneously fiddling is the current novelty in Cape Breton. First performed by Jerry Holland as a child, the practice was revived a few years ago by Natalie and then Ashley. By now most of the younger fiddlers have mastered this art. An extension of this, in the form of synchronised stepping and playing between two fiddlers, has also emerged for example with Dawn and Margie Beaton. Piano players have also got in on the act, most remarkably Hilda Chiasson and Tracey Dares.

Whether standing or sitting, the practice of marking a vigorous rhythm with the feet, is a vibrant aspect of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition. For a strathspey four even beats are tapped out per bar; in the reel two beats (1 and 3) are marked by the left foot, with a more syncopated rhythm coming from the right. In a jig, the left foot marks the first of every group of three quavers, while the right foot supplies quavers two and three of the group.

Central to the vitality of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition is an intense interaction between fiddler and audience. The local audience is very much in tune with the repertory, familiar both with the tunes themselves and the progression of tunes in a medley. The change from a strathspey to a reel for instance is one of the highlights of a performance and is given just recognition in the form of applause and 'hoots and hollers'. A change in key or a particularly popular tune will likewise be acknowledged. Attempts to convey this lively interchange have been made on some commercial recordings, for example North Country by The Rankin Family. It is best captured however in live recordings such as the Nimbus Album Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island. Nothing of course can better the real situation.

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CHAPTER EIGHT
THE LIMITS ON STYLE

At the heart of the concern surrounding the changing Cape Breton fiddler lies the issue of musical sound. Change in musical sound has both affected and been affected by change in all other aspects of the tradition. What is this Cape Breton sound? Has it changed over the years? Is it changing today? Such are the questions to be explored for the remainder of this work. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the essential criteria for the creation of the Cape Breton sound in its various manifestations and to outline the parameters within which that sound might be realised at any given time.

8.1 Defining Style in the Context of Cape Breton Fiddle Music

The term 'style' ... denotes the composite form of the distinctive features that identify an individual's musical performance.
(McCullough 1977:85)

The definition of style postulated by McCullough refers specifically to individual style. Style, at this level, is the active realisation of a more generic style, which in incorporating the stylistic universals for the idiom encapsulates individual styles. The questions surrounding the genesis of generic and individual style - is the generic style the result of combined individual styles, or is an individual style a mere re-interpretation of a generic one? - are thought provoking, but beyond the scope of the present work. For now, style in the context of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition will be discussed based on the assumption that the generic style, in its various guises over the years, is the composite form of individual styles and thus may be defined in terms of them.

Style, in many music traditions, is defined according to the elements recognised by the practitioners or 'cultural actors' of that tradition as being crucial to the creation
and identification of the musical sound. These are the elements referred to when a qualitative judgement on performance is being made. While the choice and amalgam of such elements is culture-specific, resulting in each tradition having its own unique sound identity, in each instance "their occurrence or non-occurrence characterises every performance and serves as the basic evaluative standard by which an individual performance is judged by other musicians" (McCullough 1977:85). The elements of style are thus regarded as variable as opposed to fixed entities. Decisions in the selection process are crucial in determining both individual styles and generic styles. In defining style, reference to particular practices within the tradition may also be necessary. In Irish music for instance, stylistic definitions are understood in the context of improvisation and variation (See McAuley 1989 and Ó Canainn 1978). In Cape Breton, the equivalent is 'correctness', which defines the parameters in which the elements of style are recognised.

The Cape Breton fiddle tradition thus has its own vocabulary of stylistic elements which are peculiar to it alone. Certainly many of the elements are shared with other traditions where the fiddle is prominent, such as Ireland for example, but it is the particular combination of these which distinguishes Cape Breton from all others. Besides the labels of generic and individual, several other identification tags are possible in the area of style, all of them susceptible to change over time. Some of those common in other traditions are redundant in Cape Breton. Distinction based on instrumental styles, for instance, has no role, since the tradition is dominated by the fiddle. Likewise, being a practicing solo tradition, no distinction in terms of solo versus group styles is feasible. Individual styles have been at the centre of the issue in Cape Breton over the years, with one player often being qualified in terms of another, generally older player. The concept of regional styles remains inconclusive. There are two principal schools of thought on the subject today, the one refuting any such geographical distinctions at any period in Cape Breton's history, the other espousing the theory, although through multiple and often conflicting definitions. These range
from the belief that regional styles were prevalent until the early decades of the 20th century to considering them still in evidence; from those who can identify four styles, coinciding with the four counties of Cape Breton, to those who can identify regional styles in practically every community on the island; and finally, those who extend the theory to include ethnic as well as geographic boundaries. While the division of Cape Breton fiddling into regional styles remains somewhat ambiguous, there are two concepts of stylistic diversity which have been accepted at different times as intermediate points on the individual to generic style continuum. The first concerns performance context, and was the principal consideration in matters of style most notably from the late 1940s to the 1960s. This period witnessed the emergence of non-functional music performances ie. music in contexts removed from the dance. Coinciding with this development came the categorisation of players according to the context in which they excelled, hence the concepts of 'dance players' and 'listening players'. This implied a distinction in style, the one concerned with rhythmic drive, the other less so inclined. The most recent style distinctions are based on chronological criteria, basically an 'old' style and a 'new' style (John Morris Rankin, LD#21/ST#21) where old is synonymous with tradition and new with progression. These terms have become especially prominent in the last decade as fears concerning the changing Cape Breton fiddler escalate. They were nonetheless alluded to much earlier, in connection with the progressive styles of fiddlers such as Winston Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm, from the 1940s onwards.

Since the current Cape Breton fiddle style is largely defined in terms of old and new, these dual strands merit some discussion. Frequently in an oral tradition, style is in a constant state of evolution, with older elements being supplemented with and replaced by newer elements. In Cape Breton this process has been increasingly evident since the late 1920s, mirroring in musical terms the progression of the society at large. In the Cape Breton context, the old style referred to is reminiscent of 18th century Scotland, and that musical sound as it was preserved in Cape Breton until the
early 20th century. One problem with definitions of this nature is that old can have
different connotations, depending on the age group of the observer. Today, given the
concern surrounding the increasing popularity of new and often eclectic styles,
individuals like Buddy MacMaster, are held up as the epitomy of the old style. This
leads to a certain amount of confusion, since Buddy, although falling into the older
age bracket, is not entirely representative of the older sound, but rather stands at an
intermediary point between the old and the new. Thus it follows that an old style is
not confined to, or necessarily expounded by older players, just as the new is not
automatically the domain of the young. The use of the term new style, implies that
certain elements of the old have been lost or replaced by newer ones. Nevertheless,
the new does not necessarily obliterate the old. McCullough suggests this:

the evolution of a style is a cumulative process. A style is essentially a
conglomeration of elements absorbed unconsciously or appropriated
outright from other styles and then reshaped and refined into a "new"
style that is distinct yet never entirely divorced from its predecessors
or contemporaries. (McCullough 1977:96)

In the Cape Breton situation this certainly holds true. The new style essentially
consists of both old and new techniques, reshaped to create a new sound. Also, the
emergence of an identifiable new strand does not preclude the old; the current Cape
Breton scene embraces exponents of both styles. The stylistic criteria which defines
the Cape Breton fiddle tradition has certainly undergone various transformations
from the 1920s to the present time. The principal categories of stylistic elements,
while variable over time and with each individual, have essentially remained constant.
Indeed, even in light of the changes in style that have taken place, the area has not
been dramatically re-shaped, merely re-defined. As I see it, the elements of style, as
they have existed and continue to exist in Cape Breton, are tempo, intonation,
bowing, left-hand embellishments, and technical ability. As general categories, they
inform other aspects of style, such as articulation, phrasing, and internal rhythms, or
'drive' as it is termed in local taxonomy. The changes which have been implemented in each of these aspects of style will be discussed in detail in Chapter Ten.

In Cape Breton, the combined effect of these elements of style add up to what is commonly referred to as the 'flavour' (See LD#21/ST#21; LD#23/ST#23; LD#34/ST#34 and LD#44/ST#44). An individual's style is the 'flavour' he or she 'puts on a tune'. Selection of the stylistic criteria will, of course, be governed by the wider style divisions such as old/new. The style is thus perceived as being separate from the tune; the division is clearcut, with the tune being subjected to the application of stylistic elements, ie. the 'flavour'. The 'flavour' is the area where personal identity can best be asserted:

most people around here, I think ... put their own flavour into it ... it sort of gives everybody their identity ... their own little way of doing things. (John Morris Rankin, LD#21/ST#21)

It is the vehicle which accommodates individual expression, allowing each fiddler to "put their own personality" into the music (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). What is the tune though? Since the word itself may be somewhat ambiguous in local terminology, referring to the melodic outline in any of its guises or to the finished product ie. when the 'flavour' has been applied to this, I propose to introduce the term 'model' at this point, where model refers to a fixed melodic outline of a given tune upon which the elements of style - the 'flavour' - may be imposed. The term has been chosen based on Nettl's definition of it as being "at the base of the performance" or "the ground on which he [the performer] builds" (Nettl:1974:11). The model may be obtained through either an aural or a literary source; it may also be a local Cape Breton derivative. Generally, where learned aurally, much of the 'flavour' of the original performer is retained; the model and the 'flavour' may both be absorbed. In Cape Breton, models acquired via literary sources show little influence of any styles suggested in that source. The word model is not part of local Cape Breton
terminology. Rather the concept of the model is implied through words such as 'version' and 'setting'. Micheál Ó Súilleabháin's definition of the word 'setting' suitably encapsulates my interpretation of model. Referring specifically to the Irish tradition he says explains the term in the following way:

the term 'setting' ... is used by musicians to denote a particular version or variant of a dance tune. The word 'setting' itself implies a process whereby something which is fluid or moving becomes in some way static. (Ó Súilleabháin 1990:119-120)

The decision to introduce the term model, as opposed to either 'setting' or 'version' is based on the ambiguous nature of both words in Cape Breton, where they are applied arbitrarily to either the melodic outline or to the melodic outline plus the elements of style. The distinction, although it might seem somewhat trivial, is of the utmost importance, and lies at the heart of the Cape Bretoners perception of their music making. In the Cape Breton mind, the musical process involves the application of the elements of style - the 'flavour' - to the fixed entity which is the model, with the end result being the product or performance. According to Bohlman "depending on the cultural expectations available to the performer and the audience, each performance combines elements of unifying style with individualising content" (Bohlman:1988:25). In Cape Breton terms these elements translate as model (the 'unifying' entity) and 'flavour' (the 'individualising' entity) respectively. Central to the process, and hence ultimately the product, is the issue of 'correctness', a Cape Breton term or "emic notion" (Baily 1988:114) which holds implications of restrictiveness, operational in both aspects of model and 'flavour'.

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8.2 The Issue of Correctness

What is correct? ... it's definitely knowing the language and being able to make subtle melodic changes that are just as good as the original, or better. (Paul Cranford in Caplan, No.57:87)

The issue of correctness in the Cape Breton tradition is a nebulous one. Awareness of and adherence to the notion of correctness is a fundamental aspect of the tradition. Correctness functions like an intangible yardstick against which qualitative judgements can be made. Anyone with an intimate knowledge of the music tradition refers to correctness arbitrarily, referring to it for instance as an attribute of someone's musical ability, comparable in merit to their timing or their bowhand:

the older players were very particular about playing the tune as correctly as possible. (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1)

Yet a definition of correctness remains somewhat elusive among Cape Bretoners. Certainly among my informants no verbalisation of the issue was forthcoming. Paul Cranford's perception, as quoted above, comes close to my own understanding of the concept. Nevertheless, the freedom he alludes to - "being able to make subtle melodic changes" - is somewhat generous, since the whole notion of correctness in the context of Cape Breton fiddling is synonymous with restrictiveness within fixed parameters. No doubt Cranfords more casual conception of the issue is coloured by his experience of Irish traditional music, where licence to recreate the melodic line is elementary.

Before examining the issue of correctness and its ramifications on style in more detail, it is important to address the question of why it has such a central role in the Cape Breton tradition. I believe that the compulsion towards correctness exercised by Cape Breton musicians links into the wider, social reality of its history as an immigrant community, as was discussed in Chapter One. Associated with the immigrants' disposition towards maintaining traditions of the old country, is the obligation to
maintain authenticity. In music terms this translates as correctness. In the current climate of change in Cape Breton music, one of the major concerns is that the proper standard of correctness is not being maintained, and that the tradition is suffering as a result. The younger players in particular are often castigated for their casual attitude towards correctness in their music:

some people are not as fussy today. They're more interested in good swing, in good lively dance music, and it doesn't matter to them if the tune is right or wrong. (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1)

For the purpose of the present work I will first of all formulate a working definition for correctness as it applies to the Cape Breton situation. The implications of correctness on the musical sound, as it is constructed from the model and 'flavour', will then be discussed, with patterns of change being given particular attention.

A certain amount of confusion surrounds the issue of correctness in the Cape Breton context for the simple reason that it is often referred to as a specific element of the tradition associated with other more tangible aspects of the tradition, usually literacy. Explanations of correctness, qualified by statements such as "... he wouldn't variate from what he read in a book" (John Morris Rankin, LD#21/ST#21) and "he was always a stickler for playing the tunes correctly as they were written" (Caplan, No. 53) imply that some form of notation was involved as the qualitative measure against which correctness was judged. While printed sources did often function in this capacity it is over-simplistic to confine the notion of correctness to this. Were it this clear-cut, it would follow that a literate fiddler anywhere could qualify as a Cape Breton fiddler, given the appropriate printed music sources. It would also follow that all Cape Breton fiddlers would sound the same. Obviously this is not the reality of the situation. To be a correct Cape Breton fiddler entails more than accuracy of melodic outline. Other criteria are essential, the "... things that couldn't be notated in the first place" (Allister MacGillivray in Caplan, No. 29). In any case, references abound in
printed sources to non-literate players particularly noted for their correct rendition of tunes:

Danny [Beaton] didn't have to have the notes. He was one of those fiddlers that, when he played with a note reader, you couldn't tell the difference. (MacGillivray 1981:8)

Similarly, Dan Michael Kennedy "was very correct for an ear player" (MacGillivray 1981:109). Kyle MacNeil expressed surprise at the correct nature of Robert Stubberts playing, having inadvertently made the equation between orality and inaccuracy:

I was kind of amazed when I started listening to it more, how correct ... how close their tunes were to the actual correct form of playing them, I suppose. (LD#12/ST#12)

This association between orality and fluidity in interpretation and retention is echoed by Fr. John Angus Rankin:

learning by ear, you'd find some differences ... definitely. Because no matter how good your ear is, you're not going to pick up a hundred percent correctly. (LD#17/ST#17)

Correctness then in the Cape Breton context transcends the dualisms of model/'flavour' and orality/literacy. It is best perceived as a value that embraces all these aspects of the tradition, allowing only for slight flexibility within set, restrictive parameters which are themselves established according to perceived authenticity at any given time. Perceptions of authenticity, being somewhat elusive in the Cape Breton situation, may fluctuate between individuals at any given time and also over time. Reactions to the restrictive parameters imposed by correctness will now be examined in the context of model and 'flavour' (since these divisions integrate the
oral/literate dualism) to determine basically if the value of correctness is diminishing in importance in Cape Breton today.

8.3 Correctness and the model

John Dan MacIntyre, a violinist as well as an authority on Scottish fiddle tunes, was a perfectionist regarding the interpretation of the old-time melodies; Dougald (Dughald Iain Ghilleasbuig) and his four musical brothers were constantly warned against modern variations in accepted traditional arrangements. (MacGillivray 1981:47)

Most of the confusion surrounding the issue of correctness is directly connected with correctness as it relates to the model. Here one finds the biggest discrepancy between what people say happens and what does actually happen in practice. Here too is where the division between correctness and issues of literacy become blurred in the Cape Bretoners perception. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between correctness as a value against which model and 'flavour' are measured as distinct from correctness meaning accuracy, precision, and exactitude of the melodic line.

As was determined previously, the model in Cape Breton terms is a fixed melodic outline of a given tune upon which elements of style - the 'flavour' - can be imposed. Correctness is enforced most stringently in the area of the model. According to Bruno Nettl's thoughts on the matter this would certainly be justifiable given the high level of density of that model which typically deters digression (Nettl 1974:13). Interestingly, the model of any given tune may vary from player to player although variations may be slight, constrained within the restrictive parameters implied by the value of correctness. Compare the various interpretations of 'Miss Lyall Strathspey' and 'The West Mabou Reel' in Appendix A for instance. Each individual, however, remains, for the most part, true to the model of their choice. Once a model is chosen,
it becomes a fixed entity for that player. This is true of the past and the present
generation of fiddlers. A similar trend exists in the Shetland fiddle tradition:

each fiddler has his or her own version of a tune which will differ to a
greater or lesser degree from other versions. Such differences evolve
as the fiddler learns the tune, and its form becomes set through habit
so that the basic features of any fiddler's version will not vary much,
whatever the context of the performance. (Cooke 1986:51)

The entire matter becomes somewhat confused when reduced to explanations on the
part of the exponents of the tradition - the impression given is usually that there exists
one single fixed model acceptable within the tradition. On occasion the model may be
re-defined over time. In the two editions (1988 and 1992) of Jerry Holland's
compositions, for example, we can pinpoint instances where tunes have become
modified over time. Again though the modifications are minimal and represent fixed
settings until such times as he decides on an alternative setting:

Jerry has consciously and unconsciously continued to hone his music.
Sometimes one finds that a melody simplifies itself over time. Other
times it becomes more complex. (Cranford in Holland 1992:IV)

In the preface Paul Cranford concedes this point:

the beauty of traditional music lies in individual expression ... the
settings ... are simply Jerry's current interpretations and are not to be
considered definitive. (Cranford in Holland 1992:III)

Less frequently, the model undergoes variation upon immediate repetitions of the
tune.

The fixed nature of the model is recognised as a commendable aspect of the musical
tradition:

A guy said to me one day .. he said if he learns a tune out of a book
he'll only play it exactly the way it is in the book, supposing he plays it
a thousand times. (Tommy Basker, LD#33/ST#33)
Archie Neil Chisholm praised the older generation of musicians for this accurate or correct approach:

the tunes as played 75 and 100 years ago ... most of the violin players were purists in that ... you had to stick by the book. If they got James Scott Skinner's book they stuck by the book. They added nothing or subtracted nothing from it. (LD#31/ST#31)

Natalie MacMaster claims that her uncle, Buddy MacMaster, "plays the tune the same way all the time" (LD#15/ST#15). Certainly some fiddlers such as Dan R. and Bill Lamey showed a preference for following the printed version of many tunes in their repertoires with great attention to accuracy of the melodic line. Examples such as Bill Lamey's playing of the 'Marquis of Tullybardine' and 'Brem Dog', featured on the Shanachie album, *Bill Lamey - Classic Recordings of Scottish Fiddling* (Shanachie 14002) are identical to the settings in Skinner's *The Scottish Violinist* and *the Harp and Claymore* respectively; 'Muschat's Cairn' and 'Prince Charlie's Welcome to the Isle of Skye', on the same recording, follow their written equivalences in *The Skye Collection* exactly, while hornpipes 'Minstrels Fancy' and 'Upper Denton' are accurate renditions from the *Kerrs Collections* Numbers 2 and 3 respectively. The addition of selected stylistic variables add the individual flavour to these. An important point to remember is that these elements of style are never acquired from a literate source but rather from the players own aural experience of the musical sound of the tradition.

This predilection towards accuracy assumes a different cast when referred to in the performance of an individual's own compositions. Those fiddler-composers who experiment with recreating the model of tunes in their repertory in general, allow if not encourage similar re-interpreations of their own tunes in the hands of others. For those fiddlers who espouse accuracy of the model, such a casual attitude amounts to interference with the tunes. John Morris Rankin for instance feels this way:
if you're going to be playing a fiddle you should at least try and learn the tunes the way they're written or close to it, and not learn them the easy way ... just because it was easy ... it sort of kind of discredits the guy who wrote the tune. It's not nice if you write a tune and you hear, you've spent a lot of time writing it, and you know, somebody just learns it the way they want to learn it, that's not the way you intended it. (LD#21/ST#21)

Others not in favour of interference with their tunes at this level were Dan R. MacDonald and Dan Hughie MacEachern (See John Donald Cameron, LD37/ST#37). Conversely, Jerry Holland claims that he "wouldn't look to restrict anybody that would be using my tunes ... it's wide open for them to do as they please" (LD#42a+b/ST#42). Likewise Dougie MacDonald, in the introduction to his collection of self-composed tunes published in 1992, dismisses the notion of following his settings accurately - "if there are any tunes you'd like to change to suit your ear, please feel free to do so." Occasionally, the re-interpretation of the model is recognised somewhat more formally and referred to as arranging. J. Murdoch Henderson in Scotland for example made alterations to some of the compositions of Dan R. MacDonald and thus would be acknowledged as the arranger of that tune (See John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37).

It is thus emerging that there exists two schools of thought on the subject of correctness as it concerns the model, the one favouring accuracy according to the original, the other allowing for a somewhat more flexible approach. Generally, the division is made based on the dichotomy of ear/note players and old/new style players. As mentioned earlier however, these divisions are not immutable but provide for much fluidity. Most significant is the fact that those acclaimed for and claiming to follow the printed page precisely are in reality referring to the pitches only. Freedom is nearly always exercised in the rhythmic structure (Kinnon Beaton tries "to do it as I find it in the book" but "I don't watch the dots and the little lines or ... more just what
the note was rather than the value of the note," LD#23/ST#23) and in the intonation, which often involves a personal interpretation of key-signature and accidentals.

Furthermore the question arises as to which model is chosen since most tunes exist in written form in a number of variants. Tara Lynn Tousenard alludes to this:

you can look at one book and find a tune written one way, and look at another book and find it written, you know, with different notes. I've come across that plenty of times. 'Big John MacNeil' you know, I've seen it written two or three different times at least. (LD#13/ST#13)

Duncan MacQuarrie's setting of 'The Ewie with the Crooked Horn' is different to that which appears in the Athole Collection, although it is identical to that found in the Kerrs Collection. Which setting or model then does the Cape Breton fiddler choose? Carl MacKenzie believes that "the version that most people play, it's the better version of the tune" (LD#8/ST#8) thus implying that there is some local (subconscious) consensus in favour of a single model. In fact in many cases an indigenous Cape Breton model is favoured over any of the book options. The common model (which may then be subjected to some individual modification) for tunes such as 'Athole Brose' for instance are Cape Breton derivatives, which may well have entered the repertory from an oral source, and are thus maintained in this form, distinct from any later, written variants. Another possibility is that the model, as widely accepted in the Cape Breton tradition, may be the product of the process referred to by Bohlman as "consolidation" and defined as "a fusion of several versions, rather than being a single original version" (Bohlman 1988:20). Similarly many tunes by known composers such as William Marshall are found in Cape Breton in settings which are substantially different from their written equivalences - again the product of orality which by its very nature encourages fluidity. Examples include 'The Duke of Gordon's Strathspey' and 'Miss Grace Menzie', both Marshall compositions. Along with opting for a modified melodic contour, Cape Bretoners often choose to
change the key, thus for example 'Lady Muir MacKenzie' composed by William Gow in C is commonly found on D, 'Paddy on the Turnpike' in F in the *Skye Collection* is commonly on G, and 'Miss Stewart' written in F in the *Athole Collection* is played on G.

The correctness that the individual presumes in his or her correct version exudes a confidence in stability; nevertheless, it is exactly such an individual stability that reflects change when any 'correct' version is compared with all other versions. (Bohlman 1988:26)

The reality of the correctness issue with regard to the model is that while some players do attempt to follow the pitch contour of a given model exactly, be it from a literate or an oral source, some modification of the model may happen over time. This can be a subconscious process, linked with musical memory:

I find that if! learned a tune a few years ago, then got away from [it] and started playing it just from my memory, I might have something a little different in it ... that could be from hearing somebody else play it you know too." (Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19);

in most cases ... after I play a tune for a while, if I learned a tune out of a book and take it and learn it and then go and play it for a while and come back and I look in the book, I'm actually playing it different anyway. (Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12);

I try to learn it in the correct way, and then the next day I just play it, and it's totally different. Of course that's my own, kind of my own setting, I guess. (Robert Deveaux, LD#30/ST#30)

The changes that are being referred to here are usually very minor modifications to the model. Once the model is still regarded as authentic ie. when it does not deviate from what is accepted as the norm, it qualifies as being correct. An extension of this process however causes more concern among Cape Breton purists. Certain players
over the years have chosen to experiment with the model, pushing the boundaries of correctness in this way. Reactions to this vary from those who shun it as being simply incorrect (See Winnie Chafe, LD#54) to those who applaud it and actually recognise the modified model as being preferable and accept it as the new standard model (See Francis MacDonald, LD#48/ST#48).

Interestingly most of this experimentation has happened outside Inverness County, and was associated initially with fiddlers such as Winston Fitzgerald and Mike MacDougall. These fiddlers were well aware of the dangerous territory they were getting into:

He [Mike MacDougall] chose to - I wouldn't say change the music - but express different tunes in a manner that was all his own. And at one time expressed to me that in some circles that wasn't accepted ... I always understood that that kind of thing was to be done as little as possible, and there was this fine line that should never be crossed. (Jerry Holland in Caplan, No. 48)

Nevertheless, these individuals became recognised for their abilities in this field. Winston Scotty Fitzgerald was one fiddler particularly respected for his ability to recreate and actually improve the model, replacing the previously accepted standard in the living tradition:

there's some fiddlers and piano players too that have a gift. They can alter a tune without taking away from it. That's a gift. Winston would take a tune in a book, and you might get a note in there that you have to reach for it - a note that is really out of the way - and by doing that it would disturb, interfere with his flow. Winston had a terrific flow in his music. So, rather than having to reach over to a certain area to get a note that wasn't in line, wasn't in the run, he would alter that note to suit his style. And that's improvising ... actually when he made a change, he improved the tune. (Caplan, No.39);

26 Angus Chisholm from Inverness County is one of the early exceptions to this. His experimentation with the model reflects the progressive nature of his playing in all aspects of the Cape Breton style.
after Winston put it together ... nobody would play it the way it was in the book any more. (Paul Cranford in Caplan, No.39)

Among the many tunes he reworked in this fashion and which subsequently became the recognised new models were 'Mr. Bernard', 'Miss Menzies', 'George I. Taylor', and 'The Marquis of Huntley'. His own logic behind the process was simple:

after I got to learn music, I had good tunes out of books ... Gow's and O'Neill's and Fraser's, and all those good collections. The Gows - the music thieves - they'd steal tunes and put variations on it. And I figured, if they can do it and get away with it - well, hell - I can. So if I didn't like a tune the way it was in the book, I'm damned if I'd waste time and play it if I didn't like it. I would play it, but ... I'd probably shift a few notes there. And, oh, it seemed to sound a little better. (Caplan No.46)

Although Winston was renowned for his constant re-interpretations of the model this particular tendency was never confused with style in the Cape Breton perception but referred to as a separate thumbprint of his progressive style, even given that the models he arrived at certainly helped facilitate this new style. In any case, even with Winston, once he had changed the melodic outline to his liking, the new model became a fixed unit upon which he could impose the elements of style, which in his case were often new, and foreign to the tradition, until such times as he might chose to re-create this new model again. Winston Fitzgerald is also testimony to the fact that literacy does not presuppose correctness.

While the ear/note and old/new style divisions do not systematically indicate the level of correctness adhered to, it is true that among those fiddlers most inclined to experiment with the model are those who have been most exposed to the Irish tradition, where spontaneous manipulation of the model is encouraged. Young Cheticamp fiddler, Robert Deveaux admires the playing of Brenda Stubbert for this reason:
what I find from Brenda, she's got really good settings for all the tunes ... she takes a tune, and I don't know if she does it on purpose or if it just happens that way, but she can take a tune, and she can discard that whatever's in the tune ... that's not nice, and put something better in it's place. (LD#30/ST#30)

People like Johnny Wilmot followed the models of Michael Coleman, an Irish fiddler renowned for his ability to vary the melodic line:

I listened to that Michael Coleman. I slowed that fellow down many's the time, and I played him too, to see if I could learn his tunes. Play and play and play and play. Every time I put him on he'd be doing something else. (Caplan, No.40)

There is however one important difference between the approach of Irish and Cape Breton players to the model. This essentially concerns spontaneity. Whereas for the Irish musician the model is reinterpreted spontaneously to a greater or lesser extent in every performance, the Cape Breton musician who chooses to reinterpret the model in the first place will do so before a performance, so that instead of spontaneous interaction with the model we have in essence, a conscious re-composition of the model. For the Cape Bretoner, once the model is re-shaped to the individual's satisfaction, it becomes fixed in this format. This holds true for those fiddlers who are believed to be increasingly disposed towards spontaneous variation or controlled improvisation in their performance practices. Although on the surface their interpretations of the basic model may appear to be spontaneously inspired, in reality they are usually pre-meditated occurrences. In fact, Cape Breton fiddlers have often learned a tune from an Irish player intact, with what were originally spontaneous variations on the part of the performer, as their model. The Cape Breton player will then reiterate these in every subsequent performance. Johnny Wilmot did this with Michael Coleman's versions of tunes, and more recently Doug MacPhee has done the same with Seán Maguire's variations of the 'Mason's Apron'. Consider too Natalie MacMaster playing Irish tunes learned from the playing of Eileen Ivers. While her
performance of such tunes is usually regarded as containing much instant variation
she is actually reiterating the musical choices made by Ivers on one single occasion:

she [Eileen] was improvising, and I wanted to do that so bad. So ... I'd learn her improvisations that she puts in the tunes ... so I played that like her. (LD#15/ST#15)

Likewise Jerry Holland, considered at times by other players to lean towards spontaneous variation in his performances, admits that his variations are indeed pre-conceived:

I'm not a person for the most part that'll off the cuff try a variation ... I'm somewhat more disciplined ... I can maybe do a variation or two or whatever ... to a tune, but it'd be something that would be practiced ... not spontaneous. (LD#42a+b/ST#42)

It occurs to me that the current generation of fiddlers are more inclined towards including such variations of the model within a single performance. While these continue to be pre-arranged their increasing presence might be responsible in some way for the prevalent theory that the correctness value is becoming less important.

More common than internal variation is the practice of adding fixed variations on to a tune. Examples such as 'The High Road to Linton', 'The Drunken Landlady', 'Miss Flora MacDonald' and 'The Drover Boy' all have extra parts, which are essentially variations of the original parts or model. Dan R. MacDonald added variations to both traditional tunes such as 'Miss McLeod's Reel' and to his own compositions, mostly jigs. These extended models may be accepted as the new basic model within the tradition. In the Irish tradition variations of this nature would have been integrated into repeats of the basic model. This raises an important issue for Cape Breton

27Since adding variations is outside the norm in Cape Breton it seems that this might be one reason behind the practice of playing each tune through only one or two
music regarding the dividing line between improvisation and composition. The question of the relationship between these two processes has been addressed by Nettl, among others, in an article entitled *Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach*. In this he suggests that, rather than being viewed as two separate processes, improvisation and composition are in fact "part of the same idea" (Nettl 1974:6). This logic has no place in the Cape Breton situation, where a great distinction between the two processes is perceived. Composition is a recognised and essential part of the music tradition while improvisation, with its implications of spontaneous creativity, is not accepted, but rather frowned upon. Similarly, the composition of new tunes is regarded no differently from the composition of variants of pre-existing tunes - both qualify simply as composition. From an outsiders point of view however this division is somewhat more obscure, given that in reality many so-called new compositions are in essence, variations of pre-existing tunes. Irish musician Fintan Vallely pointed this out quite bluntly and with some exaggeration when he claimed that all Cape Breton compositions sound like tunes already in circulation. John Donald Cameron also alludes to this when referring to Winston Fitzgeralds reinterpretation of one of Dan R. MacDonald's compositions 'Mrs. Wallace':

he changed it from the way Dan R. had written it, and ... Winston wasn't aware of it at the time but Dan R. had written another tune that now resembled 'Mrs. Wallace' because Winston changed the way it was played.(LD#37/ST#37)

To conclude this discussion on correctness as it applies to the basic model embraced by the Cape Breton fiddler, it seems that the value has continued to be enforced quite stringently in this aspect of the tradition over time. Even in the hands of those times. Further repeats would be superfluous, creating monotony, since nothing new is being added each time.
individuals most noted for their ability to reinterpret the model, thus creating a new model for successive fiddlers, the process is a strict one with the new model emerging not spontaneously and continually in performance, but rather as a fixed or consciously re-created entity. Examining the claim that the music is no longer being played correctly with an eye to the model, it is clear that certainly there has been some change in the way the model is approached since the start of this century. For instance, it has been determined that the middle years of the century witnessed the beginning of conscious recreation of the model in the hands of Winston Fitzgerald and some of his peers. Nevertheless, it seems that with regard to the model, conservatism has predominated over innovation to the present day. Therefore the diminishing correctness, if it is a reality, must be linked more considerably with the elements of style.

8.4 Correctness and the 'flavour'

It's one thing on paper, and another thing to play it.
(Joe MacLean in MacGillivray 1981:136)

You learn a tune out of a book, but if you don't put anything in it, you know, you might just as well wash your feet with your socks on, to me, because there's no flavour to it. (Winston Fitzgerald in Caplan, No.46)

The notes have nothing to do with the sound, you know.
(Mike MacLean, LD#34/ST#34)

Playing an accepted melodic outline or model alone is not sufficient for the rendering of a correct performance of Cape Breton music. A knowledge of the musical language - the elements of style - is also essential. Once the model of the tune has been decided upon, the individual then adds his or her own flavouring. In a way this interpretation of the music has parallels in the interpretation of Baroque music, for
example, where the melodic contour was fixed but embellishments were often left to the discretion of the performer. Likewise, Scottish and other collections used in Cape Breton provided only skeletal transcriptions of the tunes, it being left to the discretion of each player to impress upon them appropriate stylistic nuances. To this end, players rarely followed suggested bowing patterns or embellishments in printed sources, relying instead on their aural experiences of the Cape Breton musical sound. Dan R. MacDonald, for example, railed against becoming a "mechanical" player and ignored suggested bowing patterns in favour of those practiced by the old fiddlers of Inverness County. Interestingly in his own collection of self composed tunes bowing marks are added. It is suggested though that their use be left to the discretion of the performer.

The elements of style are critical to the whole essence of the tradition, being the area where individual expression is best expressed. It is arguably the most important aspect of the tradition (See MacEachen 1992a). While, as we have already discovered, the creation of the model is conservative and restricted, it seems that much more flexibility is allowed when adding the 'flavour'. This is the variable aspect of the Cape Breton style, both in terms of each individual, and over time. Where the model, once decided upon, is only rarely re-created by the same fiddler, the elements of style applied might change from one performance to the next. Winston Fitzgerald, for instance, constantly strove to "play that tune better ... tomorrow night .. so I might add a couple of more grace notes or a little bit of bow work, or some little thing that would add to it. It doesn't take much to put a change in it" (Caplan, No. 46).

Again though flexibility is confined within the parameters of correctness, in this instance what is regarded as acceptable in specifically technical terms. It has already been suggested that the area of adding 'flavour' to the music is where the greatest threat to diminishing correctness stems from. Much of this is no doubt tied to the fact
that the area of stylistic elements has been one of the most progressive, and rapidly changing in the tradition. While the range of acceptable stylistic elements has certainly become more diverse, it is interesting to note that within the newer style of playing in Cape Breton use of such elements is kept to a minimum. The expansion of the vocabulary of accepted stylistic traits will be discussed in Chapter Ten. For now, suffice to say that the parameters of correctness have been stretched, and continue to be stretched, in the area of elements of style.
CHAPTER NINE
THE CHANGING STYLE OF THE CAPE BRETON FIDDLER

In the 1970s, the principal concern in Cape Breton was that the fiddle tradition was not being regenerated, a notion that enthusiasts of the music set out to refute following the grim predictions postulated in the CBC documentary, The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler. In 1995, it no longer seems that the fiddle music tradition is in danger of extinction in the foreseeable future. The fear now is for the changing Cape Breton fiddler. Aspects of change have already been discussed, specifically with regard to repertory (Chapter Six), performance contexts and practices (Chapter Seven), and aesthetic values (Chapter Eight). Factors directly influencing the playing style and the musical language will presently be examined.

The current pre-occupation of the Cape Breton musical community is with the changing Cape Breton fiddler. Change, as perceived in this context, impinges upon all aspects of musical activity. The notion of musical change is not peculiar to the Cape Breton situation. Nor is it something that is of recent genesis. According to Bruno Nettl "every musical system has inherent in it a certain amount of constant change which is one of its core elements, required simply to hold the system intact and to keep it from becoming an artificially preserved museum" (Nettl 1983:177). Within a single culture, elements of change may be viewed negatively or positively (Nettl 1973:6). Of course, the two opinions may be held simultaneously, by different schools within the society (Blacking 1977:7).

In his article 'Some Problems of Theory and Method in the Study of Musical Change' John Blacking cautions against the perfunctory use of the term change, in instances where "variation and innovation within a flexible system" (Blacking 1977:1) are essentially being implied. He postulates that instances of real musical change are minimal, and that "the most interesting and characteristically human features of music are not stylistic change and individual variation in performance, but non-change"
(Blacking 1977:6), referring to music as "the art of flexible non-change" (Blacking 1977:15). The question of whether the use of the term is appropriate in the context of Cape Breton therefore demands some attention. According to Blacking's theory, "to qualify as change, the phenomena described must constitute a change in the structure of the musical system, and not simply a change within the system" (Blacking 1977:17). In light of this, it could certainly be argued that in essence, little change per se has happened in Cape Breton music, although the boundaries of variation and innovation have undoubtedly been stretched. What is arguably the greatest development in Cape Breton musical terms - the introduction of the piano and the establishment of its obligatory role - can be reduced in these terms from a change to an innovation, since its arrival did not necessitate the invention of a new musical system, merely an expansion and modernisation of the old.

From the outset, I have referred to the evolution of a Cape Breton fiddle tradition from the 18th century traditional music of Highland Scotland. By definition, the concept of evolution implies the development of one species from another earlier species. Is such a process valid without resorting to the notion of change? Does the use of the term evolution merely assuage the bluntness and immediacy inferred by the term change? Is the changing Cape Breton fiddler a creature in evolution rather than one of continually different character? Debate on the pros and cons of the validity of the term change as used in reference to a musical tradition is beyond the scope of the present work. Given that the term, in its widest possible musical sense, is at the crux of the current crisis facing the Cape Breton community, it will be maintained for the ensuing discussions of the musical style of the Cape Breton fiddler, albeit with some trepidation on the part of the writer. This decision however is most sensible, given the very definite opinions Cape Bretoners hold on the concept of change as it applies to any aspect of their musical tradition. Within this tradition it seems that any variation from a strict norm is immediately recognised as change. This has already been identified at a micro level, where the dividing line between variation and composition
is discussed. Spontaneous variation upon a melodic model is not tolerated although variation of a more fixed nature is encouraged (See Chapter Eight). It is therefore quite plausible for this strict perception of change to exist at the macro level, thus implying that any variation from, or innovation on, the norm is indeed change.

"Now the traditional music evolves; I'm a steadfast believer in the fact that music evolves" (Dan MacDonald, LD#2/ST#2). Over the specified period, c1928-1995, much change has taken place in Cape Breton on economic, social, socio-musical, and musical levels. Certainly the musical sound has not escaped unaffected, but has both affected, and been affected by, change in other aspects of the culture; in other words the musical style both affects and reflects change. It is generally accepted that changes in the musical sound itself are often less frequent and slower to be implemented than other aspects of musical change. Blacking states that "what is constantly changing in music is that which is least musical about it" (Blacking 1977:6). Nettl also points out that "musical concepts and behaviour change more readily than musical sound" (Nettl 1983:185). With regard to the Cape Breton situation, John Donald Cameron believes that "very little has changed you know really, as far as playing the music. It's still, you know, played basically the same way" (LD#37/ST#37). This begs the question of whether actual musical change is a reality in Cape Breton? Is the change regarded so suspiciously today confined to the extra-musical aspects of the tradition? If all the recently acquired external trappings are stripped away has the underlying fiddle sound remained constant? Authorities have generally agreed that style is "that least changeable aspect of musical performance" (Nettl 1973:247). Certainly much change has occurred in Cape Breton in areas surrounding the musical sound. The purpose of the following chapters is to determine whether a change in the the musical style or language of the Cape Breton fiddler has accompanied all the other identified changes.
9.1 The Changing Style of the Cape Breton Fiddler - A New Phenomenon?

They're getting away some from the Scottish playing, I'd say.
(Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19)

I would say that ... it is no longer basically Scottish at all.
(Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)

Now ... it's changing into ... a Cape Breton style.
(Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17)

It is ironic that the international recognition of Cape Breton as a unique stronghold of 18th century Highland music has coincided with what some regard as the period of greatest change in the musical tradition. Perhaps the journey towards this recognition is responsible for generating these changes? Or perhaps these changes were already being realised but were not confronted? Perhaps the current climate of fear for the changing Cape Breton fiddler is a symptom of a pattern already established in Cape Breton whereby the collective head is buried in the sand, ignoring a potential threat until it is no longer possible to do so?

Typically an association is made between change and the younger members of society. In this respect, Cape Breton is no exception. Certainly there is a sense of adventure inherent in the younger generation which in musical terms may be channelled into the creation of new sounds. Mick Moloney concedes this point:

it is in the nature of young people who are musically inclined to experiment with innovative styles, techniques and repertories. They will characteristically work with whatever is available, and invariably something new develops. (Moloney 1992:561)

In the current situation, the finger is generally pointed at the younger generation (those in the 19-39 age bracket), with the accusation that they are solely responsible for the musical changes witnessed over recent years. Certainly they have been
responsible for a certain amount of these changes, created as they respond to the ever-increasing opportunities available to them. Nevertheless, many factors leading to the current situation are beyond their control. It is unfortunate - or perhaps fortunate - that the acceleration in changes characterising the present time coincides with an international awareness of Cape Breton as the refuge of 18th century Scottish musical traditions. In light of this it is understandable that there be concern that this new-found reputation be contradicted. Nevertheless, heaping blame on the young fiddlers of today is of no benefit.

What is important to remember though is that each generation has at one time been the younger one, and has thus left its mark on the tradition in this way. Successive generations essentially receive the musical sound as it was re-interpreted by the preceding generation. This, I believe, is the key to understanding the current climate in Cape Breton. The problem is that what is now being held up as the ideal is in reality many generations, and consequently many reinterpretations, away from the fiddlers of today. In other words, the greatest obstacle between the current young generation of Cape Breton fiddler and the pure sound of 18th century Scotland, considered the ideal, is manifest among the intervening generations of fiddlers. The inexorable process of change has meant that the conflict between tradition and innovation has been part of the Cape Breton scene at least from the late 1920s onwards. The consequences vary from the subtle to the obvious. Prior to the present climate, the most recent era in which similar challenges were faced was that of the 1940s and '50s. As observed in Chapter Three, this was a period of great musical activity and change. This leads to another suggestion - perhaps there is a parallel between increased musical activity and increased musical change? In that case, which precedes which? The lasting consequence of the activity of the '40s and '50s has been that the perception of what the Cape Breton sound was, or should be, changed. Two styles emerged, the one affiliated with the Scottish tradition, the second, emerging from it but redefining it in new sound terms. This is not to suggest that a new musical
language was called for. Rather, the old language was merely expanded upon and polished. To the fore of this movement was Winston Fitzgerald, although there were others, such as Angus Chisholm, who were also partially responsible. It is this second layer of the Cape Breton voice which has become established as the reference point for the majority of today's younger players. Hence the current crisis has its genesis not in the immediate generation, active in 1995, but in an earlier one.

The current perception of the old and new styles has already been observed, where old is synonymous with tradition, and new with progression. Whereas the old style emulates the 18th century Scottish mould, the new is hinged on that style as it was interpreted by Winston Fitzgerald and his peers. Both styles can co-exist naturally in the Cape Breton environment, although one is more prominent than the other. Corresponding divisions in other aspects of the tradition such as repertory can help define the dualism. At the same time, occasional blurring of the parameters of each is also a reality.

The conclusion that I postulate is that the Cape Breton fiddle style has changed between 1928 and 1995, insofar as Cape Bretoners themselves define change. Certainly there has been an acceleration in aspects of this change in the recent past, inspired by increased opportunities, and mostly from external, non-Cape Breton sources. Nevertheless, this change has not happened suddenly and without warning, but as in any tradition has been in operation constantly. While usually of a more subtle nature, one other period characterised by intense change, can be identified. This is the 1940s and '50s. At the centre of this progressive movement was Winston Fitzgerald. The ramifications of this period's musical changes have been long lasting. Most significantly, the new style, the second strand of the Cape Breton sound, gradually gained recognition as the norm. For an increasing number of subsequent fiddlers this sound, as it was developed by Winston and his peers, became the new reference point. The first significant metamorphosis of the Cape Breton fiddle style
was thus irrevocably introduced by the mid-20th century. In the crisis of the early '70s, the concern was with reviving the fiddle tradition; little attention was paid to the choice of sound model. Since that time the tradition has stabilised and expanded. Increased numbers of younger fiddlers, and added opportunities have activated much change. The danger in this is that what they are changing has already been removed from the ideal, or pure sound. The Cape Breton fiddler is thus facing a second crisis. Perhaps this will prove a more difficult one to resolve.

9.2 Towards Stylistic Change

It has now been determined that stylistic change is an issue for the Cape Breton fiddler of 1995 as it has been for preceding generations, certainly since the beginning of this century. Before examining the individual elements of style and attempting to assess the degree of change implemented in the case of each, it is important to survey the larger picture, exploring the various factors, musical and extra-musical, which have contributed to musical change at the level of style.

(a) The Changing Environment and it's Consequences on Style

The issue of regional styles in the context of Cape Breton fiddling is a complex and ill-defined one, in that there is no consensus of opinion on whether regional styles exist today, or indeed ever existed. In the current environment occasional reference is made to a prevailing Mabou Coal Mines style (See LD#2/ST#2; LD16/ST#16 and LD#53/ST#53). This is contradicted by others:
I will not say, a hundred percent, that there was a Mabou Coal Mines style. I think that comes from the fact that Mabou Coal Mines had quite a few players, see ... but I don't think that as far as innovating a style of their own, that was so different from ordinary playing, I don't think that existed at all. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#6/ST#6)

Likewise some individuals can identify several distinct regional styles (Dan MacDonald, LD#2/ST#2) while others confuse regionalism with ethnic divides:

there's three different styles of playing in Cape Breton. There's the Inverness style, and there's the Sydney Mines style, and, if you will, the Acadian style, you know, the Scotch French style. (Tommy Basker, LD#33/ST#33)

This of course does mould to the concept of regional distiction with little difficulty, since those ethnic groups most inclined towards the fiddle music tradition, the French Acadians and the Micmac Indians, are segregated geographically, the former in villages such as Cheticamp, the latter in reserves, such as Eskasoni. Similarly, those with a strong Irish bent, are typically associated with the Northside area of Sydney Mines, North Sydney, Bras d'Or and environs.

It seems to me that it is very likely that regional styles of music would have characterised the early Cape Breton scene. Although the relatively small land space involved, the lack of instrumental variety, and the strong association with the dance might be seen as negating the case for the concept of regional distinctions, it is important to balance these factors against other social factors. Cape Breton, until the early decades of this century, existed in isolation from the rest of North America. Internally, isolation was also significant, the combination of bad weather conditions for several months of the year and lack of a communication infra-structure, resulting in each community being effectively insular. Since the pioneers typically settled in family groups, gravitating only towards others originally from the same part of Scotland, each community was bound together by strong family, religious and
linguistic ties. This remained a reality until the twentieth century arrived. Given such an environment it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the music fostered in these communities would have been individual in nature and distinct from all other communities. The fact that the notion of regional styles is retained to some extent today gives added credence to this supposition. Perhaps though, local or community styles would be more suitable appellations, given the narrow geographical confines concerned.

The concept of regional styles in the current Cape Breton environment is more difficult to justify. In fact, it seems to me to be an invalid argument altogether. The social reality of Cape Bretons increasing exposure to, and alignment with, the wider North American community since the 1920s, has resulted in - or perhaps caused - greater unity within the island. Inevitably this would have significant consequences on the musical tradition, particularly in light of comments by individuals such as John Blacking - "changes in musical style have generally been reflections of changes in society" (Blacking 1973:76). In musical terms, these social changes effectively anticipated a move towards homogeneity of style and repertory. If this is true, how can the notion of regional styles be qualified today? Interestingly, there is no parallel perception of regional distinction in terms of repertory held today. As already mentioned, the most frequently mentioned regional style today is that of Mabou Coal Mines. I would suggest that in Cape Breton terms, Mabou Coal Mines style is a synonym for what is commonly referred to as the old style of playing.

There's not so much distinction any more from any of the players around Cape Breton today. The younger players, I wouldn't say there's too much distinction between any of them, but in the older style of players, the Mary MacDonald style and Dan J. Campbell, and Angus Allan Gillis and all those players in Inverness, those old Invernessers, they had a certain way, accent of playing, and it was different from Washabuck and it was different from the Northside. But today ... it's very similar. (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1)
This opinion, expressed by Doug MacPhee, was substantiated by many others throughout the course of my fieldwork. Dan MacDonald for instance believes that "the quality of playing has increased, but the distinctiveness from one player to the next has decreased" (LD#2/ST#2) while Fr. John Angus Rankin simply stated "now it's become ... kind of general" (LD#17/ST#17). The general feeling is that there has been a recognisable move towards uniformity in Cape Breton music, although it seems that the move was neither immediate nor all-inclusive. Probably the shift was initiated by the social progress of the 1920s, which saw the emergence of radio and commercial recordings, the development of road and rail, and the introduction of the motor-car. Further blurring of local boundaries was assisted and encouraged by these factors. Internal migration within Cape Breton, for example the large-scale population shift from Inverness to the coal mines and steel plants of the Sydney area in the early 1900s, helped develop uniformity. It is of course difficult to estimate the immediate extent of the influence such developments had on the music. Nevertheless, such influences were inevitable as communities emerged from isolation and began to converge in a general Cape Breton community. Fiddlers were now exposed, for the first time, to others from outside their immediate communities. Peculiar tunes and stylistic traits were recognised and absorbed. Individuals of non-Scottish descent became involved. The result was the beginning of a more homogeneous style, and the first glimpse of an emerging Cape Breton musical tradition.

I don't know what kind of style I have you know ... it's maybe a combination of whatever I'd hear that I'd like when I was young ... I tried to pick up whatever I could, regardless of where the fiddler came from. Anything I liked I tried to put it into my music, you know.
(Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19)

Such an attitude became increasingly characteristic of the Cape Breton fiddler from the 1920s onwards. No longer confined to those fiddlers in the immediate locality, the individual could now choose the sounds he or she wished to recreate in their own
interpretations of the music from fiddlers on any part of the island. The inevitable
extension of the process, again facilitated by social expansion and diversification, was
the addition of non-Cape Breton musics to the range of choices. This eclecticism is
typical of the younger players today, many of whom are happy to dabble in Irish,
American, Bluegrass, or Old-time musics and experiment in combining these with
their Cape Breton traditions. "I think one thing about the Cape Breton style, that it's
kind of a mixture of ... the Scottish, the Irish, and even the French" (Kyle MacNeil,
LD#12/ST#12); "it's a combination of Scottish, Irish, Old-time and, more recently,
some American influence" (Neil Beaton, LD#11/ST#11); "the Cape Breton style is
now influenced by Ireland, Scotland, Nashville, country and western, and bluegrass"
(Dougie MacDonald, LD#32/ST#32). The perception of Cape Breton music today as
a collation of different musical styles is, naturally, a worrying one. Joey Beaton
voices his thoughts on the matter:

I admire what they [the current younger generation] do, I respect
their talent. And it's great that all these other influences are coming
into play ... but I don't want us to lose this something precious that
has made Cape Breton music so popular. (LD#16/ST#16)

There is no denying the fact that external musics are impinging upon the Cape Breton
tradition today more than ever. This is not to imply that other musics have not
influenced the Cape Breton sound over the years. Several instances of published
collections have already been identified as helping shape the repertory (Chapter Six)
and there is also evidence that direct contact with Irish musicians has been a reality
throughout the Cape Breton experience in this century at least. The current fear of
acculturation is fuelled by a greater musical awareness of other traditions on the part
of the musical community at large, so that now everyone can easily identify what
tunes, or elements of style, come from where. The ignorance of these matters in
earlier generations was less worry inducing. An important fact is that acculturation
usually happens at the level of repertory, and less frequently in matters of style. In the
hands of players such as Natalie MacMaster, Dougie MacDonald, and some of their peers, this is being given a little more attention today. Cape Breton musical identity is the subject of another chapter. For now, the focus is on the musical sound, in particular on how social expansion has allowed for, if not directly encouraged, musical change.

(b) The Master Cape Breton Fiddlers

Musical change ... is brought about by decisions made by individuals about music-making and music on the basis of their experiences of music and attitudes to it in different social contexts. (Blacking 1977:12)

The common denominator throughout the history of musical life in Cape Breton has been the individual. Whether confined to a tiny locality, part of a homogeneous scene, or an element in a broader, universal picture, the importance of the individual has remained constant. What has changed has been the social milieu, resulting firstly in the individual's influence becoming increasingly widespread, thus encouraging a lack of distinction in the fiddling community at large, and secondly, the individuals music style becoming increasingly eclectic. Also significant is the fact that today, an individual is rarely influenced by one fiddler alone; instead, aspects of several fiddler's styles are collated and re-interpreted by the individual in the creation of their own style:

I tended to play more like Joe MacLean at first. I think I sort of developed my own style. When I'd hear Winston play certain tunes ... and I'd hear Angus Chisholm play a little different ... I kind of have a mish-mash of that, I guess. (Carl MacKenzie, LD#8/ST#8)
In *The Northern Fiddler*, Allen Feldman refers to "an incipient 'star system'", which has "precipitated a centralisation of musical style and repertoire" in the Irish tradition (Felman and O'Doherty 1979:15). Certainly a similar case can be argued for the Cape Breton situation. Nevertheless, select individuals were responsible for setting standards at a local level in Cape Breton communities prior to the modernisation of the 1920s. According to Dave MacIsaac "communities being so isolated in those times, it was hard for fiddlers in different communities to get to hear one another ... so if there was like a star fiddler in the area ... everybody else would kind of listen to him, to his style" (LD#7/ST#7). Some of the fiddlers who provided inspiration at this local level included Donald John "the Tailor" Beaton (1856-1919), "Big" Ronald MacLellan (1880-1935), John Alex "The Big Fiddler" MacDonald (1877-1958), Sandy MacLean (1893-19) and Malcolm Beaton (1912-1951).

Typically certain individuals are pinpointed as being of considerable influence, based on their musical ability - often innovative in nature and individual in character - and the subsequent recognition accorded them from other practitioners within the tradition. In Cape Breton such individuals are referred to as 'Master' fiddlers. From the late 1920s onwards, developments in the media and improvements in transport were creating a more integrated island community; consequently, these master fiddlers came to be selected by the wider Cape Breton community as opposed to individual localities. Such fiddlers came to both affect and reflect homogeneity.

The late 1930s and early 1940s have already been identified as a period of great musical activity in terms of the media and social events. Coinciding with this was much more specifically musical development and experimentation, regarding both repertory and style. To the forefront of all these movements, musical and extra-musical, was Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald. Comments such as the following give some indication of the popularity surrounding this fiddler: "old Fitzgerald stood alone. He was head and shoulders above the rest. He was the Elvis Presley of the
violin, as far as I'm concerned" (Estwood Davidson, LD#51/ST#51); "after the war, Winston came on the air. That changed everything, that did" (Wilfred Prosper, LD#46/ST#46); "he introduced something new to music ... all the young people that were playing ... were taken with Winston; they were kind of leaning towards Winston's style" (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1); "Winston is like a household name around here. And he was such a slick player, that who wouldn't be influenced by him ... he took everything by storm, you know" (John Morris Rankin, LD#21/ST#21). One of the most popular players on the square-dance circuit, Winston was particularly recognised for pushing the boundaries of the accepted musical sound, introducing new material into the repertory, and advocating a new direction in terms of musical style. In his hands, the Cape Breton fiddle became more refined and polished. Intonation became more defined; much of the dissonance created by the random use of drones in a bagpipe-like fashion disappeared; clarity and definition became the order of the day where execution of left-hand embellishments was concerned; the limits of technical ability were stretched, with previously unheard of keys being introduced, and position work being handled with ease; unfamiliar tune-types became part of the repertory; the value of correctness was tampered with. Significantly though, these developments, if anything, enhanced the rhythmic nature of the music, and the association with dance remained strong, although supplemented with an appreciation of music in its own right. Winston Fitzgerald, as already mentioned, was largely responsible for instigating the second strand of Cape Breton musical style, the so-called new style, which the majority of subsequent players have chosen to develop upon. The clarity and definition of style he suggested in his own playing has been followed through by many of todays players, who have eschewed the constant use of drones and who have no place for tonal ambiguity in their music. Likewise players such as Carl MacKenzie have imitated his unique bow hold. Dwayne Cote has expanded upon the technical dexterity he initiated in his performances. Still others continue to play tunes and even entire medleys associated with him. Many of his re-interpretations of tunes have become standards in the
repertory, the models for subsequent interpretations of the tunes. Arguably, he is the all-time master fiddler of Cape Breton, equal in status to Michael Coleman in the Irish tradition. Ironically, Winston is held in high esteem today by both those being criticised for their inclinations towards change and those espousing the old sound. This is typical it seems in other societies where the dualism of old and new styles is an issue:

the 'purists' have been curiously ambivalent in their attitudes to continuity and change in music. They have lamented departure from what they conceive to be traditional practices, and have invoked concepts such as authenticity to distinguish between what is not good and worthy of study; but they have also applauded the creative musicianship of outstanding individual performers, whose originality must, by definition, threaten the stability of any 'authentic' tradition. (Blacking 1977:7-8)

Angus Chisholm, a contemporary of Winston's, was another influential Cape Breton fiddler, although significantly different in style and performance preferences. Often both are spoken of simultaneously on account of their progressive tendencies: "Angus ... and Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald, were the two that were the innovators" (Archie Neil Chisholm LD# 31/ST#31); "they modernised ... the Scottish fiddling around here anyway" (Donny LeBlanc, LD#44/ST#44). Of Angus, Buddy MacMaster says, "he was kind of more modern style, but yet he did play a lot of the old stuff too, you know" (LD#19/ST#19). According to Francis MacDonald, Angus Chisholm was "the master of them all" (LD#48/ST#48). Angus was particularly noted for his technical virtuosity and the speed at which he executed this. His bow hand was especially admired as well as his effective renditions of clogs and hornpipes. Today elements of his style are maintained in the playing of his nephew, Cameron Chisholm, and also Arthur Muise of Cheticamp, who absorbed recordings of Chisholms (commercial and non-commercial) so thoroughly that he learned mistakes and all (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7).
Buddy MacMaster is regarded as one of the master Cape Breton fiddlers of today - held in high esteem by the current younger generation: "Buddy was the king, and he still is" (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41). Elevation to the status of master fiddler is not the prerogative of the older members of society alone. Some of the more influential fiddlers of a given time have been among the younger age groups. Jerry Holland for instance has had a lasting impact on the fiddlers following in his footsteps. Still only in his forties, his style, repertory, and even his physical stance, have been emulated by several younger players, most notably Dougie MacDonald and Howie MacDonald.

Individuals of this calibre who have become recognised as masters of their field are particularly significant for their contributions towards musical change, with style often being affected. Successful experimentation on their part becomes immediately accepted and imitated by their followers. Among the current fiddlers Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac in particular stand apart as being trend setters. In the eyes of those being introduced to music for the first time today, these are the master Cape Breton fiddlers - "all the kids that are starting right now, they look up to her [Natalie MacMaster] so much and they're gonna all want to play like her" (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41).

(e) 'There's Gaelic in the Fiddle'

It seems likely that the general characteristics of a language - it's stress patterns, it's patterns of intonation, and of course structure of it's poetry - are reflected in the music of it's people. (Nettl 1973: 8)

One of the greatest compliments that can be paid to the Cape Breton fiddler is having 'the Gaelic' in their music. This is especially significant today, since a rapidly decreasing number of fiddlers show this trait in their playing styles. The decline of the
Gaelic language in the Cape Breton community is perceived as having a parallel in musical terms, with the loss of the Gaelic expression on the fiddle style. The assertion that an "English language-based music" is becoming predominant (John Gibson in MacDonald 1995) is nevertheless a bit extreme. It is possible for characteristics of the Gaelic language which have come to influence the fiddle style, to be retained as purely musical idiosyncrasies, understood in musical terms, without reference to their linguistic origins. In any case, many of the current generations of fiddlers, almost exclusively English-speaking, have had no direct experience of an intense language-music relationship. The direct connection has already been severed for the majority of today's fiddlers, so that the concern for the language is generally not viewed by them as something which has any significant bearing on their styles. Buddy MacMaster for instance does not see the decline of the language as being a chief factor in changing the fiddle sound, and believes that "outside influence is changing the music faster than the loss of language" (MacDonald 1995).

Having the Gaelic in the music is a phenomenon peculiar to the old style, and is one of the distinguishing features between the old and the new. This is confidently asserted by both musicians and language enthusiasts alike:

I hear it in so many of the old-time violinists, a certain sound, a certain lilt, a certain style, a certain format that appears to have been influenced to a large extent by the language and the Gaelic singing ... the difference I hear in the music among contemporary violinists and I hear in more of the so-called traditional violinists, may well be that absence of the language ... that's not to say that the music is something less, but to my ear it's something different. (Sheldon MacInnes, LD#4/ST#4)

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28Exceptions include Alex Francis MacKay of Glendale, and Mike MacLean of Big Pond. Incidentally both are in the 60+ age group.
Certain players, such as Donald Angus Beaton and Mary MacDonald, were particularly acclaimed for the presence of this quality in their music. Of Mary MacDonald, Doug MacPhee says:

she could play a strathspey and you could cut the Gaelic, you could feel the Gaelic accent in her playing, just as it was in her speaking voice ... her voice was up and down with the Gaelic." (PI) Johnny Wilmot recognised the same quality in her music - 'she played like she spoke.' (LD#1/ST#1)

The notion of perceiving the language in the music dates back to Scotland, where Captain MacDiarmaid said of Captain Simon Fraser "I never heard anyone make the fiddle speak Gaelic so beautifully" (Alburger 1983:154). Today 'the Gaelic' is represented in the playing of a few older fiddlers such as Alex Francis MacKay. Occasionally, suggestions of it flavour a younger players performance. Wendy MacIsaac is sometimes told that she has 'the Gaelic' in her music. Since she herself has no knowledge of the language - "I only know the bad words" (LD#40/ST#40) - any traits suggesting this Gaelic expression would have been absorbed on purely musical terms, although probably from older, Gaelic-speaking players.

Definition of this Gaelic expression in terms of its effects on the musical style however remains somewhat elusive. Throughout my fieldwork the phrase came up again and again in descriptions of style; when queried on the exact nature of this Gaelic influence though, none of my informants were forthcoming with a satisfactory explanation. Neil Beaton referred to it as "that traditional brogue-ish sound - whatever it is" (LD#11/ST#11). Dave MacIsaac supplied the typical response -"I can't explain it, but I know it when I hear it" (LD#7/ST#7).

It has previously been established that Gaelic mouth music or puirt-a-beul, was a valuable source of repertory for the early Cape Breton fiddler (Chapter Six). Several tunes with corresponding Gaelic words, were transferred to the fiddle, ensuring in the
process that a certain amount of correctness was maintained by the fiddler. There is no reason to doubt that as well as concerning the model, i.e. the basic melodic outline, that the flavour or expression may also have been transferred and observed in a similar fashion. In other words, that inflections of the language were absorbed along with the tunes. It is these inflections that largely constitute the Gaelic expression as it shapes the fiddle style. Some such inflections are realised in specific fiddle techniques such as cutting (See Chapter Ten). Likewise the phrasing of the Gaelic language is externalised through the use of 'flying spicatto', for instance, a bowing technique associated in particular with the Mabou Coal Mines style (See Chapter Ten). Most fundamentally however, the Gaelic language seems to have impressed the fiddle style in matters of rhythmic structure in that the rhythms of the language have dictated the rhythms of the tunes. In Campbell and Collinson's *Hebridean Folksongs, Volume 1* (1969) a parallel is drawn between the alteration of long and short vowels (a, o, u, and e, i, respectively) in the language and the rhythm of the melodic line. It is suggested for example that long vowels are generally not associated with notes of less value than a dotted quaver in 2/4 time, while a short vowel may vary from a demisemiquaver to a quaver. Such an intrinsic connection between the language and the music implies that that section of the repertory acquired from Gaelic language sources would have been strongly characterised by such accentual patterns. Those familiar with the language would have expressed these rhythms and stresses quite naturally in their fiddle interpretations of tunes with corresponding words, extending this to apply to tunes acquired from other sources. It is also likely that those Gaelic-speaking composers of tunes in Cape Breton would have maintained the rhythms of speech in the internal rhythms of their own tunes. The question therefore arises of how a change in the popularity of the language is reflected in musical terms. What are the consequences of the music moving into the hands of non-Gaelic speaking fiddlers? Are the same accentual patterns maintained, transmitted from generation to generation of non-Gaelic speakers, based on their intrinsic musical value? Or does the new vernacular impinge upon the musical style?
The demise of the Gaelic language in Cape Breton has been responsible for some degree of change in the fiddle style. Gaelic sources of tunes for instance have largely become redundant, and those tunes initially acquired from Gaelic sources and which have been maintained, are done so without reference to their origins. Musical changes stimulated by the changing fate of the language were never immediate however. The rhythms of the Gaelic language had already become ingrained in the musical sound before there was a threat to the continuation of the language. Thus a demise in the language did not necessarily impinge upon the musical style. What I am suggesting is that many of the characteristics of the language had already become established and accepted in purely musical terms. Some confusion surrounds the issue however, since there has been some degree of change in the rhythmic character of the fiddle music in recent times. For instance, the rhythmic figure, the Scots snap, once found in both strathspeys and reels, in now part of the strathspey only. Changes such as this, I would argue, although ironically coinciding with linguistic changes in the community, are not the result of these changes, but rather reflections of changes being instigated from within the music itself. The greatest problem inherent in the language-music relationship is not one of immediate stylistic change. As pointed out, elements of the language can certainly be sustained in purely musical terms. The problem arises when these elements are subjected to change, stimulated from within the music itself. It is when this occurs that the absence of a Gaelic language infra-structure is most negative. For the majority of today's fiddlers, the music and the language are perceived as two separate entities, and I would postulate that a resurgence in the language would not invoke a significant musical change at this stage. Alarmist statements such as "there'll be none of it [music] if the language goes" (MacDonald 1995) should therefore be treated with some caution. While the demise of the language may signify the inevitable disappearance of whatever characteristics it has imbued the fiddle style with, the fiddle music tradition, albeit shaped by different forces, will surely not be under threat.
(d) The Influence of the Highland Bagpipe

The Highland Bagpipe has had an important and varied role in Cape Breton since its arrival with the pioneer settlers of the eighteenth century. The pipe music transported to Cape Breton is believed to have been predominantly of the *ceol beag* (small music) variety and was largely functional for the dance. Vestiges of this particular brand of piping existed well into this century with individuals such as Joe Hughie MacIntyre - "his was a music with great lift and step-dance rhythm" (Am Braighe, Summer 1995) - and is continued today in the piping of Alex Currie. Most of the piping activity in Cape Breton since the early 1900s, has however been in the context of the military pipeband:

> pipebands were formed early this century in Cape Breton and were further stimulated by interaction with Scottish pipers in the military during the first and second world wars. (A. MacDonald 1993)

Many pipers joined the ranks of The Cape Breton Highlanders (now the 2nd Battalion The Nova Scotia Highlanders (Cape Breton) Pipe and Drums) and subsequent aspiring pipers automatically followed suit. This essentially marked the demise of the old order of pipers and irrevocably changed the style of pipe playing, with the solo, dance oriented tradition being ousted in favour of the band format and eventually the competition forum. The movement of the pipe tradition in this direction, the tenuous retention of the old ways by a few select individuals, and the current efforts in the rejuvenation of this old style by members of the piping fraternity, are aspects of the Cape Breton piping tradition worthy of further study. 29 For the purpose of the present work however, comment on the pipe music tradition will be restricted to its effect on the fiddle style.

The influence of the bagpipe tradition on the fiddlers' repertory has been discussed in Chapter Six. It emerges that quite a significant quantity of tunes have infiltrated the repertory from this source. In fact, the field of repertory has arguably provided the greatest link between the pipe and the fiddle traditions. Certainly repertory influences have been more enduring than specific stylistic influences. Significantly though, the means of accessing this repertory has moved from the direct to the more indirect. Until midway through this century fiddlers were in direct contact with the residual pipers of the old traditional style, what is often referred to as Gaelic traditional piping. Donald Angus Beaton, for instance, spent much time in the company of his pipe-playing relatives from the area of Mabou Coal Mines. Travelling pipers, such as the renowned Sandy Boyd, ensured direct, personal fiddler-piper connections. Inevitably, many tunes and indeed techniques, were acquired through such direct relations. The utilisation of printed pipe music sources from the early decades of the century was implemented with a knowledge of the corresponding pipe sound. As the century progressed and the presence of the old traditional pipers faded from the scene, the printed sources continued to serve a purpose. The crucial factor was that now the tunes were being transferred to the fiddle without reference to the pipe sound.

Reciprocal interchange of tunes between fiddle and pipes was a common occurrence within the Cape Breton tradition. It was of course facilitated by the fact that many pipers doubled as fiddlers:

in the 19th and 20th centuries there were many musicians who played both fiddle and pipes. At dances these musicians undoubtedly chose tunes spontaneously on whichever instrument happened to be in their hands when the inspiration came to them. (Paul Cranford in Shears 1991:ii)

The process of adapting a pipe tune to the fiddle is an uncomplicated one. Working from a printed source all that is necessary is to ignore the gracings and to put two
sharps in the key signature. Some fiddlers preferred to introduce some slight alterations to the melody. Donald Angus Beaton for instance would "get a pipe tune, and he's sort of change a couple of the notes up, to sort of increase the range, to make it a little more appealing on the violin. Because you have such a broad range on the violin" (Shears in Caplan, No.52). The process in the opposite direction, from fiddle tune to pipes, usually requires a compression of range, and can thus be effected only on those tunes which are narrow in range from the outset:

I've managed to go through the fiddlers' repertoire and pick up tunes ... I have a reel from Donald Angus Beaton and it's written with ten notes in it. And in the Highland bagpipe we only have nine notes. So what I did, I just moved this high D, which we can't play on the bagpipe, into an A, to bring it into scale with the bagpipes. And I got a great little tune. (Shears in Caplan No.52)

Shears also includes a number of newly composed fiddle tunes, adapted for bagpipes, in his publication, The Gathering of the Clans Collection. These include newly composed tunes such as 'Brenda Stubbert's Reel' by Jerry Holland, 'Over the Cabot Trail' by Donald Angus Beaton, and 'Trip to Mabou Ridge' by Dan Hughie MacEachern, alongside more standard traditional tunes such as 'Gille Crubach', 'Cota Mor Ealasaid', and 'Muilleann Dubh'. Of course it is possible that tunes such as this were initially conceived on the fiddle with the bagpipes in mind. In Cape Breton certainly a number of composers have modelled some of their own tunes on the pipe style. In the transfer of pipe music to the fiddle, either directly through tune sharing, or indirectly through new compositions based on the pipe style, the piping tradition has made a definite impression on aspects of the tune style of the Cape Breton fiddle. The narrow range has already been mentioned. Other idiomatic traits which have transferred to the fiddle style include a predilection towards modal scales, particularly the soh mode, the use of gapped scales and the double tonic. These are all examples of the pipe influence in the context of repertory or tune style. The next issue to be addressed must therefore be the piping influences on the style of playing itself.
The characteristics of piping noted above as having influenced one of the aspects of
the musical sound of the Cape Breton fiddler are associated with what is today
perceived as the 'old' style or sound. The 'new' style of fiddler shows a distinct move
away from these particular cliches. Significantly the same is true of those aspects of
piping which have affected the style of the fiddlers. Again certain distinct piping
characteristics have been impressed upon the fiddle style:

If you listen to the fiddlers ... of the '30s, '40s and '50s, like John
Willie Campbell, piping has certainly had quite an influence on the
style of fiddling. (Shears in Caplan, No.52)

Other fiddlers particularly noted for their affinity with the piping sound include
Donald Angus Beaton and Mary MacDonald. The musical characteristics that lends
themselves to this sound concern mainly intonation, the practice of droning, and
certain ornaments, all of which will be discussed in Chapter Ten. The identifiable pipe
sound created when these techniques are applied in fiddle playing contributes to the
distinction between the old and the new styles. The association of these traits with the
so-called Mabou Coal Mines players is testimony to this, since today, Mabou Coal
Mines is regarded as synonymous with old style.

(e) The Influence of the Dance

The question of whether Cape Breton step-dancing is of Scottish or of Irish descent
is quite controversial, and beyond the scope of the present work. Certainly there is
much evidence to suggest its Scottish origin (Emmerson 1971, Flett 1964,
MacGillivray 1988, Rhodes 1964); however, some scholars have drawn parallels
between it and Irish dancing, particularly as it has survived in Newfoundland
(LeBlanc 1986, MacInnes 1993, Quigley 1985). There is no reason why both
traditions may not have been responsible to varying extents for shaping the genre, in much the same manner as both traditions have shaped the fiddle music.

While several references to the dance tradition have been made thus far, a brief synopsis of the history is called for here. Dancing in Cape Breton exists both as a solo art form and a social group practice. It seems that the dance may have made the transfer from Scotland to the New World with the earliest wave of settlers in the 18th century. Certainly there is much evidence pertaining to dancing masters in the early 19th century actively passing on their inherited skills. Examples of such individuals include Allan 'The Dancer' MacMillan who left Lochaber in 1817, eventually settling in Rear Little Judique, and teaching dancing in the local community (Rhodes 1964:269), Angus 'Ban' MacDougall from Moidart, who settled in West Lake, Inverness County in 1812, and John Kennedy who came from Canna in 1790 and taught in Broad Cove (Rhodes 1964:271). The dances taught by these masters included the four and eight handed reels, and a selection of solo dances such as 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Lord MacDonald', 'Seann Triubhas', 'The Fling', 'The Swords' and 'Jacky Tar'. Vestiges of these dances, with their formal arrangements of steps, were maintained in Cape Breton until some thirty years ago (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#6/ST#6). The setting periods of the eight-handed reel (also referred to as the 'big' or 'wild' reel or the 'eightsome reel') and the four-handed reel or Scotch Four were the original platforms for extemporised step-dancing to strathspey and reel tunes. This step-dancing gained an independent identity in a solo capacity as it came to replace the older formal and arranged dances. The turn of this century saw the introduction, from the U.S., of the square-dance in its European Quadrille and Lancer formations. These replaced the old Scotch reels as the popular social dance of the day. Variants of these dances have retained this position to the present day. In Inverness County, the modern square-set is a derivative of the Quadrille; the square-sets danced around the Sydney area are based on the Saratoga Lancers. In Inverness County the traditional form of step-dancing was incorporated immediately into the
new square-sets, creating "a wonderfully exuberant form of square dance" (Moore 199?:19). In the Sydney area, step-dancing has only been introduced into the square dance format as recently as the past twenty years, and is a symptom of the emergence of formal dance classes (Carl MacKenzie, LD#8/ST#8). Prior to this, more sedate walking and shuffle movements sufficed. The older Scotch Fours are now reserved for occasional concert performances, and the eight-handed reels have essentially disappeared. The basic square-set formations, in all their local variants, have evolved over this century from anything up to six figures into a standard three figures. Particularly in Inverness County, the dancing of square-sets has become quite flexible in recent times, having no apparent fixed rules regarding the number of couples involved and subsequently the length of the set. This often chaotic interpretation of the sets coincided with - or perhaps caused - the demise of the caller or prompter, whose job it had been to create order and to outline the dance movements:

there always was a prompter ... and he organised the set. We had very strict prompters years ago - four in a set, that's it; the music wouldn't start if there's a fifth couple in the set. They'd have to get out, or they'd be thrown out. (Donnie MacDougall, LD#27/ST#27)

Calling at dances was something any fiddler could easily turn to; in fact it was such an integral part of the music scene that "you'd have to be careful when you were saying your prayers that you didn't mix that in with it!" (Joe Neil MacNeil, LD#34/ST#34). Some of the more popular callers around the island were Peter MacKay of Scotsville, Mike MacNeil, Donnie Morrison, John Rory MacNeil, Jim MacNeil, Neil John Gillis, Arthur Campbell, and Mike MacNeil (Rod C. MacNeil, LD#18/ST#18). Today, only the occasional dance, in Baddeck for example, uses a caller.

It has also been noted that the dance has played an important role in shaping the repertory throughout this century. Changing dance fashions led to the introduction of
new tunes into the repertory at various times and also allowed for the demise of others. Tune-types such as the polka for instance thus had a very short functional lifespan within the Cape Breton tradition. The fate of the hornpipe changed quite significantly as it became disassociated with a particular dance; the tune-type only survived in the repertory by affiliation to stronger tune-types, such as the reel. The jig was rarely found in Cape Breton before the turn of the century since it had no corresponding dance. Introduction and acceptance of the type is largely due to the popularity of the square-sets, of which it was, and is, an integral part. Dancing, in both its solo and social formats, has played a large part in the formation of tune groups or medleys. For square-dancing, tunes of a single type, mainly jigs or reels, are grouped together. The solo step-dancing has retained the strathspey-reel format of the old Scotch reels. This tune-type formation has become a thumbprint of the Cape Breton sound, remaining central to performance, even in non-dance situations.

The intensity of the fiddler-dancer relationship, and the recent, initial signs of its dilution have already been observed (See Chapter 7.1). The transfer of energy from musician to dancer and vice versa has always been a chief stimulus to performance in Cape Breton. In more specifically musical terms this energy was stimulated by a close relationship between the tune and the step. Whereas the fiddle music of Cape Breton, practiced within the strict confines of 'correctness' allows little room for variation, the essence of the step-dance tradition lies in its extemporised nature. Certainly one supported, if not demanded, the other. Ironically, the current perception of diminishing correctness in the fiddling coincides with a more formalised attitude to the dance, with individual steps and routines being pre-arranged. Nevertheless, there remains a general consensus that certain tunes are more appropriate to the dance than others. While this applies to some extent to the square-sets, it most frequently refers to the solo step-dancing. This is maintained by Peter F. MacLean when describing the music of his brother, noted fiddler, Joe MacLean: "he had the tunes for step-dancing; you have to have a different tune, different tunes for step-dancing" (LD#36/ST#36).
Internal musical traits, particularly the rhythmic and phrasing structures, are the essential criteria for establishing whether a tune is good for step-dancing to. The suitability of a tune for dance purposes is further underlined by a process of matching the steps of the dance to the rhythms in the tune. The phrase structure is an important element in this. The simple and balanced four-bar phrases correspond to the typical step (although in an older style the step was based on a two-bar rhythmic fragment). The repeat of the step on the alternate foot concludes the eight-bar section of music. Marrying the step to the tune is becoming less typical in Cape Breton today as, instead of interacting spontaneously with the tune, today's dancers are more inclined to pre-arrange set routines of steps ready made for a performance, irrespective of the tune being played. The 'routine' concept is further solidified in the practice of two dancers performing perfectly synchronised steps together. The notion of particular tunes being more suitable for dancing is in danger of disappearing in view of these attitudes and practices. This is a concern with tune style as opposed to performance style. An extension of this occurs when the process of composition is directly affected by reference to the dance style. Both John Morris Rankin and Jerry Holland, among others, admit to considering the dance in the 'making' of certain new tunes. 'Michael's Reel' by John Morris, is one of his own tunes which he feels is particularly suited to the dance (LD#21/ST#21).

To what extent has the dance and changes in the dance affected the musical sound created by the Cape Breton fiddler? Reference has already been made to the perceived shift between the fixed and non-fixed aspects of the tradition, in other words, the increase of variation on the fiddlers part (See Chapter 8.3) versus a decrease on the dancers part. Although no solid evidence exists to corroborate the theory, I would suggest that one validates the other. Therefore a change in the basic approach to the dance, has, at this level, directly affected the musical sound. Tempo or timing is also central to the issue. One of the criticisms being levelled at the younger fiddlers of today is based on the increased tempo which has come to
characterise the Cape Breton sound. The validity of this criticism will be questioned in Chapter Ten. The question here is, has an increase in musical tempo caused the equivalent in the dance? Or did the impetus towards an increased tempo initially come from the dance? The latter opinion is most commonly held. Fr. John Angus Rankin for example believes that "dances have become faster and maybe that's what speeded up the music" (LD#17/ST#17). Carl MacKenzie too finds that "the younger step-dancers really want you to play fast for them" (LD#8/ST#8). Jackie Dunn states that "I think some of it may have come from step-dancers wanting a real lively tempo when they do their solo dancing, because I definitely like it faster than slower; it's more tiring to dance to a slower tempo" (LD#41/ST#41). Certainly this argument can be fuelled by the fact that dances have indeed become somewhat more simplified in recent times, the square-dancing in number and structure of figures, the step-dancing through pre-arranged routines. It does seem likely that such changes pre-empted the corresponding musical or tempo changes. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that those fiddlers condemned for playing at faster tempi perform most regularly in contexts removed from the dance. It emerges therefore, that the increase in tempo affecting the fiddle and the dance traditions, has not emanated totally from either one, but instead reflects the changing objectives of both.

It seems that the greatest influences of the dance on the fiddle tradition in Cape Breton have not been in the area of style, but on other areas such as repertory and medley construction. Likewise, specific instances of the fiddle music tradition affecting the dance are outside the area of style. For instance, the solo step-dance tradition originated as a strongly percussive force. Over the last number of decades there has been a gradual move towards a "lighter and near-silent" version of the same, typified in the dancing of Harvey Beaton and Willie Fraser for instance (MacInnes 1993). No doubt this is one consequence of the transformation of the musical sound from the unaccompanied fiddler to the fiddle and piano combination of today. It may also be bowing to the notion of the music being a valued performance
art, the validity of which no longer depends on the dance. Certainly the dance and music traditions have impinged upon one another where aspects of style are concerned; nevertheless it is often difficult in these circumstances to determine where the impetus originated.

Interestingly, step-dancing has done more to shape the style of the piano accompaniment. Many of the basic rhythms of the local step-dance tradition have been directly transferred to the piano. The quintessential rhythmic fragment of the piano accompanying a reel represents the basic reel step:

![Musical notation]

R = Right Foot  
L = Left Foot

Similarly, the equivalent six beats per bar marked by the dancer in the jig figures of a square-set can be identified in the basic piano rhythm used to accompany that tune-type. Reciprocally, it seems likely that the strongly syncopated style of the piano has been the chief influence behind some of the most recently composed steps.
(f) Accompaniment and its Influence

To me the violin is a beautiful instrument but without the piano it's like a bell without a tongue. (Marie MacLellan in MacGillivray 1988:191)

The Cape Breton sound in 1995 is unequivocally contained within the combination of solo fiddle plus a very distinctive style of piano accompaniment. Within a very short time space, merely a few decades, the piano has established itself as much more than a mere background accompanying instrument; while it's role is still essentially one of accompaniment in reality it has come to be an equal partner with the fiddle, in that its presence is essential in performance. As Kate Dunlay noted "the sound is not Cape Breton without it" (Dunlay 1989b:27). In practical terms this translates into every hall being equipped with a piano and, most recently, a concern with keeping these well maintained. The evolution of the fiddle-piano partnership, coinciding with the development of a style peculiar to Cape Breton, is one which deserves attention. An indepth study of this process however is beyond the scope of the present work. While I do suggest that the elevation of the piano to equal status with the fiddle has arguably been the greatest contributing factor in creating a distinct Cape Breton sound in this century, and is in fact the thumbprint of that sound, I will confine my discussions on it to a brief overview of the development of the accompaniment style, with specific regard to how it has helped redefine the fiddle style.

Besides the piano, the guitar has been the other accepted accompanying instrument in Cape Breton since the 1930s. Some of the first guitar players featured on recordings of Cape Breton fiddlers include J.D. MacKenzie, Mikey MacIntyre and Estwood Davidson. With few exceptions however the guitar is used to supplement the piano rather than to provide an alternative to it, and as such has had little direct influence on the evolving fiddle style. In fact, the opposite has been true for those guitar players who have developed an ability to play tunes on the guitar, a practice started
by John Allan Cameron in the '50s and continued today with Dave MacIsaac and, more recently, Gordie Sampson. Whereas John Allan Cameron plays a 12 string flattop, and picks the tunes with a thumbpick using only downstrokes, MacIsaac uses a different style:

[He] uses a dynamic variety of down and up flatpick patterns, often changing direction to follow the bowing of a traditional fiddle player. This sometimes necessitates adventurous left-hand fingering because of the differences between violin and guitar tuning ... MacIsaac is also able to reproduce on his guitar all the subtle trills, turns, wavers, warbles, and compound grace notes typical of and essential to the music of the Cape Breton fiddlers, and so difficult to obtain from a fretted, unbowed string. (Stecher 1992b)

The addition of guitar to the standard fiddle/piano combination requires a certain amount of pre-arrangment particularly in a recording context, when chord charts are often used to guide piano and guitar in the same direction. For the most part the guitar is concerned with rhythmic emphasis, although the bass runs of the piano are often imitated. In any case the accompanying role of the guitar in this context is recognised; the basic rule is not to interfere with the fiddle - "you don't want to get in the way of the fiddle, which is the main thing" (Dave MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7).

The central status of the piano within the tradition is underlined by a recognition among the current generation of young players of the importance of a good piano player. This represents a marked departure from the past and even serves to highlight the difference among today's older players and the young. Typical of the first category is Mike MacLean, who admits that in his playing he is more or less oblivious to the accompaniment: "I wouldn't notice anything about them [accompanying instruments] because I don't pay much attention to them" (LD#34/ST#34). Among the younger players, Robert Deveaux for instance, sees the choice of piano player as an important aspect of Natalie MacMasters performance - "she's always got good piano players with her, like Hilda [Chiasson] or Tracey Dares ... she's really got the good pianists with her so that makes a lot of difference too" (LD#30/ST#30). Of himself he says
"it's hard for me to get going without the piano though" (LD#30/ST#30), reflecting the general opinion among the younger players (See Wendy MacIsaac, LD#40/ST#40). Increasingly there has been a perceptible recognition that fiddle players standards be matched by standards in the piano playing. An outstanding fiddler performing with mediocre accompaniment is no longer acceptable. Jackie Dunn believes that "the better your accompaniment, the better you play" (LD#41/ST#41). Likewise Natalie MacMaster acknowledges the asset that a proficient accompanist provides, inspiring her to be more creative in terms of modulations, sudden stops or breaks, and so on, secure in the knowledge that the piano player is well equipped to adapt and react to any spontaneity on her part (LD#15/ST#15). Tracey Dares is one piano player she finds it particularly inspiring to work with - "she makes me really feel like playing" (LD#15/ST#15). A number of fiddlers and piano players have forged informal partnerships, the familiarity created by constantly performing together allowing for a very solid musical sound, and as such often providing the starting point for musical experimentation. Besides the duo of Natalie MacMaster and Tracey Dares other partnerships, given similar recognition as teams of two fiddlers at the start of the century, include Kyle and Sheumas MacNeil, John Morris Rankin and Howie MacDonald, Ashley MacIsaac and Joel Chiasson, Jerry Holland and Mary Jessie Gillis, Kinnon and Betty-Lou Beaton, and Hilda Chiasson and J.P. Cormier. Earlier, Beattie Wallace was the usual piano accompanist to Winston Fitzgerald. From that time onwards there has been a gradual increase in recognition afforded the piano player. Nevertheless even at the present time it is not uncommon for advertising and fees to favour the fiddler, although no fiddler would consider performing in the absence of a piano player. Thus while in musical terms the piano is regarded as an essential element in the typical Cape Breton performance, the corresponding recognition has not yet been quite secured.

An increasing sensitivity on the part of the piano players to the changing needs of today's fiddlers is encouraged by the fact that many individuals are proficient on both
instruments. John Morris Rankin, Howie MacDonald, Natalie MacMaster, Brenda Stubbert, Jerry Holland, Ashley MacIsaac, Wendy MacIsaac, Stephanie Wills, Joel Chiasson, and Robert Deveaux for example are among those who perform easily on either instrument. That this has positive connotations is made clear by John Morris Rankin, one of the island’s most outstanding performers on both fiddle and piano:

when you're a fiddler, it enhances your playing maybe to hear certain accompaniment. So in knowing that ... when I'm going to be playing the piano for somebody else I will probably try to do on the piano what I would figure would help the fiddler, make the fiddler feel good about what he's doing. (LD#21/ST#21)

This is extended a step further when the fiddler actually dictates what he/she wishes the piano accompaniment to provide. Jerry Holland for example was one of the first fiddlers to become actively involved in matters of accompaniment, working with his long-time accompanist Hilda Chiasson, to create a style and texture with which he would be satisfied suited his fiddle playing:

once we got a thing to ... where I was satisfied with it, she was able to duplicate that every time we'd go out on stage, and that's what I needed to hear. Any variations from that would throw me off ... and to play with somebody else would be a definite throw-off as far as, you know, my concentration. (LD#42a+b/ST#42)

While this suggests a certain rigidity in the approach to performance, in reality the piano accompaniment is actually quite flexible, much moreso than the fiddling which of course is restricted by the parameters of correctness.

The piano accompaniment style associated with Cape Breton today is typically spontaneous, with much variation and improvisation within the limits of the tune being played:

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the accompaniment is improvised; the tunes aren't really changed. So that's a very conservative style of improvisation 'cause the melody ... virtually stays the same. (Stewart MacNeil, LD#49/ST#49)

This certainly marks a departure from the style first combined with the fiddle music. Of course the fiddle style at that point ie. around the 1940s was, for the most part, significantly different to the style of today's fiddlers, and it is possible to identify a strong link between changes in the fiddle and the evolving piano accompaniment style. As the fiddle style became increasingly defined and precise, with the emphasis on a transparent texture comparing dramatically with the very full and raw sound of the earlier style, so the piano accompaniment became more complex and busy. In effect, in referring to the piano, as with the fiddle, two styles, the old and the new can be identified in contemporary Cape Breton, with the new being a development upon the old. Today, those exponents of the older style find that their fiddle playing sits most easy with those piano players who adopt a more simple and basic approach, ie. the old style, while the new style fiddlers respond best to the new piano style. For some, the new style is synonymous with improvement - "well, piano accompaniment is, if you listen to the old tapes and that, has just improved like a hundred and fifty percent over the last ten, fifteen, twenty years" (Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12).

For the early piano players, rhythm was infinitely more important than harmonic correctness. A simple chordal approach was favoured, with the basic rhythm of the tune being marked, a style described by Dave MacIsaac as "not fancy, but effective" (LD#7/ST#7). Of course creating volume was essential since PA systems were still uncommon at that time, or when they were available, were centred on the fiddle only, and many piano players at the time were subsequently "heavy handed" (Dan MacDonald, LD#2/ST#2). Typical players in this style included Bess Siddall MacDonald who is featured on some of the early recordings by Angus Chisholm, Dan J. Campbell, Angus Allan Gillis, Colin J. Boyd and others. As piano players became
more proficient, it became common for the melody being played on the fiddle to be doubled on piano, usually at unison pitch. Today players such as Marie MacLellan, Elizabeth Beaton, and Doug MacPhee continue this particular tradition. The majority of today's younger fiddlers find that this practice interferes with their playing, and prefer the piano player to concentrate on chording. Wendy MacIsaac for example says - "I can't stand it ... I find that I start messing up if I have somebody playing the tune along with me" (LD#40/ST#40). This has led some of the exponents of the older style to question the aesthetic value of this practice. In referring to it, Marie MacLellan for instance admits that she enjoys following the fiddler by playing the tunes on the piano, but qualifies this by saying "I know it's not professional to do that" (LD#3/ST#3). Certain older players attribute the reluctance of younger fiddlers towards having the melody doubled on the piano to a fear of highlighting their lack of correctness (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1). Piano players are still familiar with the repertory today however. While playing with the fiddlers no longer provides much opportunity to display this, since only brief melodic fragments of the tune doubling the fiddle are tolerated, the phenomenon of the solo piano player has become popular. Individuals, such as Doug MacPhee and Tracey Dares, are noted recording artists on this instrument.

The Cape Breton piano player quickly eschewed the basic "boom-chick, boom-chick" (Barnes 1993) approach for one more rhythmically active. It has already been observed that the elementary rhythmic fragments have their genesis in the step-dancing tradition of the island. Interestingly, as the step-dancers have come to favour more syncopated steps, so too has the piano player, particularly in right hand motifs, suggesting that the dancer-piano player connection is still important. As syncopated and other rhythmic motifs came to be integrated into the piano style a very perceivable shift away from merely supporting the fiddle, to interacting with it, was put in motion. Part of this stemmed from the fact that from merely marking the primary beats in a tune, the piano began to follow every note, creating what John
Morris Rankin describes as "a rolling style" (LD#21/ST#21). In other words for a jig in 6/8 time for example, rather than merely articulating the first of each group of three quavers, resulting in two piano beats per bar, six quavers are actually marked consistently. This is regarded as generating more rhythmic drive for the fiddler to respond to. Central to the evolution of the new style of piano accompaniment from the old was an activation in left hand techniques. Initially the left hand's function was to provide the basic chord on the strong beats, alternating with the right hand's statement of that chord on the weaker beats. Gradually the left hand became somewhat freer, in that firstly it moved away from sounding the triad, and secondly away from the simple chordal approach, introducing more movement. Mary Jessie MacDonald was one piano player who was particularly innovative in developing the left hand style for the Cape Breton piano player. Living in Boston in the 1950s she was familiar with jazz piano styles, and has been described as developing her style "after sitting in the balcony at big band concerts and watching the left-hands of the piano players" (Stecher 1992b). Certainly one of Cape Breton's most influential piano players, Mary Jessie's style was a synthesis of old and new; while in her left hand stylings she was particularly progressive, her right hand remained more conservative, and often merely doubled the tune in unison with the fiddler. Walking bass or bass runs, either in octave doublings or in a rocking octave style, are typical of the Cape Breton piano style of today, and are often chromatic in nature.

An increase in harmonic awareness is another factor which has been crucial to the development of the new style of piano accompaniment, and is an area in which the current generation of players are doing much in the way of experimentation. For the first Cape Breton piano players rhythm was of prime importance, and little attention was paid to harmonic accuracy, to the extent that often the chords being used were inappropriate to the tune. Certainly rhythm has remained central to the pianos role. Now however, the rhythmic dimension is supported by a strong harmonic awareness. Players such as John Morris Rankin and Tracey Dares for example concentrate on
finding an appropriate chord for each beat of a tune; others such as Howie MacDonald are a little more flexible, and follow the overall harmonic shape of a tune, rather than each individual note: "Howie sort of goes around the tune, and flows in and out with the whole thing" (Tracey Dares, LD#14/ST#14). As such John Morris, Tracey Dares and others represent a further stage in the evolution of the Cape Breton piano style, described by Tracey as being "more fancy" (LD#14/ST#14) and by Dan MacDonald as being "not bang on tradition" (LD#2/ST#2). Both references suggest that, as with the fiddle tradition, the "tradition" being referred to is actually a style not too far removed; in other words the reference point is not the origin but a later stage in the evolution process. Interestingly Tracey Dares admits to changing her approach depending on the tastes of the fiddler she is performing with. Like all Cape Breton piano players, while she may perform regularly with a single fiddler - in her case Natalie MacMaster - it is usual for her to play with others as her schedule permits. While Natalie responds positively to creativity in her piano playing, and in fact would encourage it, Tracey finds that in playing for older fiddlers in particular, she has to refine her style:

I know Carl does not like off-chords. Carl MacKenzie likes me to just stick to the root chords ... so if I'm playing with him ... I don't play as many off-chords as I would if I was playing with Natalie. (LD#14/ST#14)

Kate Dunlay commented on the harmonic practices of the Cape Breton piano player:

regarding chord choice, the ears of the native performer are the guide, since most of the pianists are self-taught or learned from others within the tradition. The development of the style has been organic in that external rules of chording were not imposed on the music. In particular, the rules of harmonic progression in classical music were not used by pioneers of the style. (Dunlay 1989b:19)

While this is certainly true of the older style exposure to other types of musics has undoubtedly been influential in expanding the harmonic vocabulary of the Cape Breton players in recent times. The accessibility of popular musics has been of
particular importance in this regard, especially since many of today's prominent players were introduced to the piano by "taking regular pop lessons" (Tracey Dares, LD#14/ST#14). According to Stewart MacNeil "the harmony that's used for the most part is the harmony that's in pop music ... anywhere from 1959 to 1990" (LD#49/ST#49). Tara Lynn Tousenard observed that "if you listen to music from years ago you're probably going to hear stuff that's chorded strictly I-IV-V-I ... and now you know like they're throwing minor stuff in, they're throwing diminished stuff in ... it's refreshing almost" (LD#13/ST#13). Sheumas MacNeil is one player particularly noted for his progressive approach to harmony within the Cape Breton tradition. The idea of using chords on degrees of the scale other than tonic, dominant and sub-dominant is central to his style; in particular moving from the tonic to the sub-mediant is one of his trademarks, which has subsequently been adopted by other players. Augmented and diminished chords have also been introduced through his playing. The idea of "stacking harmonies" (Stewart MacNeil, LD#49/ST#49) or having a pedal note in the left hand above which the right hand harmonies may change, is also frequently found in Sheumas' playing and in that of Tracey Dares and John Morris Rankin. Other features of the new style of piano playing, which have been introduced over the last twenty years include a subtle use of dynamics, variations in the part and range of the instrument used, the use of arpeggiated movements in both left and right hands, and occasional glissandos. The effect created is one which is extremely full and busy.

As this piano style evolved and became accepted, certain modifications in the fiddle sound became necessary. The increasing harmonic knowledge displayed by the piano players allowed, and indeed encouraged, experimentation in the whole area of tonal sequences. Likewise less rhythmic tune-types such as the slow air were experimented with, also made possible by the increasing capabilities of the piano players (See Winnie Chafe, LD#54/ST#54). Incidentally, the steady rhythm which characterises the playing of slow airs in Cape Breton is, I believe, also linked to the fact that the
accompaniment is always present in their performance. A recording of Winston Fitzgerald playing the air 'Bovaglie's Plaid' unaccompanied, suggests that more flexibility in metre may have been exercised in Cape Breton slow air playing in the absence of a piano accompaniment. As the piano became quickly accepted as the accompanying instrument for Cape Breton fiddling from the 1940s on, a marked change in intonation can be perceived in the fiddle style. Inflections, reminiscent of the Highland bagpipes and the Gaelic language, were disbanded in favour of precision of tonality. Likewise the discordant drones, again an echo of the bagpipes' influence, were eventually dropped, as they came to be perceived as clashing with the piano. As the piano players began to explore the range of the piano, and experiment with syncopated rhythmic and melodic motifs in the right hand, the fiddling began to compensate for this increase in activity by opting for a thinner, more transparent texture, facilitated by reducing the quantity of embellishments used, and sharply defining those which remained. The extent of these changes will be discussed further in Chapter Ten. At this point it is enough to recognise that certainly the evolving Cape Breton piano style and its gradual acceptance as more than a mere rhythmic support has influenced the fiddle style and instigated a certain amount of change. That the Cape Breton sound in 1995 is that of solo fiddle plus that special style of piano accompaniment has been made possible only by both elements compromising on aspects of their style throughout the process of evolution.
CHAPTER TEN
"... AND THEIR SOUND IS CAPE BRETON" - THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

According to John Blacking specific musical changes are an uncommon occurrence and are frequently confused with change at extra-musical levels (Blacking 1977). Similarly Bruno Nettl acknowledges that "musical concepts and behaviour change more readily than musical sound" (Nettl 1983:185). Throughout the present work the social changes associated with the fiddle music tradition of Cape Breton Island from c1928-1995 have been discussed. So too have musical changes in the broader sense of performance practices through to the more specific areas of repertory been considered. Various degrees of change have been observed at all these levels, which in effect merely surround the musical sound. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to turn to that musical sound, and examine whether actual musical change has coincided with all the other related changes which have characterised Cape Breton in this century.

The elements of style perceived as being crucial in the generation of a Cape Breton style of fiddle playing have been identified as left-hand embellishments, intonation, expanding techniques, tempo and timing, and bowing. While in an effort to disentangle those strands which have indeed changed, from those constants in the musical sound, these elements are discussed individually, it is important to remember their interdependence. Aspects of articulation and accentuation, since they are perceived within the tradition according to those forces through which they are externalised, such as bowing for example, will be mentioned in relation to such forces where appropriate.
10.1 Left-Hand Embellishments

He put in certain grace notes to give his fiddling a very special type of expression. (MacGillivray 1981:16)

Much of the personal expression in the Cape Breton fiddlers music is determined by his/her use of left-hand embellishments. The vocabulary and choice of ornaments used contributes much to the 'flavour' created. Changes in the type and amount of these embellishments employed by the Cape Breton fiddler over the years has been a major contributing factor towards the changing style. Certainly many of the older types of embellishment, such as the single and double grace note, are retained in the Cape Breton style of today, although supplemented by more recent additions such as the slide, and the use of vibrato as a stylistic device. Most significant is the discernible decrease in the amount of embellishments employed within a single performance. An older player such as Mary MacDonald "couldn't play what you'd call a straight note, everything was, you know, this, what do you call it with the finger, you know. And to transcribe something that she wrote, you'd never be able to read it" (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1). This compares radically with most of today's players, who, by their own admission, "don't really use that many grace notes, especially in faster tunes" (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41). This trend seems to have started towards the middle of the century. Winston Fitzgerald, in an effort to achieve a cleaner, more transparent texture, was certainly responsible to some extent. The emergence of the rich, busy piano style, at around the same time, furthered the cause for an emphasis on clarity on the part of the fiddle. Along with a decrease in quantity of embellishments used, there has also been a marked change in the manner of their execution. According to Kate Dunlay "the same embellishment may sound different depending upon the speed with which it is employed" (Dunlay 1986a:19). With the early Cape Breton fiddlers, embellishments, particularly grace notes, were played in a lazy, relaxed fashion, frequently resulting in a lack of distinction between them and the primary melodic notes. Today's fiddlers generally prefer to articulate
embellishments more clearly, giving grace notes for instance, a definite crushed status. Of course, evidence of the older approach may still be found, often in association with other characteristics which suggest the so-called old style. The fundamental role of embellishments has also undergone a certain amount of change within the tradition. It appears that the flexibility characteristically associated with the inclusion of embellishments in a tune, has been gradually diminished, so that today there is a somewhat more fixed status accorded them. A certain amount of spontaneity is allowed in the addition of embellishments, although less than in previous times. In particular, it seems that each fiddler adopts a more rigid approach when deciding upon the points within a tune where the addition of embellishments is deemed appropriate. Each rendition of the tune is embellished, for the most part, at the same points. However, the choice of technique employed in each instance may vary (See Cranford in Holland 1992: iv). Proof of this can be found by comparing tunes notated in Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes published in 1992 - namely 'John Pellerine's Strathspey' (No.111), 'David White's Reel' (No.112), 'CBC's Carl and Glen' (No.116), 'Just Cruising' (No.117) and 'Iggy and Squiggy' (No.125) - with transcriptions of these tunes by the same player a year later (See Appendix A pp. 11-15). For the most part, the embellishments included in the live performance were in the positions suggested in the published source.

(a) Grace Notes

Grace notes are used as part of the vocabulary of stylistic elements in both their single and double variants. Single grace notes generally precede the main melody note, while double grace notes most usually follow it. Of course the speed at which the double grace note is played may create some ambiguity regarding its postion after

330
or before the main melody note.\textsuperscript{30} Winston Fitzgerald, however, occasionally used a double grace note before the primary melody note:

\begin{image}
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{music.png}
\end{image}

\textit{Miss Grace Stewart' Strathspey, Round 1 B, bar 4. (Appendix a, p7)}

Single grace notes most typically approach the main melody note from a step above, although the step below is often used also. Occasionally there may be an interval involved between the pitch of the grace note and that of the melody note:

\begin{image}
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{music.png}
\end{image}

\textit{John Morris Rankin, 'Lime Hill', Round 1 A, bar 2. (Appendix A, p 42)}

Another possibility is for the grace note to repeat the pitch of the melody note directly preceding it:

\begin{image}
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{music.png}
\end{image}

\textit{Mary MacDonald, 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey', Round 2 B, bar 6. (Appendix A, p 27)}

\textsuperscript{30}In transcribing the tunes in the Appendix, my strongest impression of the double grace note was, that it fell after the main melody note, with few exceptions. This contradicts Kate Dunlay's opinion, where she feels that "the use of either one or two grace notes before the melody note is common" (Dunlay 1986a:26). In either case the impression is of a given melody note being split by a single grace note, after the piping style.
Double grace notes typically involve a step above or below the main melody note, and a return to it. Wider intervals may also be involved:

\[\text{Illustration of grace note structure}^{\text{Winston Fitzgerald, 'Miss Grace Stewart' Strathspey, Round 1 A, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 7)}}\]

It seems that the incorporation of wider intervals between grace note and melody note is typical of the newer style. Today for instance, Jerry Holland, Dougie MacDonald, and Howie MacDonald are among those who use both, while Alex Francis MacKay and John Morris Rankin most frequently use the note immediately above or below. Many players, particularly those of the older school, tend to use a combination of both single and double grace notes in all their guises, in their performance of a single tune. Less variety is typical of more recent players. While the single grace note remains prominent, the double grace note is less frequently used, particularly in reels. With regard to reels, the range and quantity of grace notes used is noticeably reduced among contemporary fiddlers. Some players such as John Morris Rankin and Ashley MacIsaac tend to execute their grace notes in a very lazy fashion, well spaced out from the melody notes, as is typical of the old style, whereas Dougie MacDonald and Natalie MacMaster for instance prefer the more defined, crushed effect. The norm is for the grace note or notes to be played with the same bowstroke as used for the main melody note (Dunlay 1986a:26):

\[\text{Illustration of grace note structure}^{\text{Alex Francis MacKay, 'Untitled Strathspey', Round 1 A, bar 3. (Appendix A, p 36)}}\]
A few players have recently begun to experiment with alternating bow directions for grace and melody notes. Dougie MacDonald is one player who does this:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\includegraphics[width=2cm]{example.png}}
\end{array}
\]

_Dougie MacDonald, 'Untitled Strathspey' Number 2, Round 1 A, bar 2. (Appendix A, p 25)_

So too does Ashley MacIsaac:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\includegraphics[width=2cm]{example.png}}
\end{array}
\]

_Ashley MacIsaac, 'Mist Over the Loch' Round 1 A, bar 6. (Appendix A, p 35)_

Particularly common in Cape Breton is the use of a first finger grace note above the open string, while the pitch of the open string is being doubled by the fourth finger on the string below. Winston Fitzgerald was particularly noted for his use of this technique (Dunlay 1989a). Today most fiddlers make use of it. Some players combine a single and double grace note in their embellishment of a single pitch:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\includegraphics[width=2cm]{example.png}}
\end{array}
\]

_Jerry Holland, 'CBC's Carl and Gien', Round 1 A, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 13)_

Winston Fitzgerald also uses this combination:
Various other combinations of grace notes are also found. Bill Lamey for example uses an expanded version of a double grace note in 'Bog an Lochain' Strathspey:

This combination of notes creates what is effectively a trill, and is used by many other fiddlers. In 'David White's Reel', Jerry Holland introduces a three note figure to grace a crotchet:

Mary MacDonald uses a similar figure in the opening bar of 'The Highlander's Farewell to Ireland':
A further variant is used by Bill Lamey in bar 1 of 'Highland Watches Farewell to Ireland':

These turns, as they are referred to in the Cape Breton tradition, simulate the roll as found in Irish music. Dan Hughie MacEachern made particular use of this technique, in its regular or inverted forms, in his slow airs.

Kate Dunaly has identified a special type of grace note within the Cape Breton tradition, for which she has coined the term 'warble'. Essentially the warble "requires the player to partially release and then restore pressure with the working finger, thereby indistinctly sounding the note below the melody note. Vibrato is often employed simultaneously with this action, the rocking back and forth of the finger being what releases the pressure. The warble is most often used to ornament long notes which are noted by the second finger, although it can occur in other situations" (Dunlay 1986a:27). Jody Stecher, in an article devoted to the playing of Buddy MacMaster, refers to the same:

an unusual and thrilling rocking ornament that I've heard mostly on the note G on the E string. This is achieved by keeping the first finger behind the second, releasing some of the pressure on the second finger without actually lifting it, and swiftly returning the pressure harder than before, all while rocking the hand. When the pressure is
restored, the rocking pressure becomes more rapid. (Stecher 1992a:32)

This technique is a particular thumbprint of the older Cape Breton style, and is featured widely in the playing of fiddlers such as Willie Kennedy and Mary MacDonald, for instance:

![Music notation for Mary MacDonald's 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey', Round 1 B, bars 1 and 2.](Image)

*Mary MacDonald, 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey', Round 1 B, bars 1 and 2. (Appendix A, p 27)*

Some fiddlers today have made an effort to retain this technique in their music. The pitch oscillation involved is not conducive to the precision aspired to in the so-called new style of playing, and so the warble is largely confined to those who consciously refer to the old in their music. John Morris Rankin for instance includes this in his playing of 'Bog an Lochain' strathspey, this time centred on the note B however:

![Music notation for John Morris Rankin's 'Bog an Lochain', Round 1 A, bars 2-6.](Image)

*Bog an Lochain*, Round 1 A, bars 2-6. (Appendix A, p 40)

He refers to the technique as muting the grace note (LD#21/ST#21).

A particular type of grace note associated mainly with the players in the Mabou Coal Mines style is the substitution of the main melody note with the pitch immediately above. John Morris Rankin is one fiddler who is particularly fond of this technique. In the following example he has replaced the 'a' note with a 'b':

![Music notation for John Morris Rankin's example of the Mabou Coal Mines style grace note.](Image)
John Morris has occasionally used this concept as the starting point in some of his own compositions, most notably 'Molly Rankin's Reel'.

(b) Rolls

The roll as a form of embellishment is a direct borrowing from the Irish tradition. There this particular ornament generally involves five notes, although the truncated version, or short roll, is also popular. It has already been observed that the short roll is occasionally used by Cape Breton fiddlers, for example with Jerry Holland in 'David White's Reel' and Mary MacDonald in 'The Highlanders Farewell to Ireland'. In the case of the latter example, it is likely that the variant of the roll used is the result of the tune being absorbed holistically i.e. model and flavour, from the original source, since Mary MacDonald is not noted for making use of the technique on other occasions. Conversely, Jerry Holland is well known for his ability to integrate aspects of Irish music, both tunes and elements of style, into the Cape Breton tradition. His use of the roll as a popular ornament in his stylistic vocabulary, is one manifestation of this. In general, those fiddlers who incorporate the roll into their playing do so most frequently in their playing of Irish tunes, often including it in the same position as in the original source. Natalie MacMaster for instance followed the approach of Eileen Ivers - "when she put them in, I put them in the same spot" (LD#15/ST#15). Occasionally fiddlers will choose to substitute a cut with a roll in tunes of non-Irish
origin. Articulation of the roll varies among Cape Breton players. Johnny Wilmot was a master of the long roll - "he'd put in rolls in his music as long as that door there" (Tommy Basker, LD#33):

\[ \text{Note: } \]

'The Devils in Dublin', Round 2 A2, bar 4. (Appendix A, p 46)

Both Natalie MacMaster and Jerry Holland use this type of roll successfully. Other fiddlers, such as Kyle MacNeil and Brenda Stubbert achieve the proper effect, although in their playing the last two notes of the roll may not always be clearly articulated.

(c) Vibrato

The use of vibrato as an embellishment technique is relatively recent in the Cape Breton tradition. It certainly had no place in the music of Donald Angus Beaton or Mary MacDonald for instance. Today, players associated with the older style such as John Morris Rankin rarely make use of it for ornamental effect: "I don't think that was the old way of really doing things" (LD#21/ST#21).

The use of vibrato as an ornamental device dates back at least to the Western art music tradition of the Baroque era. It became prominent in Cape Breton as the playing of slow airs became recognised, gradually since the 1940s, but effectively only as late as the 1970s. While the technique was particularly associated with the rendering of slower pieces, it gradually infiltrated the dance music repertory, as a
means of adding color and accent to selected notes. Stecher views vibrato as an importatnt part of the Cape Breton sound, particularly as it is realised in the playing of Buddy MacMaster:

Buddy uses vibrato as an ornament ... it is one of his trademark sounds and is produced quite differently from classical vibrato because Buddy bends his wrist back and presses firmly against the heel of the violin neck. (Stecher 1992a)

Incidentally, the technique of producing vibrato is becoming more standardised after the classical mould in the hands of today's younger players, particularly Kyle MacNeil and Natalie MacMaster. The vibrato sound they produce is different in nature to that which has become typical in Cape Breton, being more controlled, and somewhat wider. Today, the majority of players make some use of vibrato as a technique in their playing of dance tunes, particularly on exposed, longer notes:

Jerry Holland, 'Just Cruising', Round 1 B, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 14)

Brenda Stubbert, 'Brenda Stubbert's Reel', Round 1 B1, bars 4 and 5. (Appendix A, p 45)

Vibrato, of course, has become requisite in the rendering of slower pieces. Certain players such as Dougie MacDonald find that particular notes lend themselves most easily to vibrato, in his case, notes using the third finger on any string ie. C, G, D', and A'.
(d) Slides

The slide, as an ornament appropriate to Cape Breton fiddling, made its first appearance early in this century in the playing of "Little" Jack MacDonald and again, mostly in slow airs. Nevertheless, it has never been widely used within the tradition, although a number of the younger players today are including it in their styles, inspired no doubt by players from other traditions. Winston Fitzgerald made occasional use of the technique, although mostly in slower pieces. Bill Lamey also made use of the technique in dance tunes:

\[
\text{'Nine Point Coggie', Round 1 B, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 20)}
\]

Today, the slide is most commonly in the playing of Dougie MacDonald, and consistently as an upward movement, spanning up to an octave in pitch:

\[
\text{'Untitled Strathspey' Number 1, Round 1 A, bar 4. (Appendix A, p 24)}
\]

Others who use it occasionally include Jerry Holland as in 'John Pellerine's Strathspey':

\[
\text{'John Pellerine's Strathspey', Round 2 A, bar 4, (Appendix A, p 11)}
\]
and John Morris Rankin:

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

'Lime Hill', Round 1 B, bar 4. (Appendix A, p 42)

(e) 'Doublings'

The practice of doubling the note of an open string by bowing the same note using the fourth finger on the adjacent string is a common technique in Cape Breton fiddling. It is particularly effective for creating "a bigger sound", and the general consensus is that the music "sounds kinda plain without it" (Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/AT#12). While this unison playing or doubling remains part of the style today, its use is not as common, and many players, such as Dougie MacDonald, reserve its use for the end of phrases. It is particularly effective in this position when the note as sounded by the fourth finger is preceded by a single grace note. The practice of sounding a single grace note on the upper string in conjunction with this doubling has already been discussed.

Players such as Alex Francis MacKay and Willie Kennedy make extensive use of the fourth finger in this capacity but also in preference to an open string. This helps contribute towards a much different sound than that achieved by younger players who only rarely employ the fourth finger (See Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41 and Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15).
10.2 Intonation

Until the 1940s the primary function of the Cape Breton fiddler was providing music for the dance. Generating rhythm and volume were the primary concerns. It was only after this time that the phenomenon of the 'listening' player emerged, in contexts which were essentially removed from the dance. The recognition of the fiddle music as a performance art in its own right inevitably led to changes in the fiddle style. Rhythm and volume no longer being the foremost criteria, the 'listening' fiddler was free to concentrate on a refined tone, among other things. Winston Fitzgerald was one of the fiddlers particularly regarded for his developments in this aspect of the fiddle style, advocating a much cleaner, thinner, and more transparent texture than was typical of the older players. The reduction in number of left-hand embellishments along with their sharply defined articulation, lent itself to this refined sound; much of the change was linked to changes in bowing patterns; also significant was an increasing emphasis on defining matters of intonation such as tuning, and limiting the use of drones and double stops, and high bass or scordatura. A brief survey of the forty transcriptions included in Appendix A immediately illustrates this point, moving from the full and complex textures of tunes as played by Mary MacDonald for instance, through to the much sparser sound typical of Jerry Holland. The loss of the Gaelic in the music and any identifiable links with the bagpipe sound represented the negative effects of this process. As the listening/dance player dichotomy has merged creating a syncretic fiddler, adept in all performance circumstances, familiar with the appropriate repertories, and espousing a style which can transfer easily from one context to another, it is not uncommon for favoured dance players to be noted for the sweetness of their tone. Winston Fitzgerald certainly was such a fiddler. Earlier fiddlers to be noted for such characteristics in their playing styles included Big Ranald MacLellan, Angus Chisholm, Johnny "MacVarish" MacDonald, and Duncan MacQuarrie. Today the music of Buddy MacMaster, the foremost Cape Breton dance player, has been described as "clean and smooth" (MacGillivray 1981:90).
Likewise Jerry Holland is particularly noted for his smooth and sweet tone. This sound has been further encouraged as fiddlers have become increasingly exposed to a variety of other music types, and have in some instances, received training in these.

(a) Tuning

Cape Breton fiddling intonation is not equally tempered like a piano scale. The do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do type of scale that you find on a piano is in specific tuning. The spaces between the notes are equal whole tones and semi-tones throughout the scale ... but the bagpipe scale does not have equal spacing. The third note of the scale is a little bit out. And the seventh note of the scale is a little bit out. The fiddlers, when they try to learn a tune by ear from a piper, would generally use the bagpipe type of intonation. So that's definitely influenced the sound of Cape Breton fiddling. (Cranford in Caplan, No.47)

The validity of this statement is borne out by an analysis of some of the older fiddlers styles. As is evident from the sampling of transcriptions provided in Appendix A, those older style fiddlers certainly favoured the use of such neutral pitches in their music. Mary MacDonalds playing of 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey' uses flattened versions of the third degree of the scale, here C, and sharpened versions of the seventh degree, or G. Again in 'Lord MacDonald Reel', as played by Mary MacDonald the seventh degree, in this case F#, is sharpened, while the third, or B, is flattened, particularly when played in the higher register. In this particular tune there is evidence of another practice again typical of older style players, that is of playing the note C in various guises, irrespective of its position in the scale. Donald Angus Beaton in the 'Old Time Wedding Reel', Willie Kennedy in the strathspey and reel 'Old King George', Bill Lamey in the 'Highland Watches Farewell to Ireland', and Buddy

31 Two versions of the note C are used in this tune, C natural and C#. It is the latter which is played slightly flat, creating another gradation of the note C, a neutral C which lies somewhere between C natural and C#.
MacMaster in 'Athole Brose', are other examples of this inclination on the part of older style fiddlers towards flexibility in the intonation of the third and seventh degrees of the scale, after the bagpipe sound.

Tonal ambiguity is a feature of many of the oldest tunes in the Cape Breton fiddlers repertory. The preference for clearly defined major or minor tunes among recent generations of fiddlers has already been observed, and as such modal tunes are becoming increasingly less frequent in the repertory. The ambiguity implied in tunes such as 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey' or 'King George IV' strathspey which use both C naturals and C sharps, is less common among the more recent tunes added to the repertory. Where such tunes are maintained, the younger players are quite conscious of distinguishing between the natural, sharp or flat versions of a note, and other gradations of pitch are less frequently found. Ashley MacIsaac, in his rendition of 'Miss Lyall Strathspey' (See Appendix A) for example, while he does not ignore the potential of these notes, (see Round 2 A, bar 4), is certainly much more precise and definite overall in his pitching of the third and the seventh than is Mary MacDonald.

It is interesting that increasingly in recent times the aesthetic value of such pitch gradations is dismissed, and playing in this way is regarded as being simply out of tune. Natalie MacMaster, a typical representative of today's younger players admits:

I hear a fiddler play, older fiddlers, and they're off-key; but that's the style. And it sounds great and technically there's no name ... for the note that they're playing, there's no place of it on the scale. (LD#15/ST#15)

She identifies Arthur Muise as being one player today who shows a penchant for this in his playing, in particular playing his F notes "a little bit flat constantly ... you'd almost think he was in a minor key all the time, like playing in G minor when he's in G" (LD#15/ST#15). Natalie further acknowledges the absence of this tonal flexibility
among her peers: "I think that we may not have that any more, because now you want to play on key" (LD#15/ST#15).

Linking in with the whole area of tuning and intonation is the practice among older style fiddlers to intermittently, and almost unintentionally, sound harmonic notes, around the melody. Examples of this are seen in Willie Kennedy's 'Old King George Strathspey':

![Musical notation]

'Old King George' Strathspey, Round 2 A, bar 7, (Appendix A, p 16)

and in Mary MacDonald's 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey':

![Musical notation]

'Miss Lyle's Strathspey', Round 1 A, bars 6 and 7. (Appendix A, p 27)

This is certainly one aspect of the older sound which has no place in the newer style.

(b) Drones

Theresa MacLellan's music ... she uses a lot of double stops ... she's playing a pipe reel in A major or A minor or even D; you can hear her using a lot of double stops, like using the strings down from the one you're playing on, using that for a drone kind of string. She does that
The use of drones again links the fiddle tradition directly with the Highland bagpipe tradition. Again it is an aspect of the Cape Breton fiddle style which is more typical of the old than the new. As the process of defining and refining the fiddle sound began mid-century through the efforts of Winston Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm particularly, facilitated by the establishment of the listening context, where techniques for adding volume were superfluous, and becoming increasingly necessary as the piano accompaniment style became more complex, the use of drones gradually diminished. This added to the increasing transparency of texture being promoted as the new sound, and removed the aspect of dissonance, particularly necessary as the piano stylings became more prominent. Today's younger players perceive drones as optional extras, to be used only on occasion and only in certain older or traditional tunes (See Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12). Natalie MacMaster for example associates the use of droning with the reel 'Paddy on the Turnpike' or as she refers to it 'Angus on the Turnpike' after learning it from an old Angus Chisholm recording. Of course many of the keys most recently introduced to the Cape Breton fiddler, such as Bb and C major do not lend themselves as easily to droning. According to Natalie MacMaster "it's not a big popular thing to do a lot of droning" (LD#12/ST#12). Certainly this is true today, particularly where the playing of reels is concerned. The transcriptions in Appendix A show a marked contrast between the styles of Jerry Holland, Buddy MacMaster, Johnny Wilmot, Winston Fitzgerald, Natalie MacMaster, Ashley MacIsaac, and John Morris Rankin, for instance, which feature little or no use of drones, and that of Mary MacDonald, Bill Lamey and Willie Kennedy, where drones are a prominent feature.

At its simplest a drone effect is created by sounding an adjacent string along with the melody and was the type preferred by the older players. Drones created by stopping a
string on a particular note became increasingly common, and often helped add a strong dissonant quality to the fiddle music:

\[ \text{\includegraphics{music.png}} \]

_Mary MacDonald, 'Miss Johnston Reel', Round 1 B, bar 2. (Appendix A, p 32)_

It should be noted at this point that the drone sound, as articulated on the fiddle, was never continuous but broken up by the single bowing patterns typical of the Cape Breton fiddler.

The practice of intermittent droning is in fact more common within the Cape Breton tradition, whereby a tune may be peppered with drones rather than featuring any of considerable length. A variety of intervals, consonant and dissonant, may be created in this fashion. Those of a dissonant nature are common among the older style players. Examples are found in Bill Lamey's playing of the 'Highland Watches Farewell to Ireland' and 'Nine Point Coggie' and in Donald Angus Beaton's playing of the 'West Mabou Reel':

\[ \text{\includegraphics{music.png}} \]

'West Mabou Reel', Round 1 B, bar 3. (Appendix A, p 6)

Increasingly double stops, particularly involving the octave, third, fourth, fifth and sixth, took over. Winston Fitzgerald and Dougie MacDonald for instance make much use of these intervals:
Particularly where the playing of reels is concerned, drones and double stops, especially those generating dissonance, are only featured occasionally in the playing of contemporary new-style players. A steady decline in their use can actually be identified since the middle years of this century. The bowing embellishment known as a cut however represents an opportunity for the integration of a drone-like effect for many players. Jerry Holland for instance uses an octave doubling in this rhythm in 'Iggy and Squiggy Reel' for example:

Winston Fitzgerald used thirds and fourths for similar figures in 'Mist on the Loch':

Outside the embellishment of the cut, fiddlers such as Jerry Holland, Ashley MacIsaac, Mike MacDougall, Buddy MacMaster, Johnny Wilmot, Donny LeBlanc, and Natalie MacMaster make limited use of drones and double stops. Interestingly,
many of those contemporary fiddlers associated with the old style of playing such as John Morris Rankin, Alex Francis MacKay and Donald MacLellan also use substantially fewer drones and double stops than their stylistic predecessors, no doubt a concession to the style of piano accompaniment with which they find themselves in performance contexts.

(c) High Bass

The use of drones was most particularly associated with what Cape Bretoners refer to as high bass playing - essentially the re-tuning of the fiddle strings from standard pitch, a practice known as scordatura. The extra volume emanating from an instrument re-tuned in this manner made it a viable option for fiddle players in the days before amplification systems became common. It is generally accepted that "when amplification came in, the tuning began to die out, because it was no longer necessary" (MacGillivray 1981:113). Similarly, the added resonances created by such a practice did not conform to the growing taste for clarity and precision of texture, evident from the mid-century. This, further underlined by the evolving complex piano style, would certainly have encouraged the demise of the high bass style. Today, the practice is maintained as a novelty, with most of the fiddlers having one high bass group of tunes - usually including the strathspey 'Christy Campbell' - in their repertories. Previously however, fiddlers would have been familiar with a large quantity of tunes in this style. Mary MacDonald for example is reputed to have had thirty or forty high bass tunes; of Archibald J. MacKenzie (1861-1939) it was said that "he seldom performed without utilizing high bass tuning" (MacGillivray 1981:50), while Dan Allan MacLellan (1870-1946) apparently "could play all night on the high bass and tenor - [he had] hundreds of tunes" (MacGillivray 1981:59).
David Johnson (1984) identifies three types of scordatura popular in eighteenth
century Scotland - ad'a'e', ae'a'e" and ae'a'c#". The first of these is high bass proper as
it is known in Cape Breton, where the lowest string is raised a tone. The second
tuning was also used by Cape Breton fiddlers and referred to as "high bass and tenor"
or "high bass and counter". A low bass tuning was also possible, whereby the low G
string was dropped a tone to F. Ranald Kennedy was one fiddler who favoured this
particular approach, having learned it from Donald John "the Tailor" Beaton. Today
this tuning is uncommon, although Dave MacIsaac occasionally uses it (Dave
MacIsaac, LD#7/ST#7). Besides creating additional volume through the resonance of
the strings when tuned in these ways, the practice of high bass also facilitated the
performance of a tune in octaves by two fiddlers. Similarly, the uses of these tuning
patterns made the use of open string drones particularly striking.

10.3 Expanding Techniques

The opportunities afforded the Cape Breton fiddler through the establishment of a
performance context removed from the dance, ie a 'listening' context, combined with
the progressive experiments of Winston Fitzgerald among others, encouraged
exploration in the area of technique. This of course represents that area of the music-
making process referred to colloquially as the 'flavour'. As was observed in Chapter
Eight correctness, insofar as the 'flavour' is concerned, has been redefined among
recent generations of fiddlers, beginning in the 1940s, and particularly with Winston
Fitzgerald. While the quantity of techniques used to impart personal expression at this
level has been significantly reduced, as a thinner, clearer texture has become the
norm, the variety of these techniques has increased. This has already been considered
with regard to embellishments, bowing techniques, and drones etc. While expanding
upon the types of techniques which have long been part of the tradition has been an
important feature in this regard, another trend has been to introduce techniques previously unfamiliar to the Cape Breton fiddler. This has been increasingly feasible as fiddlers became exposed to and familiar with other musical traditions and practices.

The ease with which today's fiddlers can play in any key is a relatively new phenomenon, and one which has been facilitated by the improvements in piano accompaniment, thus providing a confident support to experiments of the fiddler in this area. Most of the earlier fiddlers were limited as regards the number of keys in which they could perform. Today this is still evident in the narrow choice of keys to which some of the old style players such as Willie Kennedy and Mike MacLean confine themselves. Much of this of course links into the pipes as a source of repertory and the subsequent limitations on keys which this would imply. The introduction of published sources of tunes from the 1940s onwards brought other potential keys to the attention of the fiddlers. Certain early players such as Hugh A. MacDonald however, merited special distinction for their ability to play in more unusual keys (MacGillivray 1981:35). Others such as Sandy MacLean, "Big" Ranald MacLellan, and Johnny "MacVarish" MacDonald were noted for their ability to play "lots of the tunes in three or four keys" (MacGillivray 1981). Bb was a key regarded as particularly difficult among the fiddling community and as such was rarely used. One exception was Johnny "Ranald" Beaton (1862-1928) who "played some hard stuff on Bb and F - all the flats. One tune I remember him playing was 'Mary Walker's Reel' on Bb. He'd play in pretty near any key" (MacGillivray 1981:11). "Little" Simon Fraser was another fiddler particularly interested in what was perceived as more challenging keys. The popularising of such keys as F, Bb, and Eb owed much to the playing of Winston Fitzgerald. He claimed a special affinity with these keys - "I like the tunes in the flats - Eb, Bb, F; you get a better tone on some of those keys. When I get a new book, I mark all the tunes in the flats - that's a priority" (MacGillivray 1981:103). Others such as Dan R. MacDonald and Dan Hughie MacEachern also
included many tunes in these tonal areas in their repertories. The movement away from modality has thus been compensated for by an expansion in the choice of tonal areas. Today's fiddlers, rather than using the major, minor, and modal forms of a single key, increasingly opt for the major and minor forms alone, but maximize on variety by doing so for a greater range of keys. Certainly the tonal centres of A, D, and G, as used by the older fiddlers remain popular. A brief survey of the keys included in Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes however serves to highlight the variety typical today. Here the tonal centres used are A, Bb, B, C, D, E, F, F#, and G, and in either their major, minor or modal guises.

The use of positions beyond the first is again a practice which was unfamiliar to the early Cape Breton fiddlers. Certainly, their physical approach to the instrument was not conducive to higher position work. Many of the traditional tunes, particularly those obtained from piping and vocal sources, were confined to the first position. Even within this, many were quite narrow in range, pipe tunes for instance being restricted to the interval of a ninth. In an article in The Clansman magazine, John Donald Cameron identifies Angus Chisholm and Dan Hughie MacEachern as the fiddlers responsible for introducing challenging position work into the Cape Breton tradition - "tunes that were written in the third or fourth position weren't often tried by the less gutsy fiddlers, but once they saw Angus Chisholm or Dan Hughie try them, they felt maybe they could do the same" (MacEachen 1992b). Earlier Dougal MacIntyre and "Little" Jack MacDonald were noted for their experimentations in this area. It was certainly however the middle years of this century before higher position work became more widespread within the tradition, and came to be integrated into compositions by Dan R. MacDonald and Dan Hughie MacEachern for example. There is undoubtedly a much more general use of position work within the current tradition, which of course has been further facilitated by the classical training of some fiddlers. Nevertheless position work is restricted as regards the number of tunes it applies to; in fact there seems to be a fairly small, standard body of dance tunes, such
as 'The Contradiction Reel' and 'Seán Maguire's Reel', along with various slow airs, common to the majority of today's fiddlers, requiring movement outside of the first position.

The idea of incorporating technically challenging tunes into the repertory again has become increasingly popular since the 1940s, and the emerging of a 'listening' context in which such show pieces could be appreciated. This of course was facilitated by - or perhaps encouraged - advances in the ability of the Cape Breton fiddler. Tunes involving the entire first position range of the fiddle, and more, were introduced and imitated in local compositions such as in the tunes of Dan R. MacDonald and Dan Hughie MacEachern. This represented a marked departure from the limited range typical of the older tunes, dictated as they were largely by piping and vocal sources. Local compositions introduced more complex elements; tunes by Dan Hughie MacEachern in particular were, and indeed still are, regarded as being "really hard to play" (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41). The compositions of James Scott Skinner, made available through the avid collection of published sources mid-century, became popular among Cape Breton fiddlers, and were adapted to their style, while simultaneously pushing the boundaries of that style. Ned MacKinnon (1876-1926) of Cooper's Pond, however has the distinction of being one of the first Cape Bretoners to specialise in Skinner's music (MacGillivray 1981:56). Tunes such as 'The Banks Hornpipe' became the mark of a technically accomplished fiddler. Other tunes in multiple variation form, such as 'Tullochgorm' and 'The East Neuk of Fife', became popular also. Incidentally such tunes were rarely performed in isolation, but rather were included in longer medleys of similar and appropriate tune-types. More recent tunes of this nature to have infiltrated the repertory include 'The Hangman's Reel', played by Shawn MacDonald in a version close to Shetlander, Aly Bain's, and a couple of tunes learned by Natalie MacMaster from the playing of Mark O'Connor. It is important to note that, again while most fiddlers today can indeed approach such exhibition pieces confidently, these tunes remain a minority in the repertory. Many
fiddlers, such as Carl MacKenzie and Dwayne Cote, prefer to opt for technically challenging tunes which stop short of being exhibitionist in nature.

Various other special effects have periodically been introduced to the fiddle style. Johnny "MacVarish" MacDonald for instance was something of a trick-fiddler, who could "turn his left hand around on the neck (ie. finger the strings from above instead of below) and play just as well like that" (MacGillivray 1981:41). Other techniques he employed included "running some of the bow hair under the violin strings to create a bagpipe effect behind the actual melody" (MacGillivray 1981:41). Among today's fiddlers, techniques unusual to Cape Breton tradition are occasionally introduced. Dougie MacDonald for instance uses a pizzicato effect in certain tunes (See LD#32). Techniques such as sliding up to a higher position at the end of a phrase is also common in his playing. The use of varied dynamics has become popular also among fiddle players such as Dougie MacDonald, Carl MacKenzie, and Jerry Holland, as a device for generating energy and excitement. This is further intensified when the piano accompanists responds to this in a similar manner (See Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island CD, Track 2). The effective use of the sudden stop at the end of a medley or between tune changes reputedly has its origins in Cape Breton music with the Cape Breton Symphony, a group of fiddles plus a rhythm section (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37). Since then other fiddlers have adopted this technique. On his latest recording, Fiddle Tunes, Dougie MacDonald uses this extensively. The Barra MacNeils also employ this practice also, although their inspiration in this regard may well have been from Irish musicians, rather than via the Cape Breton Symphony. Natalie MacMaster uses the abrupt ending to maximize on the excitement created by changing key in the tune directly following the stop. Techniques which can be immediately identified with other musical traditions have also recently been incorporated on occasion into the modern Cape Breton fiddle style. Dougie MacDonald and Kyle MacNeil both admit to experimenting with the country fiddle technique of shuffle bowing in their playing.
Natalie MacMaster may drop a riff which is obviously a thumprint of the Canadian Old-time style into a tune. While today's players are constantly exploring the fiddle techniques of other traditions and experimenting with them in the context of their own music, it is important to recognise that much of their activity involves exaggerating upon techniques which older came Breton fiddlers may well have used, but perhaps less frequently, or in less prominent positions. I have heard Dougie MacDonald's extensive use of the following rhythm berated as being overly modern, when in fact it can be traced to the playing of Angus Chisholm:

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"Untitled Strathspey" Number 2, Round 2 A, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 25)

Increasing exposure to other musics has certainly helped expand the range of techniques possible for the Cape Breton fiddler. That one of these musics is that of contemporary Scotland should not be overlooked. It has already been observed that, particularly since the 1970s, the playing of certain Scottish fiddlers such as Ron Gonnella, has influenced the playing of slow airs in Cape Breton. For the most part Cape Breton - Scottish relations of recent times have seen the influence move in the other direction ie. Cape Breton players influencing Scottish players (See Chapter Two). Over the years however there have been occasional fiddlers in Cape Breton who have aspired to the contemporary Scottish sound as it was shaped by James Scott Skinner, and have opted for a quasi-classical music style, essentially removed from the dance. "Little" Jack MacDonald, while regarded as a traditional style player, also showed an inclination towards this approach. "He would listen for hours to Fritz Kreisler's old 78 recordings, and on several occasions attended both Kreisler and Heifetz recitals at the Masonic Temple in Detroit. Inspired by these classical artists, he would take on the task of trying to develop our Highland music on the violin the
way the great Scottish composers wanted it played" (MacGillivray 1981:37). Today this approach to the old Scottish music is continued in the performances and teaching of Winnie Chafe, who, at a time when Scots are recognising the heritage Cape Breton represents for them, is ironically closer to contemporary Scotland than to Cape Breton.

10.4 Tempo and Timing

Music does not have to be fast to be played lively.
( Joey Beaton, in MacEachen 1993/94)

If it's played too fast, you miss the scenery.
(Dan R. MacDonald in Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16)

At the centre of the current controversy concerning changes in the Cape Breton fiddle style lies the issue of 'timing', as it is known among practitioners of the tradition. 'Timing' is a rather general term used to denote both tempo, and also the related areas of phrasing and articulation - the infra-rhythmic structure which generates the swing or 'lift' in the music. The framework within which such musical elements are manifest is thus determined by and dependent on the tempo. Any changes in tempo will obviously affect the music at these internal levels. Of course any dramatic changes in appropriate tempos will affect all aspects of the fiddle style, with increased speed allowing certain nuances of the style to be glossed over and eventually eliminated. Earl V. Spielman concedes this point in a discussion of the merits of a slower pace:

it permits the fiddler to add a wide variety of embellishments which would not be possible when a tune is played faster. The result is also a musical texture of a more transparent, more exposed nature; a texture where lack of perfection on the part of the performer cannot be veiled
in a flurry of notes or a series of drone double stops. (Spielman 1972:42)

Good timing is a characteristic aspired to by all Cape Breton fiddlers, and is one of the criteria most commonly referred to in the appraisal of an individual fiddler's style. Individuals such as Duncan MacQuarrie, Joe MacLean, Winston Fitzgerald, Buddy MacMaster, and Wendy MacIsaac, representing various stages of the tradition over this century, have all been noted for "having good timing." The connection between tempo as it relates to the other aspects of timing is recognized by all Cape Breton fiddlers, as is evident from quotes such as "[Buddy's] more a calmer fiddler, he plays a little slower and his music's got just as much life to it" (Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15); "when I listen to older players it's really lively but not fast. And we're sort of trying to make up for that liveliness, which I don't know how they're creating, which we almost don't have, with speed" (Jackie Dunn, LD#41/ST#41); "changing the tempo, I think they'll disturb the quality ... the notes are not getting the value they should get" (Fr. John Angus Rankin, LD#17/ST#17); "the musicians took time to accent their music, to give notes their true values, and if you're playing away too fast ... you're not putting in the meat and potatoes into that, you know, the real good stuff" (Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16); "they play it very fast and it leaves the best part of the music out" (Marie MacLellan, LD#3/ST#3). The concept of timing is of course inextricably linked with the dance, with changes in either having a reciprocal influence. Likewise, the establishment of a distinct listening platform for the fiddle music would have allowed for, if not encouraged, changes in all aspects of the timing.

Aspects of the infra-rhythmic structure will be discussed presently in connection with their externalisation through bowing techniques. Firstly however, the issue of tempo which, as has already been mentioned, creates the framework within which the inherent rhythmic life and swing of the music is generated, shall be examined in relative isolation. For the purpose of the present discussion, tempo will refer to the
speed at which the music is performed. Within the Cape Breton situation the general perception is that, over the past thirty years, the tempo of the music has significantly increased. Kate Dunlay noted this in 1989: "another trend in Cape Breton ... is the tendency to play faster" (Dunlay 1989b:26). More recently John Shaw has pointed to an increase in tempo as being "one of the crucial changes occurring in Cape Breton" (in MacEachen 1994a). This perception is shared by practitioners and observers of the tradition alike: " ... I find they play, even when they play those old tunes, they play them a little faster than the old players played them" (Buddy MacMaster, LD#19/ST#19) and " ... I saw within my own lifetime a great change in the timing. When I started out playing, you played your jigs and reels much more slowly ... than they do now" (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31). I would suggest nevertheless that the acceleration in tempo noted here does not merely represent a new and recent trend as instigated by the current young fiddlers, but actually dates as far back as the 1940s and '50s, and is again associated with the pivotal developments of that era, as manifest in the playing of Winston Fitzgerald, but even more specifically in this instance, Angus Chisholm:

if you listen to some of the old records, they played fast ... Angus Chisholm, some of his old records are really fast, and you know, some tunes are better played fast ... some of Winston's are quite fast. (John Donald Cameron, LD#37/ST#37)

Besides the very real influence of such individuals, various other factors which have encouraged an increase in tempo may be identified. Changes in the requirements of the local dance tradition, and the separation of music and dance in the establishment of a distinct listening platform for the music, have certainly been influential in this respect. Increased exposure to related music traditions such as the Irish - incidentally facing at present a similar controversy over tempo - have also played a part.
Furthermore, the Acadian participation in Cape Breton fiddling is often connected to this tendency towards playing faster:

there's some of the French players, they play, I call it a kind of a French, you can tell they're French. It's little in their playing, a little excitement in their playing sometimes, they get a little excited and ... they gain a little, or speed sometimes. (Doug MacPhee, LD#1/ST#1)

Distinction between slower and faster tempos is often directly associated with the older and newer styles respectively. Fiddlers such as Donald Angus Beaton and Mary MacDonald are associated with sedate tempos. Kyle MacNeil for instance comments on Donald Angus: "the tapes of him - it always seems like you'd want to go up and push him a little faster" (LD#12/ST#12), while Joey Beaton says of Mary MacDonald "you'd never get Mary [MacDonald] speeding in her music; she gave her notes great value" (LD#16/ST#16). Interestingly, for some a slower tempo is directly connected with age, in that a single individual may be perceived as slowing down in matters of tempo as they advance in age. Joey Beaton refers to this, as does Fr. Francis Cameron - "when they get old, I think they slow up ... they mature in their playing" (LD#53/ST#53). Angus Chisholm has already been identified as a progressive figure in matters of tempo increase, standing midway between the old standards, and directing the path of the new. Thus while it is becoming habitual to chastise the current young generation of fiddlers for their inclination towards faster tempos, it should be remembered that again, the initial impetus in this direction can be traced back to fiddlers of an earlier generation, who now serve as the reference point for today's players.

The following table provides an illustration of the approximate metronomic speeds at which the tunes transcribed in Appendix A were performed. The notion of presenting performances in this fashion, I feel needs some justification, certainly in this instance, where the tempos given were not always obtained in live situations, but from
measuring recordings, either on tape (cassette or DAT) or video. In such instances, variations in tempo resulting from mechanical conditions must be allowed for. In any case, the idea of providing metronome markings for music in the Cape Breton or other similar traditions, I feel to be rather false, given the internal fluctuations of tempo which are integral to the lift or swing of that music. In other words, suggesting that a music tradition, which by its very essence promotes a certain amount of flexibility in order to generate internal rhythmic energy, can be reduced to a specific tempo is in itself paradoxical. Nevertheless some degree of scientific approach is necessary in order to attempt to outline the patterns of change in the area of tempo. With this in mind, and considering that the system has been applied previously (See Emmerson 1971 and Greig in Skinner 1890), I have opted for the use of metronome markings, but caution the reader that these are intended as mere approximations, typically allowing for fluctuation, both faster and slower than the speed indicated. Notable exceptions to this include Jerry Holland who tends to deviate little from the established tempo until a change in tune of tune-type is imminent. Then he will accelerate slightly. Bill Lamey, while allowing for much fluctuation in his strathspeys, shows a more fixed approach to tempo in some of his reel playing. In most instances the figure suggested is the average of the the highest and lowest speeds reached within that single performance.

From the above data is is immediately obvious that firstly there has been an acceleration in tempo throughout this century. A comparison of the choice of tempo of Mary MacDonald and Brenda Stubbert illustrates this effectively, the former opting for considerably slower tempos than the latter. Secondly, however, it emerges that this inclination towards acceleration has not been immediate, nor wholesale, and that is not confined to those at the lower end of the 0 - 39 age group. Rather, the increase in tempos correspond with the gradual evolution and acceptance of the so-called newer style, and as such is evident progressively in all those players inclining
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strathspeys</th>
<th>Crotchet</th>
<th>Performer</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Mabou Strathspey</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Donald Angus Beaton</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miss Grace Stewart</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Winston Fitzgerald</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old King George</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Willie Kennedy</td>
<td>60+</td>
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<td>Highlanders Farewell</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Bill Lamey</td>
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<td>Bog an Lochain</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>Bill Lamey</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miss Lyle</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>Mary MacDonald</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Highlanders Farewell</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Mary MacDonald</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>Mary MacDonald</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athole Brose</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Buddy MacMaster</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Pellerine's Strathspey</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>Jerry Holland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathspey No. 1</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Dougie MacDonald</td>
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<td>Strathspey No. 2</td>
<td>180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bog an Lochain</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>John Morris Rankin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George IV</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>John Morris Rankin</td>
<td>20-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Ann MacNamara</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Brenda Stubbert</td>
<td>20-39</td>
</tr>
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(d) = deceased

Figure 14.1 Approximate Metronomic Tempos for Strathspeys Based on a Sampling of Performances
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reels</th>
<th>Minim</th>
<th>Performer</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Time Wedding Reel</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Donald Angus Beaton</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Mabou Reel</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Donald Angus Beaton</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mist Over the Loch</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Winston Fitzgerald</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Kate</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Winston Fitzgerald</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old King George reel</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Willie Kennedy</td>
<td>60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan Ranald</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Bill Lamey</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine Point Coggie</td>
<td>112</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord MacDonald</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Mary MacDonald</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Johnstone</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Mary MacDonald</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Mabou Reel</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Mike MacDougall</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Mabou Reel</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>Donald MacLellan</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devils in Dublin</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>Johnny Wilmot</td>
<td>60+ (d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David White's Reel</td>
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<td>Jerry Holland</td>
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<td>CBC's Carl and Glen</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>Jerry Holland</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Cruising</td>
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<td>Jerry Holland</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iggy and Squiggy</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reel No. 1</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Dougie MacDonald</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mist Over the Loch</td>
<td>119</td>
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<td>Lively Steps</td>
<td>117</td>
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<td>Nine Point Coggie</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>John Morris Rankin</td>
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<td>Brenda Stubbert's Reel</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Brenda Stubbert</td>
<td>20-39</td>
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</table>

Figure 14.2 Approximate Metronomic Tempos for Reels Based on a Sampling of Performances
towards this style since the 1940s. In light of this, Angus Chisholm whose strathspeys were typically played at around crotchet = 170, and reels around mimim = 120, can certainly be acknowledged as a pivotal figure between the older slower tempos and the modern, faster one.

The strathspey-reel combination has frequently been pointed to as being central to the Cape Breton fiddler's repertory and traverses the dance/listening divide. In a typical performance, irrespective of the style employed, the dance strathspey will gradually accelerate and increase in intensity towards that climactic point at which it breaks into the reel. All of the Cape Breton fiddlers surveyed show a natural progression towards accelerating tempo within a single medley. This is evident not only as the strathspey moves to culminate in the reel, but often within the strathspeys themselves, and is for many players, maintained progressively throughout the reels also. The older style players are perhaps less inclined to continue this acceleration once the reel tempo has been established. Mary MacDonald, for instance, begins 'Miss Lyle Strathspey' at a tempo of around crotchet =139, increasing to crotchet =146 for the following strathspeys 'The Highlanders Farewell' and 'King George'. The tempo continues to accelerate through 'Tullochgorm' strathspey, culminating in the breaking into 'Lord MacDonald's Reel' at minim=105. Just as the two middle strathspeys were maintained at a fairly regular tempo, so too the second reel performed here, 'Miss Johnstone', maintains the established tempo of minim=105. Typical of the more recent trend is the medley played by Jerry Holland - 'John Pellerine's Strrathspey', followed by four reels, 'David White's', 'CBC's Carl and Glen', 'Just Cruising', and 'Iggy and Squiggy'. Again this illustrates the constant acceleration evident within a single medley, here moving from crotchet = 166, to minim=112, through minim=118, and reaching minim=120 for the final tune. Here the reel tempo has been allowed to accelerate. This example however points to another feature which has remained constant from the time of Mary MacDonald, that is the tendency to establish one tempo quite prominently, while allowing for an overall acceleration. With the older
style players such as Mary MacDonald, this stabilising of tempo usually coincided with the last reels in the medley (See Mary MacDonald 'Lord MacDonald' reel and 'Miss Johnstone', and Bill Lamey 'Clan Ranald' and 'Nine Point Coggie' reels). With Jerry Holland this trait is continued, albeit in the form of an internal stabilising, in this instance the fourth and fifth tunes of the medley, which are both performed at \(\text{minim}=118\), before a further acceleration to \(\text{minim}=120\) for the final tune, 'Iggy and Squiggy' reel.

It should also be noted that the strathspey tempo has increased more drastically overall than that of the reel, again as is apparent from the above table. That one tune-type has exhibited more resilience to tempo increases than the other is significant in itself, and surely reflects strongly on the corresponding dance developments. In musical terms, this pattern has obvious ramifications on the balance between the strathspey and the reel. The point at which the strathspey changes into the reel is essentially a subtle one, and as such is directed and determined by the tempos employed. The greater the tempo change involved, the more conspicuous this change of tune type will be. The balance in tempo between the strathspey and reel of a single medley does vary from player to player, but no distinct pattern, based on old- versus new-style criteria seems to have emerged.\(^{32}\) For those players, usually but not exclusively younger, who prefer to narrow the extremes of tempo used for both tune-types, the point where the strathspey changes over to the reel becomes smoother. In such an instance, not only is the internal rhythmic life of the music affected but the natural balance of the strathspey and reel progression is upset, and redefined. It is this redefining of the balance of that particular tune-type combination which lies at the

\(^{32}\)If anything, it would seem that there is an increasing tendency towards making the strathspey and reel more similar in tempo, among the younger players. This contradicts any notion that the older players, at least from the turn of this century, may have been adhering to the earlier concept of the strathspey-reel, where distinctions between the two tune-types, as we know them today, were not quite clear-cut.
crux of the Cape Breton fiddle tradition that perhaps presents the area where the affects of a tempo increase may become most problematic.

Within Cape Breton, even those of the old school acknowledge the inevitability of acceleration in the music as a reflection of the acceleration in life itself:

people want fast music today. But old fogies like myself and then ones like me, well we think that they should be played as they were in our day, see. So we say 'oh, they play too fast'. But ... it's what the people want that you have to give them. (Archie Neil Chisholm, LD#31/ST#31)

Certainly, it seems to me that the increase in tempo employed by fiddlers experimenting with the Cape Breton sound over the last half-century has been a conscious undertaking, and has of course happened in tandem with developments within the dance tradition. Overall, I believe that a faster tempo is perceived as being a suitable framework in which the thinner fiddle texture and the complex piano accompaniment can develop, infinitely more preferable to a slower, more laborious tempo. This I believe has been the perception which has underlined the entire evolution process of this new sound. While the balance between the strathspey and the reel tempo should be approached with considerable caution, if both are to retain a distinct identity, I feel that a general call for a reduced tempo by all fiddlers - which is what is being urged at present - shows a misconception of an entire style of fiddling playing which has developed throughout this century. The faster tempo is an integral part of this style, as is the reduced texture achieved through a limited use of embellishments, drones, etc. and of course, the busy piano accompaniment. To lament the demise of slower tempos in isolation therefore can have little consequence, since the fabric of Cape Breton musical life is now more complex than this. Encouraging the return of a slower tempo, for those who wish to maintain the old style, must be done with the broader picture in mind, that of the old style, with all its
necessary nuances, which must, if it is to be maintained, co-exist with the newer style, although with effort, perhaps in a more equal position.

10.5 Bowing

It's all in the bow ... what you're doing in the bow.
(Willie Kennedy, LD#39/ST#39)

Within the framework established by the chosen tempo, the infra-rhythmic structures of Cape Breton fiddle music - the articulation, accentuation, phrasing - generating the inherent rhythmic "lift" or "drive" of the music, are realised largely through the use of the bow. Considering the strong associations with the dance, the whole area of this 'lift' is particularly crucial in determining style as far as the Cape Breton fiddler is concerned. As part of the musical evolution process Cape Breton has witnessed over this century, aspects of these internal rhythm patterns have undergone change. The separation of music and dance on some levels has contributed to some degree of reinterpretation of this 'lift' on occasion; likewise aspects of phrasing and accentuation in particular have shifted as the association with the Gaelic language increasingly waned throughout the century; furthermore, the evolution of a fiddle and piano sound, replacing the solo fiddle, has also contributed to changes in terms of the rhythm generated - as the piano stylings became more active and rhythmically oriented, the fiddle style became increasingly refined, and less concerned with exuding rhythmic energy.

Since much of these aspects of style are realised through the bowing patterns employed, it follows that there have been quite significant changes in the area of bowing throughout this century. Within the Cape Breton tradition bowing has continued to be a spontaneous matter, and apart from some generalisations which
support the old- and new-style dichotomy, varies from one individual to the next. The practice of distinguishing between "light" and "heavy" players, refers to differences in bowing techniques in a very general fashion. Kinnon Beaton for instance recognised in his father, Donald Angus Beaton's playing, "a heavy powerful beat", which he can also identify in the playing of Rodney MacDonald, for instance. Of himself he says "I had a lighter style" (LD#23/ST#23). Cameron Chisholm is another player who has been described in this manner (Willie Kennedy, LD#39/ST#39). Certain players, for example Winston Fitzgerald and Jerry Holland, have also been indentified as having a "smooth" or a "slick" style (See LD#23/ST#23 and LD#21/ST#21), this in particular strongly suggesting the newer style of playing developed since the mid-century. That such a description does not easily fit all the players who incline towards this style is immediately apparent when the style of Natalie MacMaster is considered, in which she forcefully exaggerates certain accents, what she refers to as putting "a little force in my bow" (LD#15/ST#15). Willie Kennedy however believes that accents should be executed more subtly and that "you don't need to dig in" (LD#39/ST#39).

The amount and part of the bow used is certainly one of the primary factors which will strongly influence the overall bowing effect, and in this much personal choice comes into play. Viewing the bow as being in three sections - bottom (near the frog), middle, and tip - it seems to me that, particularly among those old-style Cape Breton fiddlers, such as Willie Kennedy, Alex Francis MacKay, Theresa MacLellan, and Mary MacDonald, the tip of the bow is most frequently used. Other old-timers such as Sandy MacLean however, were noted for using the entire bow. It seems that the decision to use a short section of the bow length is believed to link back to practices in Scotland in the 18th century. Emmerson substantiates this:

there is no reason to believe that most Scottish fiddlers of the 18th century did not adhere to the short bow of previous times. David Boyden, in his excellent and comprehensive book, states that 'owing to the short bow and that violinists commonly played for dancing, the run of violin music was probably played in a somewhat more
articulated and non-legato style than would be usual now.'
(Emmerson 1971:174)

Today, players such as Jerry Holland, John Morris Rankin, and Buddy MacMaster continue to emphasise the tip of the bow, but with more use of the upper part of the middle section, and for particular points of accentuation, use the entire length. Others such as Natalie MacMaster make greater use of the whole bow, although it is Ashley MacIsaac, incidentally a left-handed fiddler, who consistently applies the whole length of the bow to his fiddle. Other distinctions in bowing styles referred to colloquially, include an Irish bow versus a Scottish bow, the one using slurs, the other choppy (See LD#1/ST#1 and LD#33/ST#33), and bowing styles associated with tunes in high bass tuning (Kyle MacNeil, LD#12/ST#12).

The articulated bowing style of the Cape Breton fiddler is achieved primarily through a concentration on single stroke bowing, with equal emphasis being applied to both upbows and downbows. As Stan Chapman said of Donald Angus Beaton "he could do just as much with an upbow as he could with the bow going down" (LD#22/ST#22). This is audible in the playing of both strathspeys and reels particularly, and results in four beats being clearly emphasised in each case.33 This is of course one of the features which is affected in the playing of Irish reels in a Cape Breton style, and vice versa. Typically, a reel performed in an Irish style, would emphasise the first and third beats of a bar, rather than each of four crotchet beats. For most players adopting tunes from one tradition into the other, the local accentual pattern is maintained, immediately giving a distinct local identity to the given tune. That this accentual pattern, realised through bowing techniques, can be traced back to 18th century Scotland, is evident from the following quotation describing the style of Neil Gow:

33In 6/8 jigs the six quaver beats are all accented.
There is perhaps no species whatever of music executed on the violin, in which the characteristic expression depends more on the power of the bow, particularly in what is called the upward or returning stroke, than the Highland reel. Here accordingly was Gow's forte. His bow-hand, as a suitable instrument of his genius, was uncommonly powerful; and where the note produced by the up-bow was often feeble and indistinct in other hands, it was struck, in his playing, with a strength and certainty which never failed to surprise and delight the skilful hearer. (Dr. MacKnight 1809)

The general pattern is for the first and third beats in a bar to be played with a downbow. Certainly the extensive use of an upbow, in these positions, particularly for the first beats is frowned upon:

I don't like to see people going up the first beat of a measure. It just looks and feels [and] sounds too awkward to my ear. (Stan Chapman, LD#22/ST#22)

Some of the older players do make use of an upbow for these beats however (See Willie Kennedy 'Miss Lyall Strathspey', LD#39 and VT#1). The use of single bows in this fashion with the strathspey tune-type has been referred to, by James Hunter among others, as hack-bowing, and as such is evident among Cape Breton fiddlers throughout this century:

\[\text{Willie Kennedy, 'Old King George' Strathspey, Round 1 A, bar 1, (Appendix A, p16)}\]

The down-up bow pattern is also common where the short note precedes the long. While the single stroke bowing technique can certainly be considered the basis of the Cape Breton fiddlers bowing style as it applies to all tune types, there is obviously much room for variation upon this basic structural framework. Techniques such as
'snap-bowing' for instance, in which the bow is moved in the same direction for the duration of two notes are employed. Likewise the 'loop' or the 'up-driven bow', a thumbprint of Neil Gow's style, is used. This is described by Hunter as "a further development of the Scots snap ... in which the first stroke is taken smartly down, leaving the up-bow to take the remaining three notes ... extra bow pressure is put on the third note of the phrase to re- emphasise the rhythm ... and the last note, the semiquaver is taken staccato" (Hunter 1979:pxxi). A variant of this technique continues in Cape Breton, associated in particular with those exponents of the old Mabou Coal Mines style, such as Donald Angus Beaton. Known as "flying staccato" or "flying spiccatto" - "the art of bouncing the bow to achieve several distinct notes without reversing bow directions" (MacGillivray 1981:81). The technique was applied to both strathspeys and reels:

![Music notation image]

*John Morris Rankin, 'Lime Hill', Round 1 A, bar 2, (Appendix A, p 42)*

![Music notation image]

*John Morris Rankin, 'King George IV' strathspey, Round 1 A, bar 7. (Appendix A, p 43)*

The use of such a technique is rarely found in the more modern style of Cape Breton fiddling. In actual fact, I believe it fair to say that, in all aspects of bowing in fact, the newer style has become much simplified, with the emphasis being very firmly on the single bow patterns. A distinction between the old and the new in this regard is also perceived among the practitioners within the tradition. Sandy MacIntyre for instance
refers to "the old-time bowing that my mother used" (MacGillivray 1981:126). Buddy MacMaster likewise comments on "the old style bowing" that's "today, it's not around much" (LD#19/ST#19). Interestingly, individuals perceived as inclining towards the older sound, such as John Morris Rankin, eschew the constant use of older, complex bowing styles. 'Old King George Strathspey', as played by John Morris for example, uses practically only single bow strokes. Likewise as many of the older bowing patterns have been lost, contemporary players are technically able to experiment with bowing patterns such as staccato bowing and shuffle bowing coming from other musical traditions. The use of slurs traditionally is understood to have little function in the Cape Breton style, unless to correct bow direction. This is again in connection with Neil Gow's style, in which, according to comments by Alexander Campbell he "slurs none" (Dunlay 1986a:20). Certainly the use of slurs, associated with particular Irish fiddle styles, have been adopted by Cape Breton fiddlers through this source. Kyle MacNeil for instance uses a certain amount of slurring patterns, as does Natalie MacMaster and Jerry Holland:

\[\text{Jerry Holland, Iggy and Squiggy}, \text{Round 1 A, bars 1-2. (Appendix A, p 15)}\]

Many players, however, both old and young, do use slurs for triplet figures:

\[\text{Alex Francis MacKay 'Untitled Strathspey', Round 1 A, bar 2. (Appendix A, p 36)}\]
Certainly among the older players, while an extensive use of slurs was not typical of the style, they were occasionally introduced, and in relatively complex patterns:

\[
\text{\textbf{Willie Kennedy, 'Old King George' Reel, Round 1 A, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 17)}}
\]

Many of the techniques noted above emerged as part of a strathspey style of playing, although, as is evident from the examples, most can be applied successfully to other tunes, mainly reels and marches, in similar metres. The rhythmic device known as the Scots snap, that combination of semi-quaver and quaver, is central to much of their initial genesis. The use of this rhythmic motif, alongside its inversion, ie. quaver followed by a semi-quaver, constitutes the basic rhythmic character of the strathspey. Interestingly for many of the old style Cape Breton fiddlers these dotted figures transferred easily to reel tunes.

\[
\text{\textbf{John Morris Rankin 'Nine Point Coggie', Round 1 A, bar 2, (Appendix A, p 41)}}
\]

and:

\[
\text{\textbf{Mary MacDonald 'Lord MacDonald', Round 1 A, bar 2. (Appendix A, p 30)}}
\]
Other examples are to be found in Willie Kennedy's playing of 'Old King George Reel' and Donny LeBlanc, playing the 'West Mabou Reel'.

It is important to note that the jagged nature implied by such rhythms is not strictly adhered to as such within the Cape Breton tradition. Rather than being executed in a pointed and jagged fashion, these rhythms, executed by manipulating the wrist, are expressed in quite a loose manner, so that the music swings rather than jerks along. In the hands of players like Bill Lamey for instance the dotted nature of these motifs are often smoothed out quite noticeably. With regard to the newer style of playing as it has evolved since the mid-century, there does seem to be an increasing tendency towards defining these figures somewhat more sharply, an inevitability, in a style focused on precision and accuracy at all levels of the musical sound. Similarly, the younger players rarely incorporate such dotted rhythms into reels, but reserve them strictly for the strathspey.

One important aspect of bowing integral to the Cape Breton fiddle style, is the bowed triplet figure known as the "cut". Cuts are regarded as an essential part of the Cape Breton sound - "the music is dry without them" (Joey Beaton, LD#16/ST#16) - and are particularly regarded as being representative of the Gaelic language (See Sheldon MacInnis, LD#4/ST#4). In its most usual form, the cut involves three notes of the same pitch, played approximately to the rhythm two semiquavers plus quaver. Dougie MacDonald shows a penchant for exaggerating this rhythm (See 'Untitled Strathspey' Number 2, Appendix A, p 25).

The standard bowing pattern for this rhythmic figure is typically down-up-down, although it is regarded as the mark of dexterity for a fiddler to be equally adept at bowing cuts in the opposite direction. Ashley MacIsaac is one fiddler who favours the up-down-up bowing pattern in the execution of cuts. The use of four notes in a cutting figure is also a prominent thumbprint of the Cape Breton style. As with the
three note version, this rhythmic motif is often sounded on two notes simultaneously, creating a rhythmic drone effect. The rhythmic effect created by such embellishments has also been adopted into more melodic contexts:

![Musical notation](image)

*John Morris Rankin, 'King George IV' Strathspey, Round 2 A.. (Appendix A, p 43)*

An extension of the cutting technique is referred to simply as double cutting, obviously involving the direct repeat of the cut, in its three note or four note form. A recent variation of the cut, inspired by Irish musicians it seems, has been the movement of the middle note of a three note cut to another pitch, usually the step above:

![Musical notation](image)

*Brenda Stubbert, 'Brenda Stubbert Reel', Round 1 B2, bar 1. (Appendix A, p 45)*

An extensive use of cuts is associated with the older style of Cape Breton fiddling, inkeeping with the connections between that style and the Gaelic language. While the cut, as a rhythmic, ornamental device, has been maintained to the present time, there has been a noticeable decline in its use. A well as substantiating the theory that the loss of the language is directly reflected in the music, this reality also underlines the suggestion made earlier, that as the piano accompaniment has become increasingly active, the fiddle style has sacrificed some of its rhythmic energy. Rather than being an essential part of the musical fabric, the cut, as an ornamental rhythmic device, has become increasinly less prominent in the fiddle style promoted since the mid-century,
particularly where reels are concerned, so that today it is perceived merely as an optional embellishment.
CONCLUSION
THE PARADOX OF THE PERIPHERY

Folk and primitive musics ... have for us the fascinating quality of being both old and contemporary, of being representative of a peoples ancient traditions, as well as an indicator of current tastes. (Nettl 1973:5)

This quotation by Bruno Nettl epitomises the Cape Breton music tradition as it exists in 1995 where the old and the new are integrated, the one a testimony to an 18th century Scottish heritage, the other to traits developed in a new land. The contemporary situation is in marked contrast to that of Cape Breton of 1920s. Prior to that decade, particularly its latter years, the fiddle-dominanted music tradition of Cape Breton was essentially a fossil of an earlier Highland Scottish tradition. Although displaced to a new environment an ocean away, this music, surrounded by the multiple other strands of Gaelic culture, was preserved remarkably intact insofar as this can be determined. Factors of geographic isolation, and a linguistic barrier which prevented interaction with the other ethnic groups settled on Cape Breton Island, combined with the conservatism and nostalgia fortified by the substantial numbers of emigrants to create an insular Highland society or enclave in that north eastern extremity of the New World. As such the Scottish population in Cape Breton and their musical tradition were, until the late 1920s, effectively defined in terms of another centre - Highland Scotland of the 18th century - although removed from this in time and space. Cape Breton, in other words was peripheral to that centre. Such a situation is not peculiar to Cape Breton; in fact "it is a well-documented phenomenon that archaic survivals of social and cultural institutions are most likely to be found at the periphery of a given cultural area" (Shaw in MacNeil 1987:xv). Calum MacLeod has suggested that "the survival of a rich oral tradition may flourish and reach its highest perfection in peripheral areas rather than in the centre of its original diffusion" (Creighton & MacLeod 1979:v). This was certainly realised in the case of Cape Breton. While the focus in this peripheral location remained a retrospective one until the early decades of this century, at the centre, which in this case was Scotland, no
such stagnation took place. Instead rather drastic changes shaped the musical sound and practices. By the 1920s, a comparison of the musical traditions of both areas would have produced startlingly different results. While the peripheral area which was Cape Breton boasted of a music which had changed little over a century, still strongly flavoured with the Gaelic language and the Highland bagpipes, and primarily functional for the dance, that of the centre - Scotland - had been radically and irrevocably transformed. This change in musical direction was largely inspired by James Scott Skinner, who advocated the appreciation and development of fiddle music as an art form in its own right, and in isolation from the dance. Advances in technique and an emphasis on musical literacy were embraced. Further priority was afforded the music through the establishment of Strathspey and Reel Societies, where mass fiddling, and the control of personal expression on which it relies, became the norm.

Cape Breton in the 1920s thus epitomised the concept of the marginal survival, relating as it were to a centre which no longer existed. Nevertheless the intervening years between then and the present time have been ones of rebirth. With the 1920s, particularly since 1928, the outside world for the first time began to impinge on the insular island society of Cape Breton. Developments in transport which facilitated homogenisation at a local level; the introduction of radio, commercial recordings, and in the 1950s, television; the building of the Canso Causeway also in the 1950s, linking Cape Breton to the mainland of Nova Scotia and thus to the rest of North America; and the expansion of the Cape Breton diaspora were important factors in the modernisation of Cape Breton society. Coinciding with this, and indeed in response to it, the evolution of a distinct Cape Breton cultural identity began to emerge. Initially this was still defined in terms of ethnic background, although as the century progressed the emphasis increasingly focused on the common denominator which was Cape Breton. As an adjunct to this emerging cultural identity, was the fiddle
music tradition, itself undergoing a sound and identity metamorphosis. From the stagnation of the previous century a new energy was generated, and a process of evolution towards a Cape Breton musical tradition instigated. This process, beginning in the 1920s, has continued to the present day, and has succeeded in moulding a distinct Cape Breton voice from that of 18th Highland Scotland. A paradoxical situation now exists, whereby what was once regarded as peripheral and defined in terms of another centre, has actually asserted itself as a centre and generated a new energy, which in this instance is the Cape Breton fiddler and his/her music. That this has been a success is testified to by the recognition and acceptance of Cape Breton music around the world. The distinctiveness and uniqueness of that music is recognised by those who have helped shape it:

"It's separate from any other type of music right now ... it's just a kind of a different sound." (Natalie MacMaster, LD#15/ST#15)

It would seem to me that the sound of Cape Breton music as it has evolved throughout the twentieth century is aptly described as being a new voice in Scottish music. Thus while it is acknowledged that certainly this sound represents Cape Breton the Scottish roots of the music have not been forgotten or ignored. Aspects of this older style and repertory continue to feature even in the music of the most progressive fiddlers. Scottish fiddler Hector MacAndrew for instance recognised this in the music of Winston Fitzgerald - arguably the most innovative fiddler of the century - when he commented "you're very close to the truth" (John Allan Cameron, LD#26/ST#26).

That change has occurred at all the levels of concept, behaviour, and sound - the model outlined by Merriam in *The Anthropology of Music* (1964) - has been the focus of the preceding chapters. Beginning around the year 1928, change has been examined in terms of the fiddler and his/her personal identity as it has evolved in light
of changes at the wider musical and cultural levels; specific changes in the environment and their impact on the music and the musicians has also been explored; finally the changing parameters of style and repertory of the Cape Breton fiddler have also been included. As such it has been observed that between 1928 and 1995, no aspect of the Cape Breton fiddler and his/her music has escaped from change. Certainly however, some aspects have indeed been more susceptible to innovation than others. Perhaps the most significant has been the acceptance of the piano into the tradition, to the extent that today it is the fiddle and piano combination which is the thumbprint of the Cape Breton sound. At the same time, many constants have acted as a balance to the progressions of the century. Certain performance contexts have remained fundamentally unchanged; the home environment in 1995 remains - albeit increasingly tenuously - at the nucleus of the transmission process; the dance significantly continues to define musical boundaries.

It is evident therefore that a controlled change has been operational constantly over the specified period c1928-1995, although of course it has had a greater and lesser impact at different times (See Chapter Three). Nevertheless, it is only over the last couple of years that the issue of change has become a controversial one in Cape Breton. Perhaps this reflects a certain amount of stability which has been assumed since the 'vanishing' Cape Breton fiddler was retrieved and revitalised. The reinforced identity afforded the Cape Breton fiddler as part of that revival movement of the 1970s, and the security enjoyed in the number of young people taking up the music, has now been challenged as that new Cape Breton fiddler moves onto the world stage. That the expectations inherent in this new environment and its corresponding new audiences might destroy the essence of the Cape Breton sound certainly ranks high in the list of concerns troubling contemporary Cape Breton. Part of this no doubt stems from the fact that these changes will be instigated away from home territory, and so no control can be exercised on them. Until this time, most of the external influences were realised within Cape Breton itself, which perhaps created an
illusion of a control which could be implemented if necessary. Further concerns may have accompanied the realisation that as Cape Breton music becomes accepted internationally, and as contemporary Scots in particular embrace it as their lost heritage, the changes which have already characterised this century are highlighted. The Cape Breton fiddler of 1995 is no longer synonymous with the Highland fiddler of the 1700s, but is rather a new creature, with a new musical tradition which has been forged out of the old. Perhaps there is a little regret among the old school of Cape Bretoners that the heritage with which they were entrusted has been allowed to evolve into something new. Resistance to change is a fundamental characteristic of folk musics. So too is a reluctance to acknowledge change. This is highlighted in a statement by Minnie MacMaster referring to the potential influence of her daughter Natalie: "I hope that she's not going to be the one that they're going to say, well on account of her they changed" (LD#38/ST#38). Significantly Natalie has already had tremendous influence on the generation of Cape Breton fiddlers following in her footsteps, besides being to the forefront of the movement of Cape Breton music onto the world stage.

Bruno Nettl once observed that "curiously the hypothetical period of no change has been considered the 'life' of the tradition and the subsequent era of rapid change has been considered its death" (Nettl 1978:146). The common misconception in Cape Breton is that the rapid change, and hence the impending death of the Cape Breton fiddler as we know him/her, is a symptom of the 1990s. Certainly since the start of this decade there have been many advances in all aspects of the music tradition, mostly involving its exposure to rapidly expanding audiences. This of course will have lasting ramifications, some of which are already in evidence. Nevertheless, to associate drastic change with such a short timespan merely highlights a reluctance to accept the fact that change is a reality which has affected Cape Breton for many decades, that the changing Cape Breton fiddler is not a recent phenomenon. Most significantly the years between 1928 and 1995 have witnessed the evolution of a
distinct Cape Breton musical sound from that of Highland Scotland in the 18th century, and the evolution of the Cape Breton fiddler from the Highland fiddler of that era. It remains to be seen how that evolution process will be continued in light of accelerating attention from the outside world.
TUNE TRANSCRIPTIONS

This Appendix contains detailed transcriptions of forty tunes from the Cape Breton repertory, arranged alphabetically according to performer. Strathspeys and reels only are included since these are the dominant tune-types. The tunes chosen represent a cross-section of the repertory including recent compositions\(^1\) along with older traditional tunes. The transcriptions are based on the performances of seventeen players and represent the evolving Cape Breton style throughout this century up to and including the present day. This is particularly well illustrated where the same tune is performed by more than one fiddler.\(^2\)

The transcriptions are based on a number of sources, namely commercial recordings and videos, and personal fieldwork tapes and video recordings. Details of the source accompany each transcription. Bowing is included only for select examples which are discussed in Chapter Ten. Generally two rounds of a single tune are included. A round typically consists of two parts, although some extended tunes are also included. Each part consists of eight bars, which may or may not be repeated. These parts are labelled alphabetically. In order to facilitate observation of levels of variation with regard to both the 'model' and the 'flavour' the A parts of the various rounds are grouped together, the B parts together and so on. Of course in a performance all parts of round one are played before round two commences.

\(^1\)These are 'John Pellerine's Strathspey', 'David White's Reel', 'CBC's Carl and Glen', 'Just Cruising', 'Iggy and Squiggy', and 'Lively Steps' by Jerry Holland, and 'Lime Hill' and 'Miss Ann MacNamara' by Dan R. MacDonald.

\(^2\)Occasionally the tune title is varied from one source to the next. This may be with regard to spelling eg. 'Miss Lyle' also appears as 'Miss Lyall'. Other slight changes are also possible although the connection remains obvious. Thus 'The Highlanders Farewell to Ireland', for example, is merely a variation in title of 'Highland Watches Farewell to Ireland'. An example of a single tune having two titles is 'Mist Over the Loch, also known as 'Devils in Dublin'.

1
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<th>Tune Title and Type</th>
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<td>Old-Time Wedding Reel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>West Mabou Reel</td>
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<td>Fitzgerald, Winston &quot;Scotty&quot;</td>
<td>Miss Grace Stewart (Strathspey)</td>
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<td>Mist on the Loch (Reel)</td>
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<td>Bonnie Kate (Reel)</td>
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<td>David White's Reel</td>
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<td>Just Cruising (Reel)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iggy and Squiggy (Reel)</td>
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<td>Kennedy, Willie</td>
<td>Old King George Strathspey</td>
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<td>Nine Point Coggie (Reel)</td>
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<td>Mist Over the Loch (Reel)</td>
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<td>Lime Hill (Strathspey)</td>
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<td>King George IV Strathspey</td>
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<td>Stubbert, Brenda</td>
<td>Miss Ann MacNamara (Strathspey)</td>
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<td>Brenda Stubbert's Reel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilmot, Johnny</td>
<td>The Devil's in Dublin (Reel)</td>
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</table>
Donald Angus Beaton : 'Traditional Mabou Strathspey

A Musical Legacy Side 1, Track 1

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Donald Angus Beaton: 'Old Time Wedding Reel'

A Musical Legacy Side 2 Track 3

Round 1 A
Round 2 A
Round 1 B
Round 2 B
Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald: 'Miss Grace Stewart' (Strathspey)

House Parties And 78's Side 2, Track 3 - Number 2

Round 1 A
Round 2 A
Round 1 B
Round 2 B
Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald: 'Bonnie Kate' (Reel)

Classic Cuts  Side 2, Track 18 - Number 2

Round 1 A1

Round 1 A2

Round 2 A1

Round 2 A2

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Jerry Holland: 'John Pellerine's Strathspey'

*Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island*  Track 2 - Number 2
Jerry Holland: 'David White's Reel'

*Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island*  Track 2 - Number 3

Round 1 A1

Round 1 A2

Round 1 B1

Round 1 B2
Jerry Holland: 'Just Cruising' (Reel)

Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island  Track 2 - Number 5

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Jerry Holland: 'Iggy And Squiggy' (Reel)

Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island  Track 2 - Number 6
Willie Kennedy: 'Old King George Strathspey'

LD #39 (and VT#1)
Willie Kennedy: 'Old King George Reel'

LD #39 (and VT #1)
Bill Lamey: 'Clan Ranald Reel'

Classic Recordings Of Scottish Fiddling Side A, Track 1 - Number 2

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Bill Lamey: 'Nine Point Coggie Reel'

Classic Recordings Of Scottish Fiddling Side A, Track 1 - Number 3

Round 1 A

Round 1 B
Dougie MacDonal: Untitled Strathspey (No. 1)

LD #32 (and VT #1)
Dougie MacDonald: Untitled Strathspey (No.2)

LD #32 (and VT #1)
Dougie MacDonald: Untitled Reel

LD #32 (and VT #1)
Mary MacDonald: 'Miss Lyle's Strathspey'

Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle - The Music Of Cape Breton (Vol. 2)  Side B, Track 5 - Number 1
Mary MacDonald: 'The Highlander's Farewell To Ireland' (Strathspey)

*Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle - The Music Of Cape Breton (Vol.2)* Side B, Track 5 - Number 2
Mary MacDonald: 'King George' (Strathspey)

_Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle - The Music Of Cape Breton (Vol.2)_ Side B, Track 5 - Number 3
Mary MacDonald: 'Lord MacDonald' (Reel)

*Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle - The Music Of Cape Breton (Vol.2)* Side B, Track 5 - Number 5

Round 1 A1

Round 2 A1

Round 1 B

Round 2 B

cont.
Mary MacDonald: 'Miss Johnstone' (Reel)

Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle - The Music Of Cape Breton (Vol.2) Side B, Track 5 - Number 6

Round 1 A

Round 1 B
Mike MacDougall: 'West Mabou Reel'

Mike MacDougall's Tape For Fr. Hector Side 1, Track 3 - Number 4

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Ashley MacIsaac: 'Miss Lyall Strathspey'

Close To The Floor  Side A, Track 5 - Number 1

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Ashley MacIsaac: 'Mist Over The Loch' (Reel)

Close To The Floor  Side B, Track 6 - Number 4

Round 1 A 1

Round 1 A 2

Round 1 B 1

Round 1 B 2
Buddy MacMaster: 'Athole Brose' (Strathspey)

Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island    Track 14 - Number 4

Round 1 A

Round 1 B
Natalie MacMaster: "Lively Steps" (Reel)

Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island
Side 2, Track 6 - Number 5

Round 1 A
Round 2 A
Round 1 B
Round 2 B
John Morris Rankin: 'Bog an Lochan' (Strathspey)

The Rankin Family  Side 2, Track 8
John Morris Rankin: 'Nine Point Coggie' (Reel)

The Rankin Family Side 2, Track 8
John Morris Rankin: 'King George IV Strathspey'

*Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island*  Track 13 - Number 3

Round 1 A

Round 2 A

Round 1 B

Round 2 B
Brenda Stubbert: 'Miss Ann Mac Namara Strathspey'

*Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island*  Track 3 - Number 1
Brenda Stubbert: 'Brenda Stubbert's Reel'

*Traditional Music From Cape Breton Island*  Track 3 - Number 3

Round 1 A1

Round 1 A2

Round 1 B1

Round 1 B2
Johnny Wilmot: 'The Devil's In Dublin' (Mist On The Loch)

*Another Side Of Cape Breton* Side B, Track 1 - Number 2

Round 1 A1

Round 1 A2

Round 2 A1

Round 2 A2

cont.
PUBLISHED COLLECTIONS

In this Appendix a selection of published sources used by Cape Breton fiddlers is presented. These are arranged into four sections - pipe music collections, Scottish fiddle music collections, non-Scottish collections, and indigenous Cape Breton collections. This list was compiled during fieldwork between 1992 and 1995. As such it represents only those sources used by my informants (see Appendix D) and as such is not fully comprehensive.

B (i) A Sampling of Published Pipe Music Collections used by Cape Breton Fiddlers


Glen's Irish Tunes for the Scottish and Irish War-pipes. Glasgow: Mozart Allan.

Glen, David, ed. David Glen's Highland Bagpipe Tutor. Glasgow: Mozart Allan.

Logan's Complete Tutor for the Highland Bagpipe. Edinburgh: Paterson's Publications Ltd.


MacLeod, Donald, ed. Pipe Major Donald MacLeod's Collection of Music for the Bagpipe, Books 1-3. Glasgow: Mozart Allan.

MacPhee, Donald, ed. *A Complete Tutor for the Highland Bagpipe with Piobaireachd Exercises, and a selection of Marches, Strathspeys, Reels, followed by a Piobaireachd*. Inverness: Logan


Robertson, James, and Donald Shaw Ramsay, eds. 1953. *Master Method for Highland Bagpipe*. London: John E. Dallas & Sons Ltd.


Sutherland, Donald, ed. *Donald Sutherland's Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music*. Edinburgh: Hugh MacPherson

*The Inverness Collection of Highland Pibrochs, Laments, Quicksteps and Marches*, Volumes 1-6. Inverness: Logan


B (ii) A Sampling of Scottish Fiddle Music Collections used by Cape Breton Fiddlers


Cumming, Angus, 1782. *A Collection of Strathspeys or Old Highland Reels by Angus Cumming at Grantown in Strathspey, with a Bass for the Violincello &c.* Glasgow.


Harding's Collection of Jigs, Reels, and Country Dances. Fredrick Harris Music


Kerr, James S. *Kerr's Caledonian Collection.* Glasgow: James S. Kerr

Kerr, James S. *Kerr's First Collection of Merry Melodies for the Violin.* Glasgow: James S. Kerr

Kerr, James S. *Kerr's Second Collection of Merry Melodies for the Violin.* Glasgow: James S. Kerr
Kerr, James S.  Kerr's Third Collection of Merry Melodies for the Violin. Glasgow : James S. Kerr

Kerr, James S.  Kerr's Fourth Collection of Merry Melodies for the Violin. Glasgow : James S. Kerr


MacDonald, Keith Norman, ed. 1895 Gesto Collection of Highland Music. Edinburgh,


MacIntosh, Robert, 1783. Airs, Minuets, Gavotts & reels ... Edinburgh.


B (iii) A Sampling of Non-Scottish Published Collections used by Cape Breton Fiddlers


O'Neill, Francis, ed. 1907. The Dance Music of Ireland, 1001 Gems.

One Thousand Fiddle Tunes. 1940. Chicago: M. M. Cole.


Ryan's Mammoth Collection. c1880


B (iv) Indigenous Cape Breton Fiddle Tune Collections


1984  *Beaton's Collection of Cape Breton Scottish Violin Music*, 100 Compositions by Kinnon Beaton, Volume One. Port Hawkesbury: Private Publication


1993  *Cape Breton Fiddler Dougie MacDonald, Fiddle Tunes*. Mabou Communications Ltd.
1993 MacEachern's Collection - the Music of Dan Hughie MacEachern, Volume 2. Antigonish: Margaret Dunn


APPENDIX C
**DISCOGRAPHY**

The following is a list of solo albums released since 1987. Albums by bands featuring fiddlers, such as those by The Rankin Family and The Barra MacNeils, are not included. For a complete catalogue of Cape Breton recordings between 1928 and 1987, see Ian macKinnon, 1989.

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<td>The Tin Sandwich</td>
<td>Silver Apple Music</td>
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<td>Cote, Dwayne</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>Cremo, Lee</td>
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<td>Dares, Tracey</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Crooked Lake</td>
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APPENDIX D
FIELDWORK RECORDINGS 1992/1993

The following is a list of recordings made during fieldwork trips to Cape Breton during 1992 and 1993. These recordings, made on cassette and/or DAT tapes, are deposited in the Audio-Visual Archive of the Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick. Copies of all the tapes are also deposited in the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Music Department, University College, Cork.

The recordings fall into two categories. Those numbered between 1-54 contain interviews with informants who ranged from 6 to 94 years. These tapes are indexed numerically according to the chronological order of the interviews. (LD#55/ST#55 is a personal correspondence tape with Doug MacPhee responding to a series of questions forwarded to him). In each instance the initials LD refers to a recording by the collector, Liz Doherty. An asterisk (*) preceding these initials indicates that musical examples are also featured on these interview tapes. (These musical examples may be brief excerpts played by the informant to illustrate a point or they may be more extensive as the interview ended and evolved into a ceilidh. On such occasions tunes which I played myself may also be included). The initials ST refer to speech transcriptions. These are available in a separate volume a copy of which is deposited along with the tape collection in the Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick and in the Traditional Music Archive, U.C.C. Musical examples from the following interviews are recorded on VT#1 (Video tape) : LD#9, LD#32, LD#39, LD#40, and LD#41. In the following list the date and location of the interview is also indicated.
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The remaining tapes collected during fieldwork primarily contain music and as such require no asterisk or corresponding speech transcriptions. In each instance the main performers are listed; typically though several other players might feature for a group of tunes as the main fiddler, at a dance for instance, is 'spelled off'. A complete catalogue of the contents of each tape accompanies the collection at the Irish World Music Centre, U.L. and the Traditional Music Archive, U.C.C.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY
In this bibliography books, chapters in edited books, unpublished theses, monographs, journal, magazine and newspaper articles, unpublished conference proceedings, and album liner notes are referenced. Published tune collections have also been included where appropriate. For a more complete list of tune collections used in the Cape Breton tradition see Appendix B.


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<td>1. Beaton, Donald Angus</td>
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<td>4. Fitzgerald, Winston &quot;Scotty&quot;</td>
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