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SCOTTISH FIDDLING IN THE UNITED STATES:
REVIVING A TRADITION AND MAINTAINING A COMMUNITY

A thesis submitted to the College of the Arts
of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Scottish fiddling appeared in the New World in the early 1600s and quickly influenced other fiddling styles, such as Southern and Cajun styles of fiddling.¹ By the 1700s, Scottish fiddling was no longer a distinct genre in America, though elements of the tradition survived in other American fiddling styles. Over time, these Americanized styles grew into what is now Bluegrass, Country, Old-Time, Western, and Appalachian fiddling.² While the new styles maintained Scottish influences, they also absorbed other musical characteristics, such as African polyrhythms, a heavier swing style preferred by the US South, and stronger pitch fluctuation from Irish fiddling. These influences and the prevalence of new styles dimmed Scottish fiddling’s prominence in America, though it is difficult to say if the Scottish fiddling styles completely disappeared from the US before the 1970s.³

During the 1970s, a group of Scottish fiddling enthusiasts lamented the perceived lack of Scottish fiddling as its own distinctive genre.⁴ These enthusiasts created an organization, F.I.R.E. (the “FI” from “fiddling” and “RE” from “revival”) to combat this deficiency. F.I.R.E. sponsors Scottish fiddling contests to promote and reawaken Scottish fiddling in the United States. Fiddling competitions are central to this revival and related community. Competitors are judged by Scottish fiddling experts on the authenticity of their performance in accordance with established stylistic parameters established in Scotland. From F.I.R.E., other Scottish fiddling

interest groups manifested to further the revival’s momentum. These fiddling groups form a Scottish fiddling community in the United States that celebrate this musical art form through contests, jam sessions, as well as teaching and performance. This Scottish fiddling revival in the United States is ongoing today.

**Topic and Purpose**

Following this introduction, this thesis traces the Scottish fiddling tradition from Scotland to North America, focusing on its arrival and change once in the present-day United States. Certain musical elements of Scottish fiddling, such as tunes, bowing techniques, and left hand techniques appear in other fiddling styles in America after Scottish fiddling’s arrival. While elements of Scottish fiddling survive through other styles, Scottish fiddling as a unique musical genre faded from musical history in the United States around the 18th century until the 1970s. This second chapter provides the background and context to understand why Scottish fiddling needed a revival in the United States, and why fiddling competitions are important to the current Scottish fiddling resurgence.

Chapter three considers the possibility that this Scottish fiddling revival is part of a larger “Celtic revival.” The F.I.R.E. revival, though distinct on its own, is part of the larger 1970s resurgent interest in Celtic music and culture. The term Celtic and its history, especially as related to music, is discussed and defined to help categorize the Scottish fiddling revival as both its own distinct revival and part of a larger Celtic revival. The implications for Celtic applied to Scottish fiddling are discussed in this chapter and in later chapters.

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5 The term “Celtic” historically and culturally refers to the people of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittany, and parts of France.
In chapter four, six distinct, though occasionally overlapping, regional Scottish fiddling styles are discussed. The regional styles are, from North to South; the Shetland Islands, the Orkney Islands, West Highland, North-East, the Lowlands, and the Borders. These different geographic regions of Scotland developed unique fiddling styles due to cultural and historical circumstances. These circumstances include the city of Edinburgh becoming a cultural center for artists and musicians, border disputes between the Scottish and the English, the mountain ranges of Scotland separating different sub-cultures, and the islands off the coast of Scotland developing their own traditions separate from the mainland. These six regional styles migrated to America, and each regional style is valued within the context of the United States, its revival, and the connecting community. Musical and stylistic parameters for the six regional styles are discussed.

In the next chapter, the revival’s structure within the United States is investigated. Function is considered when examining the revival and how the revival fits into larger historical and cultural contexts. There are many elements and characteristics comprising the overall Scottish fiddling revival and community in the United States. These elements include, but are not limited to the organization “F.I.R.E. Ltd,” the organization’s competitions, as well as the competition’s judges, the competitors, the audience members, locations, score forms, recordings, and the interpretation of the different Scottish regional styles. Other elements include the revival’s ideology, recordings, and interpretation of the various styles by both the judges and the competitors. Specifically, competitions and their role in the revival is the main focus since competitions are the revivalist’s primary method of reviving and maintaining this tradition.

Outside of competitions, jam sessions, recordings, and pedagogy are also examined. All of these elements contribute to a larger system of the Scottish fiddling revival. The revival, in turn, contributes to a larger Scottish-American and Celtic community, making the revival a
contributor to an even larger structure. These communities then foster a sense of pride and connection among members. Such interconnections are examined.

All of these elements contribute to a Scottish-American community and heritage. Many competitions take place at Highland Games festivals and Scottish-themed events in the US. At such places, a sense of connection to Scotland is maintained. This is especially important since most Scottish music and tunes reference a famous location in Scotland or an important Scottish historical event or individual. Making the US competitions’ location as “Scottish” as possible contributes to the community and maintains the historical tradition.

The last chapter discusses the revival’s future and the impact the revival has on its own music. The tradition’s musical and social changes, many unavoidable, within the United States create complications for the revival once Scottish fiddling is reestablished. Further, competitors from the US competing and winning in Scottish fiddling competitions in Scotland have ramifications for the US revival. Also, future research possibilities and limitations are examined.
Methodology and Selected Review of Literature

Resources for this project include written historical accounts and narratives; collections of Scottish fiddle tunes, and manuals for fiddlers explaining the playing techniques of the Scottish styles. Primary resources and fieldwork include interviews of judges, audience members, and competitors. Twelve formal interviews were conducted with competitions judges, and numerous informal conversations occurred with judges, audience members, and competitors. Footage of the competitions, either still photos or video, were recorded and analyzed along with the author’s own descriptions and field notes through observation of the revival and related competitions. Research for this thesis was conducted from September 2011 through April 2015.

Most studies consulted concern fiddling in North America such as Appalachian fiddling, or Canadian styles, such as Cape Breton fiddling. There is little research about Scottish fiddling in the United States. Since competition contexts are a key focus of this thesis, studies with attention to contests were closely examined. However, the studies consulted were related or relevant to Scottish fiddling, Scottish-influenced fiddling, or general fiddling in the United States whenever possible.

Studies that examine Cape Breton fiddling analyze its history as well as the social and economic contexts of the style. This includes a study by Burt Feintuch that describes the economic and social factors that appear to explain the maintenance of this tradition. Feintuch was concerned with “the question of how social and economic factors contribute to a flourishing regional world of music when many other Western regional musics of the same vintage have

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6 Cape Breton fiddling is a style of fiddling found on the relatively isolated Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, Canada. This fiddling style is based on and descended from the Scottish fiddling style. Scottish Highland fiddlers that immigrated to Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries brought their musical traditions and instruments, including the fiddle, with them. The music transformed over time and while still maintaining a Scottish influence, it is recognized as a distinct fiddling style.

largely vanished or radically transformed themselves." He wanted to understand what links music, a place, and its people as well as why some musical systems survive and others fade.

The social elements include specific locations, like geographical terrain and particular performance contexts, including local dances, festivals, and community centers. Feintuch also describes how the Cape Breton tradition is surviving economically through recordings and live-performances in various contexts such as weddings, funerals, and parties. According to Feintuch, the economic and social conditions of Cape Breton fiddling are the main contributors to its survival. "The fiddle music should be understood in that context, where economic problems, commitment to place, and love of music and dance intersect." Feintuch expresses that the place or location is a key factor in linking music to a group of people. In the case of Scottish fiddling in the United States, the revival is not confined the same way geographically, though recurring Highland Games venues in consistent locations are a factor. The revival is linked primarily with competitions and specific individuals, such as the competition judges, making Feintuch’s comments on specific social contexts relevant.

Another study by Earl V. Spielman compares and contrasts the traditions, approach, and attitude of Cape Breton fiddling and Texas style fiddling. Through this study, he proposes a methodology from which to compare all fiddling traditions, including how they are preserved. The methodology covers fourteen elements he considers essential for the comparative study of fiddling traditions as well as seven parallel or common elements and five contrasting elements between fiddling traditions. Though not all points were used in this thesis, several were found particularly relevant, especially his point about how every tradition will have varying degrees of

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8 Feintuch, 73.
9 Ibid., 78.
what is acceptably innovative in a fiddling tradition. His concepts of defining what the desired performance qualities are within a tradition, the make-up of an audience, how performances operate, and an evaluation of how a competition system within a tradition works in general were all helpful points of analysis and examination.\textsuperscript{11}

Though the purpose of this study is not to directly compare distinct fiddling traditions, comparisons naturally occur. The elements listed by Spielman are an excellent framework to begin any fiddle-related research, though his essential points are not in order of importance.\textsuperscript{12} Though this thesis does not use this framework for point-by-point analysis, it does utilize them as a tool to begin the study. Certain aspects of his framework are more relevant than others.

Spielman’s parallel and contrasting elements were specific to his comparison between Cape Breton and Texas style fiddling. However, many of these contrasting and parallel elements between Cape Breton and Texas style fiddling are also found in Scottish fiddling in the United States. Though not discussed directly in this thesis, these parallel and contrasting elements can potentially pave the way for further research that does compare Scottish fiddling in the United States to another fiddling tradition. Spielman also mentions a “dearth of primary data” necessary to compare fiddling traditions, specifically the “detailed and refined work within each tradition” needed to compare two traditions in the first place.\textsuperscript{13} This study on Scottish fiddling in the United States helps alleviate that dearth.

Another relevant study by Glenn Graham, a prominent Cape Breton fiddler, analyzes Cape Breton fiddling in Canada.\textsuperscript{14} The book with accompanying CD chronicles the history of Cape Breton’s fiddling. He also describes recent social changes and influences to the style, such

\textsuperscript{11} Spielman, 39-40. 
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 40. 
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 48. 
\textsuperscript{14} Glenn Graham, The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition (Sydney, Canada: Cape Breton University Press, 2006).
as cultural, gender, and economic influences. Graham’s research includes methods on pedagogical techniques for teaching the Cape Breton style. Since fiddling styles are primarily an oral tradition, pedagogical research gives insight into how a tradition is preserved, maintained, and passed on to the next player. The CD accompanying the book provides descriptions, explanations, and examples of Cape Breton fiddling techniques that supplement pedagogy. Examples on the CD of traditional Cape Breton tunes recorded are in their original context such as a pub rather than a recording studio.

Graham discusses both fiddling competitions and the concept of a fiddling revival during the 1970s in Cape Breton. In his view, a “revival” in Cape Breton as applied to the fiddling style is a misnomer.\textsuperscript{15} According to Graham, the music and tradition remained intact since the Highland immigrants arrived from Scotland. The so-called Cape Breton fiddling “revival” of the 1970s was more of a renewed interest in the tradition rather than a reestablishment of the tradition.

Graham’s views on revivals and competitions are helpful since they provide balance compared to other authors mentioned and individuals interviewed. His perspectives are more cautious when it comes to the benefits of a contest or competition in a revival when a lack or loss of music is perceived in a given location. Graham is mainly concerned with authenticity. He notes, “If in the strict sense a revival is the bringing of something back into existence, when an evolving thing like a tradition is revived, origins may be forgotten and there is no guarantee the recovered tradition will be authentic.”\textsuperscript{16} Graham goes on to express caution over a tradition being

\textsuperscript{15} Graham, 100-101.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 100.
transplanted to a new location as it would change the tradition too much and create something new.\textsuperscript{17}

Graham is particularly skeptical of fiddling competitions. He maintains that they “limit expression” creatively rather than foster it when he suggests that the lack of competition context in Cape Breton allowed players there to remain different from those who emphasize or are a major part of organized competitive fiddling.”\textsuperscript{18} Competitions, while they do exist in Canada, are not part of Cape Breton’s fiddling culture compared to the United States. There are numerous other cultural contexts for a fiddling tradition to thrive, namely dances, concerts, and general tourism. Graham’s depth of work on Cape Breton fiddling styles and contexts is the closest analog to Scottish fiddling in the United States, since Cape Breton fiddling is Scottish in origin, albeit in a context other than Scotland.

While the studies mentioned so far are community based, two other studies specifically concerning Scottish fiddling are pedagogical. For instance, Pamela Swing’s dissertation concerns how fiddling was taught and revived in primary and secondary schools in Shetland, Scotland through one teacher and his students.\textsuperscript{19} Another dissertation by Melinda Crawford Perttu tests whether the styles and techniques of Scottish fiddling could be taught to violin teachers successfully using her pedagogical method.\textsuperscript{20} Both studies briefly discuss the concept of a revival; Swing’s study explores the plausibility of a revival in Scotland, while Crawford Perttu’s study examines elements of a Scottish fiddling revival in the United States. Crawford Perttu includes a brief investigation of how competitions can be learning tools, but her

\textsuperscript{17} Graham, 102-104.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 35.
perspective is primarily pedagogical, rather than ethnographic or community and revival based. This thesis builds on her ideas concerning a revival in the US and its relationship to competitions as well as adds to her descriptions of different regional Scottish fiddling styles.

Both dissertations offer insight into how Scottish fiddling is taught and transferred from teacher to student. Both studies also provide background information regarding the different Scottish fiddling regional styles. Of the two dissertations, Crawford Perttu’s study gives the most depth on the musical differences between Scottish regional styles and the different types of tunes used in Scottish fiddling in order to teach them effectively. Her work also emphasizes the importance of each regional style and how they contribute to the tradition as a whole.

In addition to considering revivals and community, this thesis also discusses competitions and their impact on Scottish fiddling. Chris Goertzen, for example, studied American fiddling contests and their change over time. His descriptions give insight into how change in competitions affects musical traditions. However, these American competitions often contain multiple fiddling genres. In all of the contests in Goertzen’s study, competitors can choose from any number of styles including Scottish, Irish, Cape Breton, Texas, Bluegrass, and/or various local styles. The judges must evaluate each genre against one another, which can lead to the eventual transformation of the genres. A judge might favor one genre over another or they might not know enough about one tradition to evaluate and compare it fairly. Further, even if a judge knew enough about all styles of fiddling, every style has a different history and set of expectations. Comparing fiddling traditions might inadvertently compare different value systems. In such contexts, a competitor might take a judge’s comments to heart and change their playing accordingly. Over time, a style will transform if enough people copy that changed style,

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causing the overall tradition to shift. With so many fiddling styles in one venue, the potential for mixing styles and playing techniques is high. Goertzen studied such potential change.

These contests in Goertzen’s study are not Scottish fiddling specific while F.I.R.E.’s competitions only include Scottish traditions. F.I.R.E.’s Scottish-only approach to competitions is important, as preserving a particular fiddling tradition is difficult when a competition mixes traditions. Maintaining separate Scottish regional styles is challenging enough without the added variable of non-Scottish styles. Although the competitions sanctioned by F.I.R.E. only play Scottish fiddling, the many distinct regional styles and the implications of mixing such regional styles make Goertzen’s examination relevant.

Goertzen’s study focuses on music compared to focusing on social elements. He describes how the “essence of a tune” is established and generally known to most players.\(^\text{22}\) Forms of different tunes easily merge, according to Goertzen, though scales and modes seem fixed in American fiddling competitions. The same is true for intervals in that they do not vary much over time.\(^\text{23}\)

Variations and ornamentations, on the other hand, seem to be the musical elements most easily changed and embraced. “Variation technique was not lost, but rather was transformed, is required, and flourishes far more than ever before.”\(^\text{24}\) Goertzen asserts that such variation is responsible for new playing styles. These concepts are used for guidance in examining musical elements of the Scottish fiddling revival and any consequential change in the music.

Goertzen also discusses revivals as connected to competitions. Many of the traditions in these American competitions, including Scottish, had “fluctuating levels of vitality” in the

\(^{22}\) Goertzen, 125.  
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 125-126.  
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 126.
twentieth century if not earlier.\textsuperscript{25} He describes an ideological concept and how an organized group or established society contributes to revivals or “rejuvenations.”

“Performers, audience members, and tunes issue from a mixture of old and new sources, with ideological emphasis on the older components. Societies, sponsoring festivals and often contests, have had a hand in each of these rejuvenations, which, like that of American fiddling, were nativistic revivals, undertaken for similarly constituted mixtures of nationalistic, historical, artistic, and even touristic reasons.”\textsuperscript{26}

The idea of a collective group or society supports the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States, how it started, and how it is maintained by an organization or group of organizations. F.I.R.E. also places an emphasis in maintaining a foundation with emphasis on older components from which all fiddlers can draw on, though they also support innovation of new components.

Goertzen further discusses the concept of a revival’s vitality. According to Goertzen, instrument revivals seem to have more staying power than vocal revivals. He attributes this to song text being more explicit and confined to a specific context.\textsuperscript{27} When people’s tastes and views change, text has less meaning. Instrumental tunes, with no lyrics, are not as “purely part of folk culture as folk song can be” and tunes are more susceptible to migration and “musical renewal.”\textsuperscript{28} While this thesis does not compare Scottish vocal music to instrumental music, the concepts of what revives and keeps a tradition alive are explored. It is possible that the fact that Scottish fiddling is instrumental is one reason in itself for successful revival and maintenance.

Other relevant research concerns Scottish Highland Games and festivals in the United States. Erin Ruth Thompson’s master’s thesis describes the history, culture, environment, and common occurrences at Scottish Highland Games in the Southern part of the United States,

\textsuperscript{25} Goertzen, 127.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 128.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 129.
specifically the Costa Mesa ScotsFest, which includes fiddling competitions. Thompson also gives general descriptions of the people who go to such Games and contests, which is helpful when describing an audience or group of followers and what potentially draws them to a fiddling competition. Her work describes a different set of Games in the United States when many of the related Games and fiddling competitions for this thesis are from the northeastern part of the United States. This thesis will add to her description of audiences and Highland Games.

Emily Ann Donaldson’s book, *The Scottish Highland Games in America*, provides a detailed history of the Games, in both Scotland and the United States. It contains descriptions of the activities during the festivals, including athletic, dance, and music contests. She provides a list of festivals and their locations in the US, which helps establish whether or not the fiddling revival has grown or expanded since her study. The locations also provide evidence on how the revival was organized in comparison to today.

Importantly, Donaldson also offers a history of F.I.R.E., along with a brief biography of several prominent players involved in the organization, many of whom are the founding members of the revival and still active in the revival and competition scene today. She discusses how and why this revival began, including the original intentions regarding the F.I.R.E. fiddling contests. The descriptions and history of the Scottish Games in the United States create depth regarding background and context for these Games and their various competitions. Donaldson’s account helps trace the Scottish fiddling revival to its origin. By speaking with current revival members and organizers, and comparing their answers to Donaldson’s book, this thesis shows how the revival changed and what remained the same since her work, published in 1986.

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Since the revival is perceived as ongoing, looking at the revival as a process, rather than a retrospective occurrence is required. A descriptive process set by Tamara E. Livingston in her work, *Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory*, is used to examine the Scottish fiddling revival. She defines revivals as “a social movement which strives to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for contemporary society.”31 Her work gives a framework for examining all possible revivals and what becomes of them once the tradition is revived. The six-part criteria examining revivals as a process is:

1. An individual or small group of “core revivalists”
2. Revival informants and/or original sources (i.e. historical sound recordings)
3. A revivalist ideology and discourse
4. A group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community
5. Revivalist activities (i.e. organizations, festivals, competitions)
6. Non-profit and or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market

Livingston’s model is not rigid. According to Livingston, a revival is not necessarily confined to these six elements, nor do these elements have to appear in any particular order or proportion. The organization, F.I.R.E., does adhere to Livingston’s proposed model for a revival, even if it is not in itself the entire revival of Scottish fiddling throughout the United States. These six elements are used to further frame this study.

This research includes a narrative of Scottish fiddling’s history, as well as musical differences and similarities of different Scottish regional fiddling styles. This thesis articulates why each regional style is separate but still “Scottish.” This work includes descriptions and analyses of “Celtic” as applied to music as this term is used in relation to Scottish forms of music globally and a broad, Celtic revival. A discussion of a Scottish-American community is included, as well as how contests impact musical tradition and community. This thesis contributes to the

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32 Ibid., 69.
small but growing body of fiddling literature, with the potential to use results as points of comparison between different fiddling styles, genres, and competitions. Finally, this study adds to revivalist literature.

Most importantly, the organization F.I.R.E. is primarily responsible for the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States. Other organizations, deriving from and because of F.I.R.E., later furthered the resurgence and development of the tradition in the US in addition to F.I.R.E.’s continuing efforts. F.I.R.E. created a Scottish-American fiddling community, which then makes the revival even stronger and more permanent. Moreover, the revival is slowly changing the music it seeks to revive, though these are unavoidable changes. Long term, competitions in the US may contribute to more standardization in Scottish fiddling. Despite efforts at standardization, the revival is growing beyond its original intent and now has implications for the fiddling tradition in both the US and Scotland. This tradition in the United States may ultimately transform into something new, though it will probably always retain Scottish roots and heritage because of the conscious efforts of F.I.R.E.’s revival.
CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SCOTTISH FIDDLING

Scottish fiddling is a musical tradition dating back centuries. It experienced numerous transformations, including the replacement of the unstandardized fiddle with the modern violin. While fiddle music is played on a standard, Western violin today, fiddle tunes were once played on unstandardized, inconsistently designed string instruments. These early fiddles were bowed and plucked like the modern violin, but the instruments were of various sizes and shapes, including rectangular box-like instruments that could be up to two feet in length, almost a foot in width, and about two inches in depth.¹ Such instruments caused unstandardized and inconsistent styles of playing.

The earliest known examples of these instruments were “strung with two strings of horsehair and played with a bow.”² These instruments were known as fethill after the Latin vidula, which translates to “fiddle.”³ The early bows were curved outward like a weapon bow and arrow rather than the curved inward versions of today. The sound box or body of these instruments was flat, unlike the modern curved, arched violin.⁴ This means that the tone quality on the early fiddles was not as good as the arched violins, which produce a more open sound.

Early fiddles in Scotland are similar to stringed instruments from other areas of Europe. The Jouhikantele of Finland, the Talharpa known to the Swedish inhabitants of Estonia, and the Crwth of Wales also resemble early Scottish fiddles.⁵ In Ireland, there are accounts of a “bowed harp” which was plucked and later adapted for bowing as well as a “fidil” which originally

² Ibid.
⁴ Collinson, 201.
⁵ Ibid., 200.
contained only two strings. All of these instruments are possibilities for influences on early Scottish fiddles. However, information on these early instruments is scarce and largely limited to iconography. As a result, determining the instrument with the most influence is difficult. The early court music of Scotland in the 1400s and 1500s provides a more complete story of early Scottish fiddle instrument and its music.

The Scottish Monarchy and Fiddling

King James IV (b. 1430- d. 1460, r. 1437-1460) of Scotland provides the first definite mention of fiddlers. As a patron of the arts, his household account books contain a payment receipt for a fiddler in 1440. After this mention, fiddlers become more prominent in the Scottish courts, though players performed on the unstandardized instruments with varying string numbers and lengths. A later monarch introduced modern violins to Scotland.

King James V (b. April 10, 1512 – d. December, 14 1542, r. 1513-1542) also has a role in the Scottish fiddle story. After his first marriage in France in 1537, he brought the viol back to Scotland with him. In France, this instrument was used in various sizes: two treble viols, a tenor, and a bass. It is conceivable that this combination was used as a quartet. Further, it is probable that these viols contained four strings, much like a modern violin. However, violins were not standardized yet and so the viol would continue to be the instrument of choice for fiddlers until

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6 Collinson, 201.
7 Perttu, 122.
8 Farmer, 92.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
around 1670.12 King James’ daughter Mary Queen of Scots further ensured the fiddle’s place in Scottish history and culture.

Though exact dates are ambiguous, the fiddle was decidedly a part of Scotland by Mary, Queen of Scot’s time (b. 1542- d. 1587, r. 1542-1567). Though the modern violin shape was still missing, iconography suggests that fiddles were four stringed by the time of her rule.13 Fiddles of that time still did not have the tone quality associated with today’s violin sound. There is an anonymous description describing the “wretched fiddles” used to serenade Mary Queen of Scots in her court.14 There are also accounts15 of a French historian and soldier, Seigneur de Brantôme, making an observation in 1560, though some records place the event in 1561, of “five or six hundred citizens of the town who gave [Mary Queen of Scots] a concert of the vilest fiddles.”

John Knox, a key figure during the Protestant Reformation, spoke of the same event as a “company of honest men, who with instruments of music, gave their salutation at her chamber window.”17 Interestingly, Knox’s followers would eventually contribute to Scottish fiddling in the then-future United States. Knox seemed to speak more highly of the event and its sound compared to Brantôme. Despite Knox’s more positive account of her majesty’s “concert,” the Queen moved her apartment to a quieter part of the house after this “serenade.”18 The “wretched fiddles” and their “vile” sound eventually replaced the violin’s sound; a sound more familiar to today’s listeners.

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13 Farmer, 92.
14 Ibid.
15 Sources vary on which year this event occurred and admit that records from this time are scarce and require further research via town records, private letters, and meeting minutes to determine the exact date. However, all sources agree that this event occurred in August.
16 Collinson, 201.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
The Modern Violin, Standardized Notation, and Manuscripts

The exact arrival date of the modern, Italian violin is unknown. The best accounts place its arrival in Scotland around 1670, though it may be earlier.\(^\text{19}\) The flexibility, tone quality, and standardization of the relatively modern violin held great appeal for fiddlers.\(^\text{20}\) Fiddle tunes were quickly adapted to the violin for its superior sound and playability. Violin-playing fiddlers replaced the viol-playing fiddlers by the 18th century; around the same time fiddle music became the music of the Scottish courts.\(^\text{21}\) Though the music is played on the violin, because of the musical style played, the violins were and still are referred to as “fiddles.” While the violin is the instrument of choice for most Scottish fiddlers, the style could be acceptably played on other instruments, such as the viola. Though Scottish fiddling techniques and tunes developed and are written mainly for violin, the style of playing is more important than the instrument itself in a Scottish fiddling context.

The standard violin’s arrival in Scotland also brought standardized, Western notation. Until around 1680, fiddle tunes and repertoire were passed on by ear.\(^\text{22}\) The violin, with its European concert music, came with notation that a fiddler learned through sight, rather than merely through sound. Players and composers began creating and notating repertoire they had heard and played in their lifetimes. While fiddle tunes were still passed on by ear and memory from teacher to student as well as fiddler to fiddler, players also liked written copies for occasional reference and to learn new tunes.\(^\text{23}\) However, these written tunes were not notated on single sheets of paper for use on a music stand. Instead, composers or fiddlers themselves

\(^{19}\) Johnson, 3.  
\(^{20}\) Collinson, 203.  
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 204.  
\(^{22}\) Johnson, 6.  
\(^{23}\) Ibid.
notated the tunes in large, oversized manuscript volumes or collections.\textsuperscript{24} Perhaps oversized manuscript collections are more difficult to steal. Composers might have been motivated by leaving their mark on Scottish fiddling history as any tune not written down could be claimed by another as their own and the original composer might be lost to history.\textsuperscript{25} Many of these volumes survive today and new volumes of tunes are still being compiled.

Manuscript volumes of fiddle tunes were and are not practical in the same way as Western concert sheet music. Written tunes were put into a fiddler’s private collection and bound in such a way that became too wide to carry or put on a music stand. Often, these collections contain no signs of use like pencil markings, fingerings, or bowings.\textsuperscript{26} Because players still memorized tunes, the written tune was not needed once the melody was committed to memory. This indicates that the sheet music was not used after memorization or for stylistics by fiddlers especially when you compare how much concert violinists marked their music for stylistics. It is as if the tunes were collected for a fiddler’s private satisfaction or to become a family heirloom.\textsuperscript{27} Also, during this time, it is conceivable that such collections were not published or reproduced due to printing costs. Many famous players later published their collections of fiddle tunes and are now thanked in retrospect by scholars and players studying this musical tradition.

Multiple manuscripts that survive today owe their existence to famous, historical Scottish fiddlers. A complete list of every famous player or composer would divert this chapter too much, but there are individuals that must be mentioned when discussing this history of Scottish fiddling: the Gow family, William Marshall, James Scott Skinner, and Robert Mackintosh. These individuals were selected because of their fiddling ability as well as their contributions as either a

\textsuperscript{24} Collinson, 205.
\textsuperscript{26} Johnson, 8.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
composer or a compiler of manuscripts, which preserved the tradition. Additionally, when aspiring Scottish fiddlers learn of the history, techniques, and styles of the various Scottish traditions, these names and their connection to Scottish music and fiddling are inevitably taught to them. The following is by no means a complete list.

Famous Players

The Gow family is given enormous credit for preserving and developing the Scottish fiddling tradition. The Gows had financial support from many members of the aristocracy who enjoyed the music and wanted to see this tradition maintained. Neil Gow (b. 1727-d. 1807) specifically is known for his “up-driven bow” technique. The up-driven bow playing style is handed down among fiddle players studying the Gow playing techniques. An up-driven bow stroke is accomplished with a strong flick of the wrist and it gives the strathspey its characteristic accent.

Neil Gow began playing at the age of nine and received limited formal musical training. He won a fiddling contest in Scotland at the age of 18, rare for someone with hardly any musical training, and it is said he perfected the “Scottish snap” using his famed up-driven bow technique. Neil became famous as a player and was frequently sought after to play at parties, weddings, and festivals. As a composer, Neil Gow wrote approximately 70-87 tunes for listening and dancing. Neil Gow and his family collected nearly six volumes of Scottish fiddle tunes, though they controversially changed the names of the original composers on occasion.

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29 Specific tunes, techniques, and regional styles are discussed further in the regional styles chapter.
30 Collinson, 221.
31 Ibid., 214.
32 Farmer, 343.
Neil Gow’s son, Nathaniel Gow (b. 1763-d. 1831) inherited much of his father’s talent on the violin. He was more educated in terms of formal Western musical theory and composition than his father. As a result, his contribution was that of a composer, arranger, and publisher of Scottish fiddle tunes, in addition to being a fine player.\textsuperscript{34} His \textit{Select Collection of Original Dances} (c. 1815) and his \textit{Beauties of Niel Gow [and Sons]} (c. 1819) are examples of collections commonly consulted by fiddlers.\textsuperscript{35}

Nathaniel often played for King George IV (b. 1762- d. 1830; r. 1820-1830) as well as other fashionable parties in all the major cities around the country.\textsuperscript{36} He famously played for the Edinburgh Musical Society, Scotland’s primary musical organization in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{37} Like his father, he occasionally plagiarized other composer’s tunes. Despite this dishonesty, his collections are some of the best quality, both in preservation and musicality, from that time.

Robert “Red Rob” Mackintosh (b. 1745-d. 1807) is another prominent violinist and fiddler. He played with the Edinburgh Musical Society’s orchestra and, like many Scottish fiddlers of the time, was a leading player in European art music. He composed many original reels and much of his work is found in numerous manuscripts today. His contributions to airs and reels are particularly notable and have been published in four manuscript volumes.\textsuperscript{38} Mackintosh was also Nathaniel Gow’s teacher.

William Marshall (1748-1833) was a man of many occupations. He was a fiddler, architect, astronomer, butler, and clock maker. Though self-taught, he worked as the butler and fiddler for the wealthy Gordon family in the North-East of Scotland for almost thirty years.\textsuperscript{39} His playing

\textsuperscript{34} Farmer, 343.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Collinson, 215.
\textsuperscript{37} Johnson, 5.
\textsuperscript{38} Emmerson, 66.
\textsuperscript{39} Neil, vol. 1, 7.
style was so highly skilled that the North-East tradition owes part of its virtuosic style to Marshall. For example, other fiddlers soon copied his deliberateness in the strathspey and the strathspey is now considered to be a slower, more exact work of art as a result.\textsuperscript{40} This is often referred to as the slow strathspey, which is a cross between an air and a strathspey: the elegance of the air but the dotted rhythms of a strathspey.\textsuperscript{41} This, and techniques like it, took Scottish fiddling to a new standard of playing.\textsuperscript{42}

Marshall’s talents were not limited to playing, however. Robert Burns, the Scottish national poet, described him as “the finest composer of strathspeys of the age.”\textsuperscript{43} In all, he composed 287 melodies, and his 1822 collection, \textit{Collection of Scottish Airs, Melodies, Strathspeys and Reels}, is still considered one of the best resources for fiddling tunes.\textsuperscript{44} This collection and other collections of his published collections of fiddle tunes survive, even in reprint, today.

Another famous Scottish fiddler is James Scott Skinner (1843-1927). He is the self-proclaimed “Strathspey King,” possibly due to being such a strong “exponent” on the strathspey with his strong, crisp bowing technique.\textsuperscript{45} He trained in both Western, classical violin techniques through some of the best concert violin teachers of the day as well as traditional styles of playing through family tradition. His distinct playing style was known as “virtuosic,” and contributed to the North-East regional style, known for its virtuosic expectations of players.\textsuperscript{46} Skinner composed over 600 tunes and was famous for both Scottish fiddling and violin concert

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Field notes, September 5, 2014.
  \item Emmerson, 52.
  \item Neil, vol. 1, 7.
  \item Collinson, 222.
  \item Emmerson, 94.
  \item Neil, vol. 1., 103.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
performances. Often, Skinner uses the “birl” bow technique, a succession of bow strokes so quick that it sounds like a “shiver” rather than three discernable bow strokes. Starting in 1899, he was the first Scottish fiddler to record commercially. Skinner’s last recording was in 1925.

It is through manuscripts that tunes from this period survive both in Scotland and in the United States. Today, new manuscripts are still compiled, but many of the tunes are repeats from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries in addition to newer tunes. Without tunes from the earlier centuries, much of the Scottish fiddling tradition would be lost forever. Many fiddlers threw tunes away once they committed the notes and rhythms to memory. Since the Scots also lost much of their music during their long and often tense history with the English, the manuscripts provide another layer of importance to Scottish music and history.

English and Scottish Tensions and Musical Migration to America

Tensions between England and Scotland resulted in events that influenced the migration of Scottish people and their music. Presbyterians in Scotland were not always welcome due to the Church of England and they sought religious tolerance in the New World. In the 1600s, many of them settled in what is now Pennsylvania, and their descendants eventually moved south, and later to the west. Also, not long after the controversial Union of the Crowns between England and Scotland under King James VI in 1603 was Jamestown, Virginia founded and named after said Scottish King. Later, Scotland was a main export location for Virginia tobacco. Flourishing trade between Scotland and the colonies begins in the 1670s; interestingly around the

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47 Neil, vol. 1., 103.
48 Ibid.
49 Emmerson, 182.
50 Johnson, 7.
same time the modern violin was introduced to Scotland. Such trade and colonization brought fiddling to the Americas.

Perhaps the most relevant event related to immigration and, by extension, Scottish fiddling in the United States is the Highland Clearances. The Highland Clearances are a series of events over hundreds of years resulting from English-Scottish tensions and forced many Scottish people into their respective diasporas. Though these occurrences are certainly not the first case or the only cause of Scots arriving in North America, these events are responsible for a great number of Scottish immigrants into North America. An important precursor to the Highland Clearances is the Jacobite Risings or Rebellion.

Jacobites were supporters of King James VII of Scotland and II of England (b. 1633- d. 1701, r. 1685-1688), whose heirs became Roman Catholics. England, as a Protestant nation, did not want a Catholic King or monarchy. They asked William of Orange, also known as William III of England and William II of Scotland (b. 1650 – d. 1702 r. 1689-1702) to rule instead and King James’ heir, James Francis Edward Stuart (b. 1688 – d. 1766), who fled to France as a result of the coup. This began a long history of tension concerning the throne of the two nations. Supporters of King James named themselves “Jacobites” after the Latin “Jacobus” or “James.” After, there were three rebellion events that led to the Clearances.

With the unsuccessful and violent attempts to restore the Stuarts, or the heirs of King James, the Scottish found themselves at the mercy of the English victors. The English attempted to suppress Scottish culture in the hope of quelling more uprisings. The Proclamation

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52 Alex Murdoch, "USA," in The Oxford Companion to Scottish History.
55 “Jacobites.”
56 “Jacobite Risings.”
57 Graham, 27.
of 1782 specifically forbid Scottish culture such as Highland dress, kilts, tartan patterns which represent the different clans of Scotland, piping, and Highland Games. Any offense of this proclamation resulted in imprisonment on the first offense and deportation and exile for seven years on the second offense. Because the Great Highland Bagpipe, seen as an instrument of war, was expressly forbidden, the fiddle reinterpreted and carried on the musical style and ornamentations of the Pipes in order to preserve its musical traditions. This influence can still be heard today in the West Highland style of Scottish fiddling, which imitates piping ornamentation and style. While the Proclamation forbidding Scottish culture was eventually repealed and did not entirely succeed in the first place, much of Scottish culture and music from that time is lost forever.

In addition to cultural suppression, there were economic restrictions imposed by the English. The Highlanders in the western part of Scotland felt the suppression most due to the high number of farms in that part of Scotland. As a source of revenue and resources, farms were primary Scottish targets for the English. English rule and prosperity caused prices of cattle, sheep, and rent to continuously rise. The Highland Clan system relied on loyalty and service rather than monetary payment on farms and ranches. The Scottish Clans, with a different economic and social structure, could not keep up with rising expenses imposed by the English.

Highlanders, especially farmers, were evicted in two phases by landowners supported by the government. The “People’s Clearance” lasted from 1770s to the 1820s and the “Sutherland

58 Donaldson, Kindle 134.
59 Ibid.
60 Details of the bagpipe tradition’s relation to the West Highland style of fiddling will be discussed in another chapter.
61 Donaldson, Kindle 134.
62 Ibid, 27.
Clearances” lasted from 1818 to 1860. Both of these clearances forced the relocation of many Scotsman and their families. Many Scottish people relocated to Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States. These immigrants brought whatever culture they could with them, including ways of dress, food, and music. Due to the portability of the violin, fiddle music and traditions were more easily transplanted to new locations away from Scotland.

One of the new locations was Ireland. The descendants of the Scottish immigrants and the Irish are known as “Scots-Irish.” “Residing in the northern counties of Ireland, separated from Scotland only by the North Channel, they were able to maintain cultural ties with their homeland,” such as the drone string sound. Due to famine and more political tensions, the Scots-Irish also began migrating from Ireland to North America. The Great Famine in the 1800s is one such example. Many of the immigrants settled in Canada, as well as the United States’ Appalachian region, East Coast, and Ohio River Valley. Over time, the Scots and the Scots-Irish moved into the west areas of the United States such as Montana and as far south as Alabama. The Scottish fiddle sound would eventually be lost to the Americanization of fiddling styles. The musical influence of Africa also contributed to Scottish fiddling’s fading prominence and other hybridized fiddling styles in the United States.

Hybridized Fiddling Styles in the US

African slaves and their music arrived in the Americas as early as 1619. Over time, the African influence merged with European derived music to form American music. This includes

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64 Neil, vol. 3., 58.
66 Ibid., 6.
fiddling styles. When slave owners realized that some of their slaves played the fiddle, and played it well, they encouraged the playing by giving their fiddler special privileges. The African preference for polyrhythm on simple European meters, combined with European style melodies created many southern styles of fiddling.

Jazz led many Africans and African-Americans to other instruments and musical styles and away from the fiddle. This meant that by the 1930s in the United States, fiddling was a primarily “white institution.” With the association of jazz as “non-white” and “urban,” fiddling would become a more “rural,” “white” tradition in America, associated with the country and the “hillbillies” of the south. Whatever was left of Scottish fiddling would remain fused to other musical styles in the south and in country music to create various styles of southern, Appalachian, country, Bluegrass, and Old-Time fiddling.

Over time, any associated musical heritage, such as fiddling, from outside of the United States would gradually fade, including that of Scotland. The musical heritage of Scotland in the US became “American,” rather than “Old-World.” Despite this, the various fiddling styles in the United States would retain some musical elements from Scotland while combining with other influences. Jigs and reels, for example, in many American fiddle styles can still trace their Scottish and Irish origins. Like the many varied influences of American fiddling, there is not one “American” fiddling style, or even one “southern” or “western” style of fiddling. The following American fiddling styles with links to Scotland are discussed below: southern,

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68 Cauthen, 10.  
69 Graf, 18.  
70 Cauthen, 7.  
71 Graf, 24.  
72 Malone, 14.  
73 Ibid., 16.  
74 Ibid.
Appalachian, Old-Time, and Bluegrass. Due to the overlap in location, there is also occasional musical overlap.

Southern fiddling is a fusion of many different influences. Musical styles and tastes can even vary from state to state or within states. A Texas style fiddling, for example, is different from a North Georgia style though techniques can overlap and merge.75 Southern fiddlers overall tend to change pentatonic structures of tunes and prefer to alter harmonically unstable tones.76 They also tend to slur many notes together on what is known as the “long bow technique.”77 This is especially true in Texas fiddling. Thus, the south prefers a smoother bowing sound and fingering technique. This is contrasted by Scottish fiddling which is more accepting of “hack bowing,” which is not as smooth by comparison since it relies on the back and forth motion of the bow to create more syncopated rhythms.

Despite this contrast, Scotland is credited with being one of the countries introducing the fiddle to the United States as well as providing many of the tunes adopted by the south and the west.78 Richard Niven, for example, an Old-Time fiddler, maintains that “it is likely that all the countless variations in southern fiddling are traceable to seven or eight different styles brought over to America by predominantly Celticly cultured immigrants from various sections of northern Ireland, southern Scotland, and to a lesser degree parts of England.”79 However, the claims of “southern Scotland” do not necessarily mean that all immigrants from Scotland were also from the southern part of the country. Further, according to individuals such as Bill Malone, W. J. Cash, Grady McWiney, and Forrest McDonald, the south appears to have a “common folk

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75 Malone, 24.
77 Malone, 24.
78 Ibid., 23.
79 Richard Nevins, notes to *Old –Time Fiddle Classics*, vol. 2: 1927-1934 (County 527) as quoted by Malone, 23.
culture” attributed to a “common Celtic heritage shared by most white southerners” that is “preponderantly Scotch-Irish.”

This “Celticism,” as they call it, contributes not only to southern musical heritage, but also to social attitudes of “fierce independence,” “clannish” behavior, and even certain agricultural tendencies.

Appalachian fiddling is mainly associated with the Appalachian mountain region of the United States. Many of the Scots-Irish settled in this region. Musically, the region is known for its ballads and broadsides of British origin, which includes the English and Scottish. Over time, the region reinterpreted these tunes into what is now known as shape note singing and lined hymns due to the hybridized influence of gospel and spiritual music. Instrumentally, the fiddle was the primary instrument of dances and much of the early fiddle repertoire came from the British Isles, including Scotland. These tunes were eventually changed, renamed, varied, and adapted to the new context of Appalachia. There was often an emphasis on a rigid, metrical beat in musical styles of this region that sometimes accompanied a ballad singer. As banjos became more common in the region, “string-bands” formed and would eventually contribute to what became Old-Timey or Old-Time music and later Bluegrass music.

The name “Old-Time music” mainly came out of the commercial industry of the 1920s. During the 1920s, radio provided the primary means of circulation for southern and “hillbilly”

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80 Malone, 418-420.
81 Ibid., 420.
82 Emily Satterwhite, “‘That's What They're All Singing About’: Appalachian Heritage, Celtic Pride, and American Nationalism at the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival,” Appalachian Journal 32, no. 3 (Spring 2005), 302.
84 Olson.
85 Ibid.
styles of fiddling. The term “Hillbilly” often refers to the south and southern culture, and by extension, music with its “Celtic” and implied partially Scottish heritage. The term and its associated music also stood for rural values after World War I during a period of urbanization in much of the United States. No one can document the first use of the “hillbilly” term, but before and during World War II an increasing interest in “hillbilly” music began, especially in the south. However, the sheer number of rural bands and musicians, including fiddlers, left record companies confused with how to market this broad genre of rural music. The term “southern” still provoked an image of slavery and the label “country” was too broad. The record companies used the terms “old familiar tunes” and “Old-Time music” to describe the many bands and musicians heard throughout the south and on the radio. This term was more appealing to consumers since “hillbilly” carried a negative connotation.

Old-Time music includes vocals, banjos, guitars, mandolins, kazoos, pianos, zithers, organs, whistles, and especially the banjo, guitar, and fiddle. In fact, the fiddle and string-instrumentation dominated most of the early recordings of Old-Time music. Scottish fiddling elements survive, though in a hybridized way, in Old-Time fiddling. Many fiddlers of Scottish decent can recognize Scottish tunes in Old-Time repertoire, though there are differences. Americans regularized the beat and gave the music more “bounce” and flair compared to the

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87 Malone, 34-38.
89 Malone, 40.
91 Malone, 39.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 43.
95 Bronner, 5.
“droning quality” of Scottish tunes. This concept is mostly applied to the slower airs of Scottish fiddling because many of the faster tunes already contained a steady beat necessary for dancing.

Old-Time fiddlers also adjusted Scottish tunes to fit different contextual needs: an air modified to a reel, for example. Also, an Old-Time fiddler would develop “calls” or “shouts” to signal the dancers when to change a type of dance step. This is decidedly different from Scottish fiddle dance tunes where a call is not employed. The Old-Time fiddlers also created their own contests for fiddling that would further disperse the music.

Long associated with fairs and festivals in the US, fiddling contests were a means of revenue for the county as well as a source of southern and rural pride. Due to the popularity and the vast number of fiddlers, top performers “resorted to physical and instrumental tricks to win the favor of their audiences,” and the competitions overall inspired “novel, and winning techniques” as well as “improvisation and melodic variation.” These fiddle contests and their intensity survives to modern times. The virtuosity developed in the contests impacted Bluegrass music’s development, a genre also influenced by Scottish fiddling.

Bluegrass is associated with virtuosos and talented musicians, and emerged from Old-Time music. Bluegrass transformed the Old-Time styles. Although not recognized as a distinct style from the beginning, Bluegrass, as a unique genre, manifested when other bands, fans, and musicians began to imitate Bill Monroe, his band, and his famous “three finger style” on the banjo and mandolin. Bill Monroe, the “father of Bluegrass,” assembled a band called the “Blue Grass Boys” consisting of a five-string banjo, a fiddle, a guitar, a string bass, and a

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96 Bronner, 11.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., 14.
99 Malone, 18.
100 Ibid., 23.
101 Ibid., 323.
102 Ibid., 329.
mandolin. These instruments combined high technical instrumental skill with gospel quartet stinging, traditional ballads and dance music, hillbilly styles, western swing, jazz influences, and African American country blues. Because of the many influences in Bluegrass’s distinct sound, there is no one region associated with Bluegrass stylistically.

Bill Monroe cites Scottish music as a key influence for Bluegrass. “The Monroes come from Scotland.” Regarding Scottish music and bagpipes, Monroe says: “I’ve always loved the sound.” As a result, Monroe would keep the Scottish “sound” in mind during his playing. Bluegrass owes much of its influence to Scottish music and “draws on Scottish and African roots to form a uniquely American style.” The African influence provides much of the rhythms, while the Scottish sound influences the tunes and melodic styles in Bluegrass. Both cultures contributed to dance styles found in Bluegrass, especially clogging, flatfooting, and buck dancing. Bluegrass fiddling in particular finds its playing style’s ancestry in Scottish fiddling. Bluegrass fiddlers play many thirds and fifths, a characteristic with roots in the West Highland style. Double stops and open tunings are also common and these techniques are reminiscent of Scottish fiddling. Like Old-Time music, Bluegrass, with its virtuosic playing, became part of festivals and contests.

Contests and Highland Games

Old-Time and Bluegrass festivals include competitions as part of their traditions. Such contests typically consider any form of fiddling valid for judging, which includes Irish, Scottish,
Cape Breton, or any American style of fiddling. This “patchwork” of fiddling styles in contests is typically dominated by styles that span larger regions, and more local styles are often suppressed.\textsuperscript{110} With so many styles, and with the dominance of some genres over others, establishing minority-fiddling styles in the United States as a distinct musical tradition is difficult. Scottish fiddling, as a minority style in the US, could not compete with the dominance of American styles in a competition setting. Until the 1970s, distinctly Scottish fiddling competitions were not found in the United States.

In the United States, fiddle competitions of various genres have been present since before the American Revolution. The Governor of Virginia referenced fiddles as early as 1618, though fiddles were banned on the Sabbath along with dances and card playing.\textsuperscript{111} The Virginia Gazette, a Williamsburg newspaper, listed and advertised many articles concerning fiddling including the earliest documented fiddle contest in 1736.\textsuperscript{112} Interestingly, this date is also St. Andrew’s Day (the patron saint of Scotland), which suggests a Scottish connection.\textsuperscript{113} Another fiddle contest announced a year later on St. Andrew’s Day reads:

“That a violin be played for by 20 fiddlers, and to be given to him that shall be adjudged to play the best: No person to have the liberty of playing, unless he brings a fiddle with him. After the prize is won, they are all to play together, and each a different tune; and to be treated by the company.”\textsuperscript{114}

Many of these fiddle contests are associated with fairs and festivals, as mentioned earlier, though documentation and detail are sparse before World War II.\textsuperscript{115} There are accounts of Henry Ford, who propelled America into the automobile revolution, contributing to fiddling in the United States. Ford, who grew up in a farm with rural, conservative values, was also known for

\textsuperscript{110} Chris Goertzen, 353.
\textsuperscript{111} David Gardner, personal interview, September 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{112} Graf, 14.
\textsuperscript{113} Goertzen, 354.
\textsuperscript{114} David Gardner, personal interview and program notes, September 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{115} Graf, 14.
his love of fiddling and Old-Time dances.\footnote{Malone, 433.} With regards to fiddling, Literary Digest on January 2, 1926 describes Ford’s attempts to “revive” Old-Time fiddling in the United States: “as many as thirty-nine fiddlers, he tells the world, have been bidden to Dearborn in the last year and a half to supply him with melodious ammunition for his war on Tin Pan Alley.”\footnote{“Fiddling to Henry Ford,” Literary Digest 88, no. 1 (1926): 32.} Ford was “aspiring” to “revive the music of our granddaddies,” as he perceived it lost to the newer trends of the 1920s.\footnote{Ibid.} Ford also sponsored fiddling contests at his car dealerships.\footnote{“History,” National Oldtime Fiddlers Contest and Festival, 2014, accessed September 17, 2014, http://www.fiddlecontest.org/history/} This means that as far back as the 1920s, certain fiddling styles were perceived as lost. If Old-Time fiddling with its Scottish influences was perceived as fading, then Scottish fiddling as its own genre was also diminished.

Though most historical accounts seem to indicate that he did, at least in part, succeed in renewing interest, Ford’s attempts were for Old-Time fiddling, rather than Scottish fiddling. Though Old-Time has influences from Scottish fiddling, the fact that all accounts of Old-Time fiddling regard it as “American” rather than “Old-World” indicates Scottish fiddling’s lack of prominence in the US. It also indicates a lack of competitions, as Ford sponsored some of the few contests for this music.

In addition to competitive fiddling, Highland Games were also brought by the Scottish immigrants. Though the exact date is unknown, Highland Games in Scotland are claimed to start as early as 1314 AD.\footnote{Donaldson, Kindle 105.} They were originally used as war games in preparation for clan rivalries and battles with enemies outside of Scotland. Highland Games contain many activities like sword dancing, athletic events, scotch tasting, and piping, all of which were banned by the
English during the Proclamation and the Clearances since they are a strong part of Scottish culture.

The first Highland Games in the United States began around the 1820s.\textsuperscript{121} Many of these Games were and still are sponsored by Scottish interest groups, clubs, and associations. These associations include the Scot’s Charitable Society, founded in 1657, the St. Andrew’s Club of Charleston, North Carolina, founded in 1729, and the St. Andrew’s club of Philadelphia, founded in 1903.\textsuperscript{122} These are some of the earliest sponsors of Games in the United States though it is by no means a complete list.

Around the time and because of the Civil War, interest in Scottish Games in the United States declined. The Games Associations and Scottish interest groups reported a general reduction of funds in addition to less public interest during the Civil War years.\textsuperscript{123} It wasn’t until the 1920s that a rebirth in the Games developed.\textsuperscript{124} New Scottish interest societies developed and older ones began to fund Games again. The Games’ popularity again declined due to World War II but the aftermath of the war saw another resurgence of Scottish Games. The 1970s were especially significant in this Games revival, and also saw the introduction of Scottish fiddling into Scottish Games in the United States.

The Beginning of a Revival

Around the 1970s, several individuals began noticing the lack of Scottish fiddling or the lack of “correct” Scottish fiddling. Much of what these individuals heard were Americanized styles now prevalent in the United States even if the tune was originally Scottish. Nancy and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[121] Donaldson, Kindle 273.
\item[122] Ibid., Kindle 278-282.
\item[123] Ibid., Kindle 496.
\item[124] Ibid., Kindle 501.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Paul Brockman of Virginia, though not fiddlers themselves, are Scottish dancers and fiddling enthusiasts. While attending a fiddling convention in Galax, Virginia in 1973, they heard a fiddler named Guy Faust play Scottish tunes in an Americanized style. They became concerned that the “true” Scottish fiddling style, with no hybridized influences, was absent in the United States. Additionally, both Paul and Nancy Brockman lamented the increasing use of accordion over the fiddle in ensemble and dance settings. They began searching for a way to bring Scottish fiddling back into America.

Paul Brockman arranged for a fiddling demonstration through the Virginia Games Association in Alexandria, Virginia. This demonstration later became the foundation for the organization F.I.R.E. The organization started as a non-profit in 1975 and sanctions fiddling competitions in the United States and Canada. They also certify judges for local and national competitions, as well as monitor the annual U.S. National Competition held at a sponsoring Highland Games during the Games season, from February to October. F.I.R.E. is the only sanctioning agency for Scottish fiddling judges and competitions in North America. This organization became the foundation for a Scottish fiddling revival.

One of the fiddlers at the original demonstration was John Turner, a Scottish-American fiddler trained in the Scottish fiddling tradition. Nancy Brockman describes the occasion:

“John Turner and some others showed up that first year and gave a beautiful rendition of this musical tradition, and John has been a major contributor throughout the years, both as a competitor, judge, teacher and promoter. At that first gathering, we determined that there was enough interest to begin a Fiddling

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125 Donaldson, Kindle 2116.
126 Ibid., Kindle 2121.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Perttu, 77.
Competition the following year and the Virginia Games supported it.”\textsuperscript{133}

A competition format was selected for several reasons. Piping and drumming contests were already established in Highland Games.\textsuperscript{134} The pre-established competition structure was easily adapted to fiddle contests. Additionally, a competition can standardize playing and allow Scottish fiddling experts to control the influences of other fiddling styles, such as Irish or Bluegrass. Ironically, the first fiddle competitions sponsored by F.I.R.E. were open to fiddlers of any tradition, even though they were asked to play Scottish tunes in a Scottish style.\textsuperscript{135} It is worth noting that although the first winner was Scottish-American and played in the “Scottish style,” the second and third place winners were not specialized in Scottish fiddling.

“The results of the first U.S. National Fiddling Championship were as follows. John Burner of Chesterfield, Virginia, who is still considered the top American-born Scottish fiddler in the U.S., won the championship. Steve Hickman, an Irish-style fiddler from the Washington, D.C. area who had his own Scottish country-dance band called Findhorn Ceilidh, was second. Stuart Ian Duncan, a 12-year-old from Vista, California, who fiddled in his father's bluegrass band, was third.”\textsuperscript{136}

As F.I.R.E. grew and expanded in the United States, emphasis in the competitions became more specific to Scottish music, and less about other factors, such as traditional Highland dress, though that is still expected of players. Originally, much of the focus and judging criteria in the competitions rested on elements other than music, like whether or not the fiddler was wearing a kilt. Nancy and Paul Brockman eventually stepped down as executive directors of the organization and officers who are Scottish fiddlers now run F.I.R.E.. With this change in officers, the competitions’ focus became increasingly more about music, rather than kilts.

\textsuperscript{133} “Scottish F.I.R.E. Homepage.”
\textsuperscript{134} Donaldson, Kindle 2125.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., Kindle 2130.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., Kindle 2130-2134.
F.I.R.E. now sanctions Scottish-specific fiddling competitions throughout the United States. Many of these contests are located in the eastern part of the US though there are competitions on the west coast and in the Midwest. The increase in competitions, as well as the standardization of the Scottish musical styles through the competitions contributed to a successful fiddling revival in the United States.¹³⁷ F.I.R.E.’s success also influenced other Scottish fiddling interest groups that support Scottish fiddling in America.

Although F.I.R.E. is the main organization for Scottish Fiddling competitions and is perhaps the most responsible for the current Scottish fiddling revival, there are other Scottish fiddling organizations in the United States. For example, the “Jink and Diddle School,” located in North Carolina began in 1983. There are various levels of instruction available through workshops, private lessons, and classes. Some of the F.I.R.E. judges are on the staff at the camp, allowing the School to owe its existence, in part, to F.I.R.E.¹³⁸ The camp is available to players of varying ages and skill levels. Typically, the camp lasts for one to two weeks. Scholarships supporting students are often given as part of the prize when players win at various competitions. Not all fiddlers are from North Carolina and the scholarship helps the travel and lodging expenses as well as the camp tuition.

More recently, in 2015, the Strathgheny School of Scottish fiddling was established at Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.¹³⁹ This school lasts for one week in June and instructs high school and adults in fiddling technical skills, pedagogy, history, interpretation, nuance, and group contexts and performance settings.¹⁴⁰ Other activities include a concert at the

¹³⁷ F.I.R.E. and its detailed contribution to the revival are discussed at length in chapters five and six.
¹⁴⁰ Ibid.
end of the week, jam sessions, private lessons, and a ceilidh party with dancing.\textsuperscript{141} For teachers participating, the camp provides continuing education credit, which underlines the importance of training students, but also teachers to further the Scottish fiddling tradition.

Other fiddling clubs and societies are prominent all over the United States. For example, the Scottish Fiddlers of Los Angeles and the Boston Scottish Fiddling Club formed in 1981. Both of these groups meet regularly and sponsor fiddling workshops, jam sessions, and events.\textsuperscript{142} The clubs also show the growth of the revival and connecting community after F.I.R.E.’s establishment.

These clubs host their own contests (not always sanctioned by F.I.R.E.), jam sessions, and lessons for players of all ages and skill levels. F.I.R.E. maintains a list of these clubs, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, and their contact information on the F.I.R.E. website. The fact that organizations for Scottish fiddling other than F.I.R.E. are present is significant. More groups show growth and increased interest in this musical art form. These groups also formed after and often because of F.I.R.E., showing F.I.R.E.’s impact and influence on this genre and community in the United States. More groups keep Scottish fiddling active and vital in ways besides competitions.

\textsuperscript{141} “The Strathspey School of Scottish Fiddling.”
\textsuperscript{142} Donaldson, Kindle 2158-2161.
CHAPTER III
DEFINING “CELTIC” AND THE GLOBAL PAN-CELTIC’ REVIVAL

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the relationship between the concepts of “Celtic” and the Celtic global revival with the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States. Although Scottish fiddling is considered a Celtic musical style, Celtic is not necessarily Scottish. The Scottish fiddling revival in the United States will ultimately reveal itself as a separate entity from the global Celtic revival. However, aspects of the Scottish fiddling revival are linked with the global Celtic resurgence.

In order to explain aspects of the Scottish fiddling revival and why it is separate from the Celtic Revival, the term Celtic and its history as related to culture and music must be discussed. Though the Scottish fiddling revival could fit into the larger Celtic revival, there are aspects of the term Celtic that make this problematic. If the fiddling revival is looked at as merely “Celtic,” no great depth of understanding is achieved. Celtic is too broad a term historically, geographically, culturally, and musically.

Specifically, since Celtic refers to many countries and heritages, using Celtic to label what is musically Scottish-specific actually does the Scottish musical culture, and other Celtic-related cultures, a disservice. Despite these terminology concerns, global Pan-Celtic initiatives still contributed to the origins of the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States. Particularly, the emergence of more Highland Games festivals in the United States and the noticeable loss of the fiddle in the United States contributed to the revival.
Ancient Celtic Culture

Celtic culturally refers to people as early as 2000 B.C.E.\(^1\) inhabiting what are now Britain, Ireland, and parts of Spain and France.\(^2\) According to the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, the term “Celtic” is reserved for “Bronze Age civilizations that expanded their territorial hold throughout Europe until the early years of Christianity.”\(^3\) These people shared a common language with similar language roots, referred to as “Proto-Celtic,”\(^4\) though many dialects were likely considering the various modern Celtic languages\(^5\) and subsequent dialects such as Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, and Welsh.\(^6\) The earliest Celtic languages most likely mixed with other languages through trade and warfare, namely the Slavic, Greek, and Germanic countries. Further, when the Romans took over the Celtic regions between 43 A.D. and 410 A.D., they also brought Latin and Christianity.\(^7\) Latin mixed with the Celtic languages to create the hybrid Celtic languages still influencing modern dialects (See figures 1 and 2).

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5. The two language groups under the Celtic umbrella, Goidelic and Brythonic, are also referred to as “Q” Celtic (Goidelic), or Irish, Scots, and Manx, and the “P” Celtic (Brythonic), or the Welsh, Bretons, and Cornish respectively.
Figure 1. Modern countries considered “Celtic”
Source: Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Celtic countries and characteristics of the Celtic territories.”

Figure 2. Map of Celtic-speaking regions of the ancient world (shown in darker grey)
Source: Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Continental Celtic.”
Many early Christians saw the Celtic languages and related Celtic culture as “pagan,” or lesser since pagan was not always a positive term. Seeing these Celtic cultures as lesser aids the disappearance of culture, including music and language. This Christian viewpoint occurred around the middle ages and into the Renaissance. Further details pinpointing exactly when and to what extent all of these language shifts occurred are limited.

The term Celtic has other relevant terms. Each of these terms has different meanings as related to Celtic culture and further clouds what “Celtic” means today, especially when applied to music. Two of these terms are “Celticity” and “Celticism.” Celticity refers to a “quality of being Celtic.” Celticism is rooted in academia and describes meanings and connotations of the word “Celtic.” By extension, Celticism refers to interests and related activities stimulated by the awareness and belief in Celticity. When speaking of any of these terms as related to culture and music, it is in relation to the areas that historically spoke one of the Goidelic or Brythonic languages, before the Romans conquered Celtic lands.

This means that “Celtic” and its related terms can accurately apply to the modern geographic locations of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany, as well as the Isle of Man and Cornwall. However, this is a large geographic area with a wide range of social customs, cultural heritage, political history, geographical implications, and musical styles. Further, the diaspora from these countries expanded beyond these countries’ geographic and current political areas, further complicating the definition. The diaspora extends throughout Europe, the Americas, New Zealand, and Australia.

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10 Ibid.
11 Perttu, 2.
Early Celticism in Music

With so many cultures to consider, applying “Celtic” to music is difficult. Garland notes that no “set of sonic traits” distinguishes Celtic music. There are broad generalizations about Celtic music, such as clear, non-vibrato vocals, pentatonic scales, and predictable melodic contours. However, these traits are easily found in other musical customs and sounds. Even if these rules applied to Celtic music, there are many exceptions to the rule. Scottish fiddling, for example, uses many modes besides pentatonic scales. Melodic contours in Irish singing might not be anticipated by everyone and may be complex enough to disprove the “predictable” notion. Also, many “Celtic singers” from across the world use vibrato. Ideally, scholars would look to the past, to the ancient Celtic people, for clues on what defines Celtic music.

However, like the early Celtic languages, early Celtic music information is also scarce. With primarily oral traditions, this is not surprising. Records from fifth century Ireland mention musicians as well as prose and poetry cycles performed by bards and minstrels.\textsuperscript{12} Ancient landmarks, such as crosses, and writings in stone carvings from this time also honor musicians.\textsuperscript{13} Depictions of early instruments such as trumpets and harps are found on such carvings and landmarks. However, early instruments directly or solely associated with the Celtic people are difficult to pinpoint as many instruments are also found in other parts of Europe. The instruments found could come from a trader or merchant that traveled to a Celtic location rather than an ancient Celtic person’s possession.\textsuperscript{14}

What is considered Celtic with reasonable certainty are various lyres, rattles, horns and trumpets, and remains of harps. Harps and lyres have been found on cave carvings dating as

\textsuperscript{12} Sawyers, 24.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v “material culture, musical instruments,” accessed October 1, 2014.
early as the 1st century B.C.E.\textsuperscript{15} Records from 1000 A.D. show harps on stone carvings and by 1188, written descriptions of the harpers of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are described as well as the sound of a Welsh choir.\textsuperscript{16} By the 16th century, records of bagpipes, more harpers, Irish singing, more Welsh choirs, and other types of lyres are found.\textsuperscript{17}

All of these artifacts, carvings, and records indicate the existence of instruments and some sonic clues, but music naturally changes and blends with other music over time. Further, with the Romans and later the British Empire subjugating the Celtic cultures, it is very difficult to identify what is distinctly Celtic. This musical issue of sonic definition and recognition is further complicated by Pan-Celtic unification and collaboration efforts.

\textbf{Pan-Celtic Efforts}

The modern Pan-Celtic movement and ideology is traceable to around the 19th century during European’s strong nationalistic period.\textsuperscript{18} Nationalism directly and indirectly influenced concepts and perceptions of today’s Celtic music, including Scotland. People fostered an immense sense of pride in their countries and by extension, themselves. With the rise of strong nation states, smaller nations, ethnicities, and cultural groups were in danger of being overwhelmed. Around the same time, literary scholars, archaeologists, and linguists in academia started the beginnings of “Celtic studies” and began treating Celtic languages as a serious subject of study.\textsuperscript{19} This, in turn, began validating related musical practices. Celtic music was now worthy of study, rather than merely folk music and lesser than other academically studied music.

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\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia}, s.v “material culture, musical instruments,” accessed October 1, 2014.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia}, s.v “Pan-Celticism,” accessed October 1, 2014.
\end{flushright}
Those identifying themselves as “Celtic” began banding together in the 19th century to fight the rise of cultural and political domination from stronger nation states. In this sense, it is possible that the more-modern interpretation of Celtic is a reaction to hegemony from other nations, most likely the British Empire. By extension, this reaction to hegemony could be even older when considering the Roman Empire. For the sake of the current Scottish fiddling revival in the United States, this chapter will focus on the Pan-Celtic efforts of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the late 1800s, Charles de Gaulle published *Les Celtes au dix-neuvième siècle: appel aux représentants actuels de la race Celtique* (The Celts of the Nineteenth Century: An Appeal to the Living Representatives of the Celtic Race [1865]), which called for institutions to take “Celticism” seriously. Though the paper sparked positive resurgence of Celtic language and culture, including music, calling all Celtic people one race started many perceptual problems around the concept of Celtic. Despite this, the first Pan-Celtic League was held in 1869. Though the league itself was not very successful, mainly due to emerging but unsuccessful concepts of one internationally recognized “Celtic nation,” the modern concepts of “Celticism” began. The league inspired festivals, celebrations, and renewed interest in the old languages. As a result, societies and interest groups emerged for the express purpose of preserving, promoting, and celebrating “Celtic culture.” Some of these groups were Pan-Celtic and crossed political boundaries. Others were specific to geo-political locations such as Wales, Scotland, or Ireland.

In 1900, a Pan-Celtic Association, rather than a Pan-Celtic League, officially formed in Dublin, Ireland. For the first time, it united representatives from all countries considered Celtic, rather than a few by the previous effort. However, the endeavor was short-lived as the

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21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
Association died in 1910. Despite its short lifespan, the group established precedents for preserving all Celtic languages as well as cultural aspects such as music, dance, and customs. The language initiatives from this time in particular were the most innovative and perhaps the most important of all their efforts as language is a key factor in Celtic identity and heritage. One such effort was “Celtia,” a monthly magazine published between 1901 and 1908 establishing the beginnings of scholarly written works dedicated to Pan-Celtic languages and efforts. Though many of the language initiatives died out, these regular meetings for the purpose of discussing language set the precedent for today’s Celtic language preservation efforts. Due to the First World War, any further aspirations for Pan-Celtic unity and language and culture preservation were delayed.

In 1917, Pan-Celtic efforts resumed under the “Celtic Congress.” The following year’s conference focused on language preservation and in “furthering linguistic, literary, historical, and musical culture.” The Celtic Congress met in the following years to establish education initiatives to keep the Celtic languages alive, as well as preserve folk traditions, including music, and present scholarly papers on Celtic-related matters.

In spite of the best intentions, political agendas were also at play with many members. The combination of politics and Word War II proved fatal to the Celtic Congress and the efforts of Pan-Celtic unity were once again defeated. Due to the war, many of the meeting minutes and records from the Congress’ initiatives are lost as only five published reports survive. This makes any music-specific initiatives difficult to trace, if they ever existed in the first place.

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23 Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Pan-Celtic.”
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
However, the fact that organizations specifically wished to preserve these cultures sets the stage for future music endeavors and enthusiasts.

In 1947, the Celtic Congress resumed in Dublin, Ireland.\textsuperscript{29} Their aims were to “perpetuate the culture, ideals and languages of the Celtic peoples, and to maintain an intellectual contact and close co-operation between the respective Celtic communities.”\textsuperscript{30} This particular effort continues to this day and meetings are held in each Celtic country every six years.\textsuperscript{31} Typically, there is a particular theme of the conference, such as language, tourism, or mass media. One of the initiatives that came out of discussions on mass media is the Celtic Film and Television Festival, established in 1980 that celebrates film, radio, television, and new media from countries identified as Celtic.\textsuperscript{32}

Other Pan-Celtic initiatives include the Celtic League founded in 1961, which seeks to “foster co-operation between the national movements in the Celtic countries, particularly in efforts to obtain international recognition of our national rights [and] to share the experience of our national struggles and exchange constructive ideas.”\textsuperscript{33} It is largely a political organization aimed at creating a separate self-government for the Celtic countries. There is a branch of the League in each of the Celtic countries, as well as England, Nova Scotia in Canada, and the United States.\textsuperscript{34}

All of these Pan-Celtic organizations and initiatives brought global resurgent interest in Celtic culture and music. However, by now the Celtic culture of the later half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century was so far removed from the ancient languages and music that such culture needed redefinition

\textsuperscript{29} Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Pan-Celtic.”
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Celtic Film and Television Festival.”
\textsuperscript{33} Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Pan-Celtic.”
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
in its newer context. New interpretations of Celtic culture naturally occurred with regards to music over the centuries.

1970s Celtic Resurgence

Musically, the Inter-Celtic music festivals, founded in 1971, and the Celtic Film and Television Festival, founded in 1979, are two examples of Celtic cultural events occurring because of the Pan-Celtic unity initiatives. The Inter-Celtic music festivals are held at Lorient, Brittany for the first ten days in August. Music and dance competitions, music and dance performances and concerts, as well as film screenings, visual artists, fireworks, and bagpipe parades span the ten-day celebration. The Celtic Film and TV festival “promotes the cultures and languages of the Celtic countries in film, on television, radio and new media.” Their primary means of accomplishing this is through the festival, similar to how the Scottish fiddling revival is promoted through Highland Games and competitions. The event is three days long and focuses on the Celtic languages such as Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic, meaning that the films and events are performed and presented in those languages. The host country for the film festival rotates yearly.

The 1970s was perhaps the most recent and significant decade to impact the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States. Scholars credit the 1970s as the most recent period of Celtic

\[\text{\footnotesize 35 Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia, s.v. “Pan-Celtic.”}\]
revivalism and resurgence globally. In North America, for example, the documentary “Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler” was released in 1971 and essentially stated that the Cape Breton tradition was in danger of dying and needed revived in Canada. This prompted resurgence in the music in Cape Breton through the 1980s and 1990s though it is questionable if this particular Celtic tradition in Cape Breton was actually dying or merely perceived as such.

Since the 1970s, festivals became and still are a key element of unity among Pan-Celtic enthusiasts. The perceived definition of Celtic often seems to include neo-paganism, druidism, and nostalgic concepts of neo-medievalism. This is contrasted by the Highland Games. While the Games might contain some of these Pan-Celtic elements, clothing is typically Scottish kilts and tartan patterns. Jewelry is often Pan-Celtic themed, such as a Celtic knot, and not particular to a religious event or custom, but the Games’ activities are traditional and associated with the established sports used by the Highland people when training for war. Highland Games are Scottish specific, whereas Pan-Celtic festivals tend to encompass more than one culture. This creates both solidarity and concerns, especially for a revival attempting to establish a distinct fiddle sound.

Celtic Today

The festival format can be conducive to both Pan-Celtic unity and Pan-Celtic confusion. With regards to confusion, different vendors, activities, performances, and booths can be set up under the umbrella of “Celtic.” If Celtic becomes associated with many groups, like Scottish,

41 Graham, 59.
42 Ibid., 59-60.
43 See next chapter concerning history and detail of Highland Games and related activities.
Irish, Cornish, and Welsh for example, and all of these groups are placed into one context under the term “Celtic.” Then, someone attending these festivals might mistakenly assume that what is really a mixture of cultures is a, single Celtic culture.

Anything associated with Celtic festivals could be treated as valid and authentic. The Pan-Celtic organizations might have distorted cultures they were trying to protect. For example, if an Irish bagpipe is played at a Celtic festival next to someone performing a Scottish fiddle tune, someone could unknowingly assume the two are from the same culture. This adds complications to a revival trying to establish a fiddling style as distinct from other music and cultural influences. Not only does a revival in the US have to control for American influences, but other Celtic influences as well.

The modern definition of Celtic has little in common anymore with the ancient Celts except by nostalgic means. This does not mean that it is any more or less appropriate to use but the concept of Celtic definitely changed. The Pan-Celtic groups, attempting to restore and reinvigorate cultures they cared deeply about, were ultimately trying to unite very different cultures that changed beyond their ancient Celtic language connections. Indeed, it is conceivable that the various Celtic cultural groups never had much more in common than their languages.

Is Celtic now a synonym for traditional music from these areas because of their ancient language roots? Record labels further confuse the issue when they market music from these areas under one label as “Celtic music.” A cursory glance at Celtic music on various labels reveals a wide variety of music, some area-specific and some albums containing many Celtic areas. What causes such a range of interpretation besides historical association? People vote with their sales and money which versions of “Celtic music” they like. Record labels take note of the sales to sell more and start putting out more and more of what people are buying as “Celtic.” If more people
like the “Irish” sound under the Celtic label, then the record companies will push that sound even if it is actually Scottish or Welsh or a mixture of two or more on the same album. Over time, this determines peoples’ perceptions of what a “Celtic sound” is.

Indeed, it is more appropriate to discuss Celtic music in terms of each specific Celtic country or area because of the rich variety of music traditions in the Celtic category. While such detail for each Celtic country’s music is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the challenges with this term as well as the benefits. The challenges include keeping each tradition relevant and separate from one another without fusing them together. Fusing traditions can distort and changes traditions. The benefits include combined finances and a common goal.

Regardless of “Celtic’s” appropriateness or inappropriateness as applied to Scottish music and fiddling, it is used to describe many of the festivals where Scottish fiddling takes place, though not necessarily the F.I.R.E. competitions. It is also used to describe Scottish fiddling generally or in relation to other music, as used by the record labels. If we accept that a renewed interest in “Celtic,” including but not limited to Scottish music, occurred due to the revival of Pan-Celticism, then it is important to acknowledge the benefits of the term “Celtic.” Celtic, as a marketing term, is a gateway for a person’s interest in Scottish-specific culture. While not always appropriate in describing Scottish fiddling, the Scottish fiddling revival may owe its existence in part to the Pan-Celtic revival, movement, and concepts.

The term must invoke a meaning if people call various festivals, including Highland Games, a “Celtic” festival. When this occurs, expectations are assigned to that “Celtic” event. This is especially true of the United States. For example, if a person found Native American music or cultural occurrences at a Celtic event, they would most likely think it out of place.
Nevertheless, people seem to expect nostalgia, neo-medieval, and an essence of Scotland and Ireland and possibly Wales when they attend these events. Only the culturally knowledgeable might pick out the differences between Irish and Scottish music. Instead, many might see the event as their impression of what “Celtic” is rather than a mixture of different countries and cultural heritages. In other words, they might perceive Celtic as one group, rather than a reference to many groups with common language roots.

This parallel is seen in Native American cultural events. There are many tribes of Native Americans across the United States. Each tribe has different customs, histories, and music though there is some overlap. Despite this, there are many Pan-Native American events in the United States. Some people embrace the concept of Native American tribes coming together to protect their heritage. Others see this as watering down traditions and customs of individual tribes. A similar attitude is found with those participating in Celtic customs, events, and music.

While Scottish, Irish, and Welsh music have some similarities, they are still distinct enough to be their own separate music. However, a perceived lack of this music might unite musicians and enthusiasts in preserving their traditions. Enthusiasts might see a merging of more than one Celtic music and culture as a better alternative than losing the individual heritage from one Celtic tradition.

Scottish Fiddling Revival Connections

The term Celtic and related designations are being used in this chapter because of the possibility of a Scottish fiddling revival fitting into or being a part of a larger, broader Celtic revival. Scottish fiddling does occur at Pan-Celtic events and festivals, even if there are no competitions for Scottish fiddling. If the event is primarily Scottish, like the Highland Games,
elements from other Celtic nations’ heritage are often found at these events. For example, vendors at Highland Games may sell Irish tin whistles, bodhráns, and claddagh rings at Highland Games and will not hide the fact that such items are Irish.

Post World War II, much of the world saw a renewed interest in folk music and Highland Games, especially in the United States. This revival peaked in the 1960s and the 1970s and also saw a particular increased interest in Celtic music, especially Irish music. In addition to an elevated interest, folk tunes were also fused with more contemporary musical styles, such as rock and roll. While Celtic music of all types is not immune to change, and its practitioners embraced some contemporary influences, Celtic music also strives to preserve its music in as pure a form as possible. This has resulted into a fairly conservative ideology in order to maintain and preserve the musical style(s). Gillian A. M. Mitchell, in his article “Visions of Diversity: Cultural Pluralism and the Nation in the Folk Music Revival Movement of the United States and Canada, 1958-65,” says:

“‘Ethnic revivals,’ which thrived in North America in the 1970s and 1980s, owed much to the pluralism of the 1960s revivals, but movements such as the revivals of Klezmer and Celtic music often adopted a retrogressive and nostalgic approach to ethnicity and music, perhaps in reaction to the political crises of the 1970s.”44

This “retrogressive” direction is seen through organizations that wish to keep their traditional music as close to the original source and tradition as possible. These organizations are not necessarily closed minded to other ways of interpreting a musical style, but they often wish to preserve the original material so that older styles of playing are not lost. The organization, F.I.R.E., began in 1975, which technically puts it in the timeframe for the broader 1970s Celtic resurgence. While the broader Celtic revival is a factor and influencer to the Scottish fiddling

revival, just as the Scottish fiddling revival could be seen as an element contributing to the broader Celtic revival, the Scottish fiddling revival is being examined on its own terms and its own merits.

F.I.R.E. only sanctions competitions at Highland Games, which are specifically Scottish events, despite some non-Scottish elements.45 This indicates what sort of heritage and culture they want to create and preserve. The revivalists do not wish to be seen as merely Celtic. Rather, their aims are specific to the Scottish identity, culture, and heritage. This does not mean that Scottish fiddling never occurs at other Pan-Celtic events. However, no F.I.R.E. competition is sanctioned at Pan-Celtic gatherings even if Pan-Celtic elements occur at the sanctioned Highland Games festivals. It should also be noted that while some Celtic festivals are really Highland Games festivals marketed as “Celtic,” the F.I.R.E. competitions are never ambiguous. The venues are always marketed as Highland Games and therefore always “Scottish.”

The numerous Highland Games festivals that sprouted since the 1970s gave F.I.R.E. a platform to begin their objectives. It provided venues, an audience, potential players and judges, and the competition format adapted to the fiddling revival. However, without Celtic resurgence and mixing of cultures and musical styles, both Celtic and non-Celtic, the revival founders would not lament a perceptible loss of the Scottish fiddling style.46 By extension, the revivalists would have no reason to begin reviving Scottish fiddling in the United States as a separate entity from other Celtic music, American fiddling styles, and even from other Scottish music. Also, there would be no audience, or at least a smaller audience without renewed interest in Celtic and Scottish music.

46 More details of this perceived loss are described in chapter five.
CHAPTER IV
SCOTTISH FIDDLING REGIONAL STYLES

Before examining the fiddling revival in the United States, understanding musical and contextual elements of Scottish fiddling is necessary. These elements include types of tunes; tune stories and social contexts, as well as the different regional styles and their distinct frameworks of playing. Many musical and cultural elements overlap, while some are more emphasized in one region over another. Because a tune can potentially be played in different styles, the regional style and the technique of the player are critical when indicating the difference between regional styles. Fiddlers are expected to demonstrate in their playing that they understand the difference between the types of tunes and regional styles.¹ A listener should not have to guess what type of tune or style the fiddler is playing. It should be clear from the performer’s interpretation.

Content and themes are as varied as the types of tunes. Scottish tunes can be about famous places or individuals. They may also refer to historical events. Other tunes depict mythological tales, love, or an appreciation for alcohol. They may have vocals in English or in Gaelic, or tell their story without words. Often, the tune content is highly specific. When this happens, a tune names a specific place or person and tells the related story in fairly sharp detail. Occasionally, a tune will have little information associated with the content and the only message or story associated with it will be very general, like a reference to an ewe and a pastoral setting.

There are tunes more common to certain regions than others. This occurs due to the tune’s story either being composed in that region, depicting a scene, location, or event from that region, or the composer is from or well known in that region. Since fiddlers do not sing while

¹ Field notes, September 6, 2014.
playing, the tunes are meant to evoke the essence of their content, and tune stories and histories will often be well known to both fiddlers and audience members.²

While a complete documentary of all Scottish fiddling tunes and their related content and stories is beyond the scope of this research, examples and names of tunes will be given when possible. Since there are hundreds of tunes to select from, tunes that are thought to best represent the region were chosen when giving examples throughout this chapter. Tunes may be ancient and of indeterminate age or are more recent from the 20th century. Composers today still write for Scottish fiddling literature, making this a continuously growing canon of work.

A single tune may be played several different ways depending upon the regional style. Each regional style has many acceptable variations because individual interpretation is encouraged. Since tune notation typically indicates only pitches and rhythms, personal interpretation is necessary for any stylistics. Further, the different regional styles, with their various frameworks, allow a player many options when performing. Individual expression, creativity, and interpretations are built into all the regions of Scottish fiddling.

Tune Types

Reels are popular dances throughout Scotland, though every region has variations in dance steps. The reel often follows the strathspey, making the strathspey part of the dance. In fact, the dance steps of a reel were performed to the tunes of both strathspeys and reels.³ Occasionally, a reel is played by itself without a strathspey for the sake of the dance. The dance is described as:

“A true Reel consists of setting steps danced on the spot, alternating with a traveling figure - the setting steps can be as varied as the dancers please, while the traveling figure

² Field notes, June 28, 2014.
is usually the same throughout the dance.”

While a reel often follows a strathspey in tune sets, it can also be performed on its own. However, if a reel follows a strathspey, the reel should be repeated as many times as the strathspey is played. This creates a more balanced performance. Like the strathspey, reels can contain significant syncopation. Despite the quick pace, players are encouraged to play “better, not faster,” with the assumption that speed comes with practice. A more precise but slower reel is more acceptable to players than a faster but imprecise reel, especially in a competition setting. As several experts during a Scottish fiddling workshop at the Edinboro Highland Games stated: “There is no prize for getting there first.” Reels are found in other types of fiddling, such as Irish fiddling, but Scottish reels tend to be a little slower compared to other styles, even though speed is still expected of a good player. A strathspey tune is unique to Scotland and its fiddling styles. The name “Strathspey” most likely originated in the Highlands in the Strath Valley of the River Spey. The Strathspey also developed from the reel.

Strathspeys are known for their 16th note runs and the use of the Scottish snap, which is written as a sixteenth-dotted eighth note set, but performed as a thirty-second-doubly dotted eighth note rhythm. The notes can be slurred or not depending on the context, but is played separately more often with emphasis on the 16th note. There is no definitive origin of this rhythm but one possibility is from inflection in Gaelic singing. A march and a strathspey sound very similar if a player does not deliberately indicate a difference in the style. There is more

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4 Flett, 1.
5 Martin, 49.
6 Perttu, 23.
7 Field notes, June 28, 2014.
8 Ibid.
9 Perttu, 3.
10 Graham, 184.
11 Perttu, 12.
12 Martin, 11.
“lift” in a strathspey with all four beats sharing the emphasis while beat one and beat three is more emphasized in a march by comparison.\textsuperscript{13}

Strathspeys can be slow or fast but are always deliberate and should be “swing-like.”\textsuperscript{14} This is especially true of tunes originating from the bagpipes. Pipe tunes are especially “swing” in style.\textsuperscript{15} One performer and expert in Scottish fiddling stated that the strathspey is like “getting there in an elegant way,” indicating the feel of a strathspey.\textsuperscript{16} The strathspey is often considered distinctly Scottish and is often a deciding factor when determining if a player sounds “Scottish enough” by other players and experts.\textsuperscript{17} If there is not enough difference in sound as indicated by the fiddler when playing a set, a listener might tend to think that the reel and the strathspey are the same.

An air should be slow and pleasing to the ear.\textsuperscript{18} A more advanced player may attempt more variations to develop the air, and by extension, the story.\textsuperscript{19} The stories themselves vary and include lamentations, laments, listening tunes, pastorals, and piobaireachds.\textsuperscript{20} Airs in Scottish fiddling, possibly due to their slow tempo, often contain significant ornamentation to embellish the tune. This is often reminiscent of Baroque music and its musical style.\textsuperscript{21} A good rendition of an air is never aimless or lacking emotion.\textsuperscript{22} Players should be deliberate in their playing and be very clear regarding dynamics, tempo, phrasing, and expressiveness. According to one expert,
fiddlers should “breathe intentionally” while playing, both literally and figuratively, since that will impact the phrasing, which is critical when creating a good musical air.  

The jig is also a dance tune.  This dance is considered a “country” dance, rather than a line or circle dance.  Jigs are quite lively in character. This tune is in 6/8 time and the rhythms are typically swung, rather than played “straight” or exactly as written. The meter can also be in 9/8 or 12/8. Since there are groups of three notes, the first note is often given an emphasis with the second note played shorter. It is unknown where the jig originated, though they have been present since at least the 16th century.

Hornpipes are named after the heavy shoes performers wear. They are heavily swung and are not as common in Scottish fiddling compared to other types of tunes. They are most likely of English origin and are typically in 4/4. Occasionally, a hornpipe in cut time is found. Culturally and historically, hornpipes are performed at parties and social gatherings, most likely on sailing ships.

Polkas arrived in Scotland around 1844. In addition to the German influence, the Scandinavian “polska” via the fishing trade routes is another impact on Scottish style music. The polka is particularly common in Orkney and Shetland styles, which are also the closest parts of Scotland to its Scandinavian neighbors. Square dances most likely arrived from France and

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23 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
24 Graham, 184.
25 Martin, 44.
26 Perttu, 12.
27 Martin, 44.
28 Ibid.
29 Perttu, 89-90.
30 Graham, 184.
31 Martin, 57.
32 Flett, 28.
33 Martin, 42.
34 Ibid.
the dance depicts four couples forming a square.\textsuperscript{35} Square dance popularity declined around the First World War.

The schottische is another type of circle dance tune based on the German polka, and means “Scottish Dance.”\textsuperscript{36} The schottische differs from the polka due to influence of the reel and the reel’s speed, which is typically quite fast. Although the notation of a schottische is similar to a strathspey, the emphasis in a schottische is on beats one and three rather than all of the beats like a Highland strathspey, though they are both in 4/4.

The last type of circle dance found in Scotland is the waltz. Waltzes are also English in origin and arrived in Scotland around the 19th century.\textsuperscript{37} The Scottish also adapted their tunes to fit the imported style. They are often in 3/4 or some variation of time in three.\textsuperscript{38} They most likely originated from the Western art music tradition out of Vienna that later traveled across Europe to France and eventually England and Scotland by 1816.\textsuperscript{39} The waltz differs from other circle dances in that a couple will dance separate from other couples.\textsuperscript{40} At first, the waltz was not popular in Scotland, especially at the beginning of the 19th century.\textsuperscript{41} Today, there are many waltzes written for Scottish fiddlers and the Scottish and Gaelic tradition, and the dance enjoys a respectable popularity.

A march should be easy to walk to. Pipers frequently play marches for parades and historically played them when troops marched into battle. Fiddlers copied the steady time and precision found in a march to honor that connection. A march requires steady, metronomic

\textsuperscript{35} Martin, 43.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{39} Graham, 185.
\textsuperscript{40} Flett, 2.
\textsuperscript{41} Martin, 39.
timing. Fiddlers sometimes literally march when playing, though stomping is frowned upon. A march is typically in 4/4, 2/4, or 6/8 time and features a lot of ornamentation.

Regional Styles

There are six regional styles responsible for the broad range of Scottish fiddling. Each regional style has a distinct framework for players when playing the types of tunes described above, though some tune types are more common in some regions than others. There is no “one” style of Scottish fiddling. Rather, there are six distinct styles based on region, each with its own set of musical characteristics, considerations, and histories. The regional styles are, from North to South, the Shetland Islands, the Orkney Islands, West Highland, North-East, the Lowlands, and the Borders (see figure 3).

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42 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
43 Perttu, 44.
44 Ibid., Appendix C. Note: this map is an approximation and is not to scale.
Shetland Islands

The Shetland Islands are a chain of islands located at the northern-most part of Scotland. Within the Shetland regional style are several other sub-genres of Shetland-style fiddling divided between the different island styles and the mainland: the Mainland style, the Yell style, the Unst and Fetlar island styles, and the Whalsay style. \(^{45}\) Detailed descriptions of these island-specific styles are beyond the scope of this research. This work will describe the generalities of the styles

and what unites the Shetland style together. Recent, frequent travel, especially the fishermen, between the islands unified and generalized the style somewhat, while specific island styles faded.\(^{46}\) Today, the style is known mostly for its “ringing strings,” reminiscent of the Hardanger fiddle of Norway with its sympathetic strings and pentatonic scales.\(^{47}\) These “ringing strings” are distinctive in that the open strings next to the string being played will “ring” or play in sympathetic vibration. This additional resonance adds volume that is helpful in a crowded, active dance hall.\(^{48}\) Another way to achieve the ringing strings is the double-stopping effect.

Double-stopping involves playing more than one string at once, usually with the 4\(^{th}\) finger on a lower string and an open string above or on the same pitch.\(^{49}\) A particular type of double-stop is the “ringing string” which relies on sympathetic vibrations and can drop in and out of the piece as the fiddler plays (figure 4). The fiddle must be well tuned for this effect to work properly. The Shetland Islands also use double stops to double other intervals, like 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths, as well as unison stops.\(^{50}\) This creates a louder sound that is needed when fiddlers played historically in loud areas near the sea or around machinery. Today, a louder sound is still utilized but mainly for crowded rooms, rather than workers and machinery.

![Example of Ringing Strings played through double stops, though ringing strings may drop in and out of the music naturally. Source: Martin, 91.](image)

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\(^{46}\) Martin, 91.  
\(^{49}\) Martin, 21.  
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 23.
The sympathetic strings and sounds inspired by the Hardanger fiddle influence came to Scotland as early as the end of the 16th century.\textsuperscript{51} Alternative, or scordatura, tuning is sometimes used and can be a defining characteristic of the style. ADAE tuning rather than the typical GDAE is popular.\textsuperscript{52} Also notable about Shetland players is that they historically placed the fiddle against their upper arm rather than under their chin.

Many of the tunes from this region, with their Norwegian influences, are in the keys of D and G, and the left hand is restricted in changing position and reaching the 4th finger when playing in these keys.\textsuperscript{53} Many of the tunes played in the Shetland style change keys often and the ability to change keys smoothly often necessitates alternative tuning, hence the scordatura. Mainland tunes and styles typically do not change keys as frequently.

The Shetland style tunes have two main functions: ceremonial or descriptive music and dance music. Many unique dance tunes come from this style, and the ceremonial or descriptive music is preserved through ritual and work tunes.\textsuperscript{54} As a result, reels and airs are featured, particularly the reels for dancing. Dancing on the Shetland Islands was often intended for a kitchen rather than a dance hall.\textsuperscript{55} Once the public hall and new dances were introduced to the islands from the mainland, many of the old dancing reels died out, though some still survive today.

In the Shetland Islands, ceremonial music is typically dance music for weddings, but never funerals.\textsuperscript{56} Work tunes were used and superstitious workers historically played fiddle tunes to scare away supernatural happenings while they worked.\textsuperscript{57} Airs, or “listening tunes,” are no

\textsuperscript{51} Martin, 91.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 97.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 98.
longer used for singing or dancing in the Shetland islands but are still played today for the sake of listening. Traditionally, fiddles were hung over the fire and a fiddler played a “listening tune” before bed.  

The tunes from the Shetland Islands typically depict sea life and the strong fishing industry. For example, the reel, Da Bonxie, or the Shetland name for the Great Skua, depicts a bird that preys on eggs of other seabirds and is found frequently near the Shetland Islands.  

Da Sixareen is a slow reel or hornpipe telling of a six-oared boat built specifically for the Shetland Islands and increased the fishing output of the islands. Other tunes on the Shetland Islands, like much of Scottish tunes, are named after or depict family and friends and famous fiddlers. For example, Helen H. Robertson, is a tune honoring the composer’s, Arthur S. Robertson’s, wife, and is one of the most celebrated tunes from Shetland.  

Shetland style fiddling within the reels and airs is known for its “lilt” and “lift.” A “lilt” refers to the “rhythmic flow of the melody” or the variation between long and short rhythms and accents. A “lift” refers to tempo and a firm bass line with staccato accents. Strong accents and very syncopated rhythms are also associated with this style and cross bowings, or a weak-to-strong beat bowing, are also common. Another way to depict this particular “lift” is “one down bow and three up bows with an accent on the second,” which results in the distinctive Shetland lift. Playing an up-bow on a strong beat is also known as “back-bowing,” and while

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58 Martin, 96.
59 Neil, vol. 3., 223.
60 Ibid., 228-229.
61 Ibid., 206.
62 Cooke, 98.
63 Ibid., 100.
64 Violinists typically use a down stroke, or “down bow” on strong beats to accent the beat. An “up-driven bow” on a weak beat will emphasize the syncopation. It is intended to be a smooth bowing technique.
65 Neil, vol. 3., 197.
emphasized, should not be overdone.\textsuperscript{66} Too much “back-bowing” changes the rhythms and the emphasis of the beat, which in turn, changes the style.

\textit{Orkney}

The Orkney Islands are also located in the northern part of Scotland, but they are closer to the mainland compared to the Shetland Islands. There are 70 islands comprising the Orkney region and the area is often referred to simply as “Orkney.” Like the Shetland Islands, this work will focus on the Orkney style broadly rather than the musical nuances of each island.

The Orkney fiddling style consists of very simple ornamentation and bowing styles. Melodies are played with extreme clarity and exact rhythms.\textsuperscript{67} Of all the regional styles, this style possibly has the most amount of slurring, which adds to its simplicity and automatically eliminates a lot of ornamentation. One example of an ornamentation that is used in this regional style is the grace note.

Ornamentations are found in all regional styles, though are least found in the Orkney style. Grace notes are played slowly in the Orkney style, as if they are added to the melody line rather than decorating it (figure 5). Grace notes are also the only ornamentation in this style, and the grace note often returns to the original note.\textsuperscript{68} There is no single way to play a “Scottish grace note.” In fact, players are encouraged to listen to other fiddlers, Gaelic song and singing, and bagpipe music when they are learning to add this ornamentation, which creates many possible interpretations. Grace notes will also vary from fiddler to fiddler naturally, possibly due to the technique involved. A grace note is often achieved with a flick of the wrist from the bow and every fiddler varies slightly on the speed and pressure applied to the bow.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Martin} Martin, 17.
\bibitem{Ibid.} Ibid., 100.
\bibitem{Ibid.} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
In Orkney fiddling, there is little to no vibrato, and melodies of tunes from this area occasionally use a sharp 4th or 8th as well as a flat 3rd or 7th. Like the Shetland fiddlers, the fiddle is not always placed under the chin in the Orkney Islands. The angle is held down with the palm near the fingerboard. This limits hand position changes on the violin and contributes to the “simplicity” valued by the style and its players.

Much of the repertoire used by early Orkney players is lost to history, but dance tunes seem to be the most resilient. Polkas and reels are the most thriving dance tunes today, though hornpipes, marches, and airs are also common. Dance teachers from the mainland historically brought their music with them to Orkney when they taught new types of dance. Also, like the mainland, prominent, famous fiddlers, like Scott Skinner, brought their music to Orkney, which disseminated tunes and playing methods. Radio and recordings were also a main form of learning for Orkney fiddlers both now and in the past. The tradition continues to grow today as new compositions are added.

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69 Martin, 100.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Themes from Orkney tunes typically involve sea and island life as well as famous bays and hills. Other tunes are connected to folklore, fellow musicians, family, and friends. These island tunes can include shipwrecked crews as depicted in *Heroes of Longhope* or mythical creatures as depicted in *The Deerness Mermaid*. *Miss Betty Corrigal* tells the tale of a woman falling in love with a sailor who promised her a wonderful life but ultimately could not keep his promises. *The Hills of Hoy* depicts the essence of the hills on the Hoy Island, as they are the only hills in Orkney that are above 1,000 ft.

*West Highlands*

The West Highlands includes the west coast and into the mountain ranges of the mainland, which stretch into the northern-most part of the mainland and as far east as Loch Ness. This style of fiddling maintains a strong connection to bagpipe musical elements due to the preservation of bagpipe music when the English outlawed anything deemed “Scottish” in the late 1700s. Over the years, the fiddlers continued the musical sounds of the bagpipe so that its distinct sound and way of playing would not be lost. As a result, ornamentation played by fiddlers of this style is much the same as the Great Highland Bagpipes. For example, drone strings and fast, bagpipe-like grace notes are often heard. The mixolydian scale, the scale on the chanter of the Pipes, is common.

Besides the bagpipes, the other main influence on the West Highland fiddle style is the Gaelic language. The Gaelic language is closely associated with the West Highlands more so

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73 Neil, vol. 3., 150.
74 Ibid., 155, 169.
75 Ibid., 163.
76 Ibid., 157.
77 Perttu, 3.
78 Ibid.
than other parts of Scotland.\textsuperscript{79} Tunes for dancing were set to the Gaelic language and vocal songs of the area, known as Puirt à beul, was then transferred to or imitated by the fiddle.\textsuperscript{80} This is perhaps heard best in the airs played in the West Highland style. The airs are typically free with time, tempo, and meter, much as a Gaelic singer would perform the song.\textsuperscript{81} Though the bagpipe influence is stronger, the Gaelic language influence is still noteworthy.

Much of West Highland style fiddling is for dancing. The emphasis is on all four beats in most tunes due to the vertical “hopping” style of West Highland Dance.\textsuperscript{82} With this type of emphasis, a strong beat may not always be played with a down-bow and a weak beat may not always be played on an up-bow.\textsuperscript{83} In Western art music, the beginning of a measure with a strong down beat would start on a down-bow. Such bowing helps distinguish the West Highland styles from other Scottish styles. The Highlands are also known for distinctive dance tunes and styles.

Highland dancing is believed to originate in Highland Game contests. These dance types are the Highland Fling, the Sword Dance, and the Seann Truibhais, and are still danced today both in Scotland and abroad. Originally intended to be danced only by men as part of the Games, the dance contests are now dominated by women with a few, occasional male dancers.\textsuperscript{84} Highland flings are solo dances “without travel,” meaning that a dancer stays in one location and does not “travel” around the room, and is thought to be an “ancient fertility dance.”\textsuperscript{85} The bagpipes were originally used but the fiddlers quickly adapted to play this dance on violins. Any strathspey can be used for a Highland fling dance.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{79} Cooke, ix.
\textsuperscript{80} Martin, 59.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{82} Perttu, 151.
\textsuperscript{83} Martin, 59.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 51.
The sword dance is a solo dance around a set of swords. The dancer moves closer and closer to the swords as the tempo speeds up and if their feet touch the weapons, they are disqualified or they lose points in a contest setting. Dancers will often clap their hands indicating a faster pace as the dance goes on. The speed of the claps communicates the tempo of the dance. The strathspey, particularly one called “Gillie Callum,” is commonly played for the sword dance as the dance can become quite fast, and dotted rhythms are the most common rhythms though the timing is expected to be strict for the sake of the dancer.

A Seann Triubhas (pronounced “shawn trews”) is the relatively newest form of Highland Dancing. Meaning “old trousers,” this dance appeared when kilts were banned in Scotland. Though debatable, it is alleged that this dance gained prominence as resentment towards being forced to wear trousers by the English. This is also a solo dance with two tempos being incorporated into the dance. The first line of a tune is played for an introduction at a slow tempo, then the whole tune is played twice also at a slow tempo, and the last time the tune is played at a quick tempo. A very common tune with the Seann Triubhas is “Whistle o’er the lave o’t.” It is associated with the dance so much that the tune is also known as “Seann Triubhas.”

Scottish style marches most likely came from pipers playing the Great Highland Pipes. In fact, fiddlers are encouraged to listen to pipe bands and pipe corps when learning to play marches. When a march is played on a fiddle, the fiddle is considered both the tenor and the bass of the march, with the bass being the beat and the tenor being the “swing,” or the style. Pipers were and still are used as part of the Scottish military and, especially due to their loud

87 Martin, 53.
88 Emmerson, 185.
89 Martin, 53.
90 Emmerson, 185.
91 Graham, 183.
92 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
93 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
volume, are useful for keeping soldiers in-step. When the fiddle began imitating the pipe sound, the march was one type of tune adapted for fiddle.

Tunes from the West Highlands contain many themes including historical events, love songs, mythical and legendary themed songs, and famous people and clans with their related traditions. *A Mhairi Bhan Og* translates from Gaelic to “Mary, Young and Fair” tells of a poet’s love for his wife and how he compared her to the best of all the trees in the forest.\(^9^4\) *Beinn Cruachan* chronicles the legend of how Loch Awe was formed as a “mighty spring, on the summit of the mountain, burst its sides” to form the Loch.\(^9^5\) *Strath of Kildonan* refers to the Highland Clearances and the resulting Jacobite uprising with the subsequent the loss of clans in the West Highlands.\(^9^6\)

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\(^9^5\) Ibid., 11-12.
\(^9^6\) Ibid., 33.
**North-East**

The North-East style is considerably influenced by Western art and concert music. The style typically encompasses the region around the east coast, Aberdeen, and south to Perth. Historically, this area is associated with many orchestras and classical violinists who also played fiddle tunes. The best fiddlers of the 17th and 18th centuries received patronage from the aristocracy who appreciated the classical sound. The Gow family, William Marshall, and Scott Skinner were some of the players and composers of this more Western art influenced fiddling. Possibly due to classical influence, abundant notation, and sufficient funding, the North-East tradition has the strongest documented history. Also, it is easier to teach classically trained violinists this style since many of the techniques and nuances are similar.

Tune content from the North-East is often paired with historical events, though there are also tunes of love and whisky appreciation. When tunes refer to a person that person’s name is often in the title, and the tune locations often refer to a specific castle or loch. Examples include *Memories of Hector McAndrew, Gordon Castle or Dunnottar Castle*. Sometimes, when referencing a castle, the tune also refers to a specific event that made that castle famous. The tune *Balmoral Castle* refers to Queen Victoria’s acquisition of that castle and her subsequent stays there. Other “castle tunes” tell of an historical battle, like *Kildrummy Castle*, which was an important location during the Scottish wars for independence as it controlled a strategic position in the North-East Coreen Hills. When a tune refers to a fiddler, it is often in honor of their exceptional skill with the instrument, which falls in line with the values of this regional style. For example, the air *Memories of Hector MacAndrew*, honors the fiddler Hector

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97 Martin, 111.
99 Ibid., 2.
100 Ibid., 30-31.
101 Ibid., 39-40.
MacAndrew who was an expert in playing the compositions of many famous fiddlers and his grandfather studied with Niel Gow.\textsuperscript{102} Because he was such a virtuoso, a quality highly valued in the North-East, this piece was written in his honor.

With its classical influence, the tunes tend to be more technically demanding compared to other styles. There is more emphasis on beats two and four and tunes have more in common with advanced concert repertoire rather than “folk” or simple tunes.\textsuperscript{103} Classical bowing techniques, like staccato bowing, difficult double stops and even triple stops, and higher positions beyond third position are utilized.\textsuperscript{104} However, a fiddler must be careful not to make the tune sound “too classical” or it is “not Scottish.”\textsuperscript{105} Classical influences and techniques are meant as ornaments or “flavor” in the tune rather than the “point of the tune.”\textsuperscript{106} Melody is always the main element of concern.

The key signatures in the North-East tunes are often more difficult due to the prevalence of flat keys, which are generally more difficult for violinists. Also, chromatic passages may be featured, unison notes are frequent, and extreme precision of intonation and rhythm is expected.\textsuperscript{107} Classical ornamentation and notation is also found in much of the repertoire, with turns and trills as one example.\textsuperscript{108} Slow airs and strathspeys are common in this region and are often most technically demanding. A good up-driven bow, an important technique from the region, is required for the strathspey and a slow air can reveal intonation flaws.

\textsuperscript{102} Neil, vol. 1., 85.  
\textsuperscript{103} Perttu, 153.  
\textsuperscript{104} Martin, 111.  
\textsuperscript{105} Field notes, September 6, 2014.  
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{107} Martin, 111.  
\textsuperscript{108} Turns are performed when a violinist plays the written note, the note above the written note, the written note, the note below the written note, and the written note again in quick succession. Trills are a rapid alternation between two notes.
Unlike the West Highland style, whose tunes were designed to preserve and imitate the bagpipes, most North-East style fiddling was written for the fiddle with virtuosic technical expectations. This is not to say that other regional styles do not expect high technical accuracy from their players, but other regional styles had other priorities. William Marshall “did not write music for bunglers” and fiddlers consider many of Scott Skinner’s tunes “virtuosic”. For example, his compositions often contain birls, rhythms with 64th notes, and very specific slurring patterns (figure 7).

Scott Skinner’s Compliments to Dr. MacDonald (♩= 78)  

J. Scott Skinner

![Musical notation](image)

Figure 7. Note the turns, specific slurs, more complex rhythms such as the 64th note additions, and more frequent ornamentation. Source: Perttu, 138.

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109 Martin, 111.
**Lowlands**

The Lowlands contains a mixture of many Scottish styles and does not feature its own unique fiddling characteristics. Instead, it is a mixture of the surrounding areas’ fiddling styles and techniques.\(^\text{110}\) The Lowlands are not an official geographic area, and as a result, contain ambiguous cultural boundaries. In terms of Scottish fiddling, this area starts where the West Highlands and the North-East area end and extends just below the city of Edinburgh. It is also possible that Edinburgh is partly responsible for the strong mixture of Scottish fiddling styles. Edinburgh historically was and is a cultural center for musicians to meet and seek recognition.\(^\text{111}\) If many fiddlers from different regions and playing backgrounds met to exchange ideas, it is fair to assume that some of the styles began merging together. Many country-dances are found in the Lowlands.

The country-dances were typically line dances with couples in two rows. The earliest record of such dances is from around 1700 from England and based on English tunes, though the Scottish would substitute their own tunes within 30 years.\(^\text{112}\) Starting in the Lowlands, near the English border, the country-dances slowly moved north into other parts of Scotland.\(^\text{113}\) These tunes started off slower due to the large skirts popular with fashion at the time, but as fashions changed without hoop-like skirts, the dances became faster.\(^\text{114}\) The music reflected this and increased the tempo as a result.

Tune themes from the Lowlands are often tied to Edinburgh. Many famous landmarks from this city and the immediate area are featured in tunes such as *Within a Mile of Edinburgh*

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\(^{110}\) Perttu, 184.


\(^{112}\) Martin, 37.

\(^{113}\) Ibid.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 37.
Town and The Forth Bridge. Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town tells of the scenery just outside of Edinburgh while the Forth Bridge opened in 1890, was once the longest bridge in the world, and is still a famous Scottish landmark today. Though Edinburgh is a central theme, it is not the only theme from this area. Castle tunes such as Borthwick Castle tells of Scottish defeat in an historic battle when Oliver Cromwell invaded Scotland in 1650. Borthwick Castle is featured in other tunes as well. Mary Queen of Scots famously took refuge at this castle and left on horseback to her eventual surrender and imprisonment. These events are portrayed in the fiddle tune Mary Queen of Scots Leaving Borthwick Castle. Other historic events over various battles in or near Edinburgh are depicted in numerous other tunes since the city was a prime target for invaders.

Borders

The Borders typically refers to the area closest to England. This style is known for its double stops and “heavy playing,” or emphasis, of chords. Fiddlers often play in duos or trios, possibly due to the need for more sound as halls and public spaces became larger. One player simply could not fill an entire hall full of people with sound. The Borders style also uses frequent slurs and snap bowing as well as single bowed notes rather than multiple slurred notes. Hornpipes and airs are popular among both players and composers of this style.

Due to close proximity with England, and the number of border disputes that have taken place, it is no surprise that many Borders fiddle tunes are about famous battles, whether the

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116 Ibid., 10-11.
117 Ibid., 26.
118 Ibid., 43.
119 Martin, 107.
120 Ibid.
121 Snap bowing is when the bow is moved in the same direction for more than one notes with a slight space in-between the notes. This often gives many tunes their “lift” and can be referred to as “straight bowing.”
Scottish won or lost. Nationalism, independence, and pride also play a part in tunes from the Borders. Scotland Yet preserves the thistle as a national emblem of Scotland and is a very patriotic song. The Battle of Stirling associates with Sir William Wallace, a hero of the wars of independence from England and a champion of this famous battle. Despite the war-like and nationalistic nature of many tunes, there is room for love and courting songs. We’ll A’ To Kelso Go depicts the town of Kelso near the border and is considered one of the most romantic locations in Scotland.

This chapter makes no claims of detailing everything about Scottish fiddle music, the Scottish regional styles, the names and types of tunes, and related traditions. Rather, this chapter intended to provide a general overview. These Scottish fiddling characteristics migrated to North America and the United States. Because all of these elements are critical to maintaining a complex and rich heritage and musical tradition, they are all valued to any serious player, listener, or scholar of Scottish fiddle music.

Though much of the music and related characteristics merged and changed with other forms of American fiddling, the current revival considers all of musical elements that make Scottish music and the regional styles distinct as crucial to Scottish fiddling in the United States. Keeping these characteristics true to established “Scottish” styles also prevents anyone mistaking the music for another form of Celtic music. It is important to the revival that this music remains distinctly Scottish rather than “Celtic” or “American.” Finally, it is important that the regional styles remain separate as they all have their own respective histories and traditions. Merging these styles would diminish them.

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123 Ibid., 75.
124 Also known as Kelsae.
125 Neil, vol. 2., 104.
Despite the intention of keeping Scottish fiddling separate from American or Celtic styles, there is still the American and Celtic cultural and musical influence to consider. American fiddle styles absorbed Scottish fiddling and therefore gave the revivalists a purpose. Celtic styles, broadly speaking, influenced many of the conditions Scottish fiddling finds itself in around the world. Celtic, as a broad concept, may also have helped the Highland Games where many of the contests for Scottish fiddling in the United States are located.
CHAPTER V

SCOTTISH F.I.R.E. – SCOTTISH FIDDLING REVIVAL

Scottish Fiddling Revival Ltd. (F.I.R.E.) is an organization seeking to revive and preserve Scottish fiddling in North America through education initiatives, resources for players, and fiddling competitions.¹ Started as a non-profit in 1975, F.I.R.E. sanctions fiddling competitions in the United States and Canada.² The organization also certifies judges for local and national competitions, and monitors the annual U.S. National Competition held at a sponsoring Highland Games during the Games season, which is typically from February to October.³ Scottish F.I.R.E. is the only sanctioning agency for Scottish fiddling judges and competitions in North America.⁴ The purpose of this chapter is to examine the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States through the organization F.I.R.E.

Within the F.I.R.E. community, the fiddle is the most important instrument. The entire purpose of the revival is to expand interest and prominence of the Scottish fiddle and its music within the United States. In competition, the fiddle is the only permissible instrument, though the fiddle can be interpreted as a violin or a viola. Other instruments, such as bodhráns, guitars, and pianos are utilized by the revival but always as accompaniment instruments during live performances, jam sessions, or commercial recordings.⁵

Though competitions are F.I.R.E.’s main concern, it is not their only function. This organization also provides resources for Scottish fiddlers, including free music through the F.I.R.E. website, social media accounts, a list of active fiddling clubs, and an active list of

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid., 77.
⁵ See discography.
Scottish Fiddling Societies with their locations. These fiddling clubs and societies establish a musical community, and are an opportunity for players to meet with each other. Such opportunities, besides competitions, usually take the form of a “jam session” or workshop. Scottish fiddling jam sessions are very interactive. The sessions consist of any number of musicians, generally fiddlers and guitarists or pianists. There may also be flutes, recorders, cellos, or bodhráns at these gatherings.

During jam sessions, players take turns soloing, starting tunes, and giving signals with their head, instrument, and/or facial expressions to indicate a repeat or ending. They also signal for tempo changes and stylistic interpretations through visual signals and aural cues in their playing. These signals have varying success rates as one musician may miss the cue to stop. Fiddlers may also join in or leave after the jam session starts. There may be different degrees of listening ability in terms of intonation, style, and dynamics. The number of tunes played could also vary.

In a competition setting, players often “jam together” while they wait for judges to score and select the winners. This defuses tension and helps pass the time since the judges can take anywhere from ten minutes to nearly an hour to compare notes, discuss, and select winners. Tunes that most players know are played more frequently. However, if a player is not familiar with the tune or wished to play something different, they play a drone note or a harmonic variation. Some players tap their instruments lightly for a rhythmic effect. Other players air bow and imitate the left hand fingerings they see and hear. If a player starts a tune that is not Scottish, other players tend to look confused but politely listen and let the player finish the tune. An

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7 Melinda Crawford Perttu, e-mail message to author, March 14, 2012.
8 Field notes, September 8th, 2012.
example of this is a US Southern tune played with too much swing to be considered Scottish.\textsuperscript{9} Southern tunes tend to have a more exaggerated swing and the rhythms are dragged out more than Scottish styles.

Like jam sessions, workshops are frequently held at competitions. The workshop format is typically informal and consists of a more experienced player teaching a group of less experienced players. Competitions will usually host and advertise workshops before or during a break in a competition. The judge(s) at the competition is typically the instructor(s) at these venues. The instructor plays a tune or part of a tune, and players echo the tune back. The instructor then makes comments or suggestions, sometimes to the group as a whole, and sometimes to a particular player. More often than not, the instructor will talk, at varying lengths, about the history and tradition of Scottish fiddling and how important it is to continue the regional styles as separate from one another.\textsuperscript{10} Comments range from musical suggestions, to recommendations about specific violin techniques such as a better tone or bowing pattern.

Jam sessions help form a sense of community within a revival. They physically bring people together and provide an informal means for players to make music for their own enjoyment. The sessions and workshops can bring older and more experienced players together with younger, perhaps less experienced players for the purpose of fiddling together. Less experienced players learn techniques, style, and tunes from the more experienced players. In this way, tunes and methods are passed on ensuring a continued style of fiddling.

This is especially important in an aural tradition like Scottish fiddling when the melody may be notated but no stylistic indicators are given. Since the jam sessions are also intended to be enjoyable, the fiddlers usually play at more than one. More than one session or workshop at

\textsuperscript{9} Field notes, September 6, 2014.
\textsuperscript{10} Field notes, September 5, 2014.
more than one location means that the music has a way of moving around. Also, jam sessions and workshops are more relaxed compared to more critical environments, such as a competition. While F.I.R.E. provides such opportunities for jam sessions, F.I.R.E.’s main function is through its sanctioned competitions. Competitions are either a regional or national competition. Regional competitions qualify players for the national competition, held once a year.

The competitions’ locations depend on the location of the judges as well as the organization hosting the Games and competitions. Many judges live in or near the states contain competitions. Another factor is the Games willing to host fiddling competitions, which impacts the location of the Scottish fiddle contests. The Games may include athletic competitions, Scotch tasting, as well as Celtic harpers, piping, drumming, Highland dancing, and fiddle playing, specifically fiddling competitions. Despite varying locations, players travel all over the country to compete in these contests.

Competitors apply to the competitions through the F.I.R.E. website, the F.I.R.E. Facebook page, or the hosting location’s website, which may be a particular university or general location such as a fairground or park. The application may be submitted online or downloaded for mail submission. The type of submission depends on who is hosting the contest. There is often a prepayment or registration fee for competitors. A parent or guardian must sign the application form if the applicant is under 18 years of age. Players come from all over the United States and a competition in one state will easily see competitors from many other states.

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Competitions and competitors are divided into three different classes: novice, junior, and open. Novice class is open to any fiddler new to Scottish fiddling with no age restrictions. Junior class is open to anyone under 18, and any fiddler may compete in an open class division. When a competitor wins three novice class competitions, the competitor must enroll in either open or junior class. Once the application is received and processed, applicants compete in reverse order of when their entry is received. A late entry will perform earlier in the competition. The earliest entry performs last.

If an applicant is applying for the U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Competition, the participant must be a member in good standing with the Scottish F.I.R.E. organization and meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Winning a regional competition since October, two years prior.
2. Placing 2nd or 3rd in a regional competition and being declared eligible for Nationals by the judge of that competition.
3. Having won, been runner up, or tied for 1st before a playoff in a U.S. National competition within the last 5 years.

An applicant applying to the National competition indicates the competition(s), year, and/or judge as necessary on the application form to prove they qualify. If the applicant is not a member, they must fill out the Scottish F.I.R.E. membership form and pay the appropriate dues. Also, typically on the application for the competition is a list of prizes that may include a trophy and a monetary prize. Other prizes include medals for the best strathspey, march, reel, and air respectively. A 4th place medal may or may not be awarded depending on the competition, and a Quaich, (pronounced “quake”), which is a tradition Scottish drinking bowl, might be given along

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15 Ibid.
with a monetary prize. Because a Quaich is strongly associated with Scottish culture, it is a distinctly “Scottish” prize to award and reinforce the culture at these events, though judges often joke about the wisdom of giving an under 18 year old winner a traditionally alcoholic drinking bowl.

Because competitions may include a prepayment or application fee, the competitions are also an income source for the revival. The Games themselves typically have an entry fee to attend the overall Games for the day, which includes the fiddling competitions and related activities such as a workshop. Such a fee is another source of revenue to maintain the cost of the competitions and the revival.

During the competitions, competitors’ names and the tunes they will play are announced either by the performer, by a judge, or by the steward. Typically, it is the steward announcing the competitors’ names and their tunes so that judges may continue marking the score sheets of the previous competitor. The competitors then play their “sets” of tunes, consisting of different types of Scottish tunes. A “set” is a series of tunes played together with smooth transitions between each tune. However, the tunes and the sets themselves do not mix the regional styles. The set has to be consistent. For example, West Highland and North-east cannot be played in the same set. The exception being if a player intends to make each tune within the set of a different style, but that must be extremely apparent to a listener.

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16 A Quaich is a traditional Scottish shallow, two-handed drinking bowl or cup, often used by travelers. It is believed to come from the Druids occupying Scotland before recorded history. They supposedly used it in their rituals. Today, it is a typical wedding gift, or a general gift of welcome, and whisky is often the drink of choice to put in a Quaich.

17 Field notes, June 27, 2014 and September 6, 2014.

18 A steward is the person in charge of the competition’s logistics and making sure that everything runs smoothly. This includes but is not limited to keeping track of applications, accommodating various travel needs as needed, making sure there are enough forms for everything, and publishing the official list of winners.

19 David Gardner, personal interview, November 8, 2014.

20 Ibid.
The sets themselves vary in both length and style. F.I.R.E. competition sets consist of, in this order, a march, strathspey, and reel. If a competitor is performing an air, then that is played before the march, strathspey, and reel set. Open and junior class competitors must play an air before their march, strathspey, and reel set. Novice class competitors may play an air in place of a march or they may opt out of the air and play the march, strathspey, reel set.\(^{21}\)

Competitors may or may not choose to tune their instrument before they begin once onstage. Some fiddlers tune before they walk onstage. Music is memorized and played toward an audience while the judge(s) sit where they can still see and hear clearly but remain unobtrusive to the audience and competitor. Competitors typically wear traditional Scottish attire such as kilts.\(^{22}\) In the Junior and Open National Competitions, traditional Scottish attire, or “Highland dress,” is required.

Musical stylistics in Scottish fiddling are learned aurally, and the tunes, when written down, contain no stylistics. This allows a competitor to put a personal interpretation on the music. The traditional Highland dress links to Scottish culture and reinforces the tradition. Both personal interpretation and Highland dress could also be considered part of the revival’s ideology. Since Highland attire is required, rather than suggested at certain competitions, specifically national competitions, it also reinforces Scottish heritage.

Competitors are judged in three categories. These categories are time, or tempo and rhythm; execution, or technical proficiency and intonation; and expression and interpretation, which include how well each tune transitions and fits together as a whole. These categories are reflected in the score forms. These score forms, in addition to the competitor’s name, competing class, email, and address, also list the judge, names of competing tunes, final rank, total score,


\(^{22}\) Field notes, September 8th, 2012.
and order of play within the competition in comparison to other players. The three categories are organized in boxes with the different tunes a player might perform. These boxes allow comments aligned with both category and tune type. In this way, a player receives feedback on exactly where they were effective and where they could improve (see figure 8).23

### Scottish Fiddling Revival, Ltd.

**Competition Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitor</th>
<th>Judge</th>
<th>Competition &amp; Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Order of Play</th>
<th>Final Rank</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Place/Trophy/Prize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Slow Tune:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style/Interpretation</th>
<th>Rhythm/Tempo</th>
<th>Execution/Technique</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slow Tune</td>
<td>/40</td>
<td>/30</td>
<td>/30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**March:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style/Interpretation</th>
<th>Rhythm/Tempo</th>
<th>Execution/Technique</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>/40</td>
<td>/30</td>
<td>/30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strathspey:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style/Interpretation</th>
<th>Rhythm/Tempo</th>
<th>Execution/Technique</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strathspey</td>
<td>/40</td>
<td>/30</td>
<td>/30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reel:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style/Interpretation</th>
<th>Rhythm/Tempo</th>
<th>Execution/Technique</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reel</td>
<td>/40</td>
<td>/30</td>
<td>/30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

Judge’s Signature

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Figure 8. F.I.R.E. Competition Score Form *Source:* F.I.R.E. website.
Overall, scores are determined by technical accuracy and interpretation of Scottish style(s). Often, these categories in the score forms also determine who wins the more specific awards like best air, best strathspey, best set, best reel, and best march. Best set, for example, goes to the player with the best transitions between tunes as well as the combination of tunes that sounded best together. Some tunes naturally transition into others more easily and judges will comment or mark the sets of tunes that complemented each other. The best ‘tune’ categories, such as best air and best strathspey, go to a particularly outstanding rendition of those tune types even if the overall set does not win a prize or if the competitor does not place at all in the contest.

However, a player may win several smaller categories and not place, or they may win many categories and place in the same contest. There are no rules saying that a player in second place or first place must also win best strathspey. Likewise, a player with an outstanding strathspey may not even earn an honorable mention, though this is uncommon. Every competition and their results are different.

Since many competitors are often nervous when they compete, judges in the competitions may or may not overlook “shaking” in either the bow or the left hand when fiddlers play, as that will impact the sound and the technical accuracy. One judge, Melinda Crawford Perttu, did admit that they are adamant about tuning and intonation when they score a player even if a little shakiness is acceptable. Judges also collectively commented that they look for who expresses substantial emotion when they play as well as who can “tell a good story” and make the tune “come alive.” This is reflected in the awards. The “best air” category, for example, goes to a

24 Field notes, September 8th, 2012.
25 Field notes, June 24, 2014.
26 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
27 Ibid.
player that not only plays beautifully, but “tells a story” with the air.\textsuperscript{28} To be judged as accurately and as fairly as possible, competitors are judged not only by musically proficient players, but also by judges knowledgeable about Scottish fiddling styles, techniques, and history.

All F.I.R.E. judges are selected based on their expertise in Scottish fiddling, which is defined by their playing ability and knowledge of the various Scottish regional styles. Potential judges are required to be performing on a professional level and are selected by three other F.I.R.E. judges.\textsuperscript{29} Professional level implies that judges are paid for their playing and fiddling. For some, this means regularly playing Scottish fiddling. For others, this means playing or conducting an orchestra. Typically, there is recognition of their abilities outside of F.I.R.E., though the sponsorship of the other judges to become a F.I.R.E. judge is the key factor to becoming a new judge in the revival. They were all competitors before they became judges and many produced recordings of their music, specifically of their Scottish fiddling.

In addition to judging, F.I.R.E. judges further the revival in other ways. Many are music educators, and some have written research on Scottish music and Scottish fiddling. Several also teach the fiddling tradition formally to students willing to learn the Scottish fiddling styles. All are experienced and professional performers in both fiddling and non-fiddling venues. These judges are critical as they are directly and indirectly responsible for the Scottish fiddling revival.

Since the judges know the most about this type of music, they impact the music’s circulation, the faithfulness to traditional styles, the continuation of its growth, and the context within which the music is placed. They are considered to be what Tamara E. Livingston calls “core revivalists,” in that they feel a “strong connection with the revival tradition that they take

\textsuperscript{28} Field notes, September 5, 2014.
\textsuperscript{29} Melinda Crawford Perttu, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2012.
upon themselves to ‘rescue’ it from extinction and to pass it on to others.”

Besides teaching and competitions, one way to pass the music on to others is to discuss the music with the audiences, which serves in part as a group of followers to the revival.

At the beginning of a competition, the judge(s) or steward or both usually welcome the audience. However, what is said after the welcome varies. Sometimes a description on how they judge and what is looked for in the competition is given. This explanation can also occur during breaks in contests or at workshops. Time does not always permit any sort of detailed explanation, but the sample of judges interviewed all agree that speaking to the audience is important.

Even before any information on Scottish fiddling is given to an audience, the audience’s existence adds importance to the event. According to F.I.R.E. judge Rebecca Lomnicky, “The layperson will always understand the meaning of competition and winning, even if they don’t understand the music.” Audiences contribute to an atmosphere within the competitions and connecting community as well as a means of support, or possibly intimidation, for competitors. Even if there is no personal relationship between the audience members and the competitors, audiences still contribute to the competitions and recognize their importance. “Within any community people recognize the value in winning awards and competitions,” says Lomnicky.

The audience may have a wide range of interest and knowledge, or possibly lack thereof, about fiddling and Scottish fiddling in particular. A varied audience may allow more widespread places for the revival's circulation. The audience becomes more informed not only by

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30 Livingston, 70.
31 Melinda Crawford Perttu, e-mail message to author, March 14, 2012.
32 Rebecca Lomnicky, e-mail message to the author, February 10, 2015.
33 Ibid.
listening to the music, but through knowledge imparted at the competitions. Several audience members informed the author or were overheard commenting that they appreciate the music more when they learn about its history and tradition.\textsuperscript{35}

Judges who speak to the audience create a more informed audience. An informed audience might better appreciate what they are hearing and is more likely to support the art.\textsuperscript{36} Through supporting the art, these audience members help expand revival. While the audience is usually friends and family, “the rest are typically uninformed on what a competition is all about,” says judge Calum MacKinnon.\textsuperscript{37} Livingston states “revivals almost always have a strong pedagogical component in order to pass on the tradition in a controlled manner. How well the revivalist community is educated about the tradition, however, varies according to the individual dispositions of the participants.”\textsuperscript{38} This pedagogical component is found when judges educate their audiences as well as private students or groups of students in workshops. The audience may be unaware of why the competitions are important to the revival or why the revival is occurring in the first place. Eliminating such ignorance can draw people to the competitions, and by extension the revival, as well as keeping a group of followers to support and maintain the revival. This could also be a potential recruiting method for new players and future judges.

If an audience better understands how a competition works, they potentially feel more involved with the experience, especially since many competitions take place in very interactive environments such as Games and festivals. Some audience members go just for the fiddling competitions and others visit the fiddling contests as part of their day at the Games. Reasons audiences members attend competitions vary. The audiences, in the form of followers to the

\textsuperscript{35} Field notes, June 27, 2014.
\textsuperscript{36} Melinda Crawford Perttu, e-mail message to author, March 14, 2012.
\textsuperscript{37} Calum MacKinnon, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2012.
\textsuperscript{38} Livingston, 69.
revival, also contribute to the financial well being of a revival since there are usually CDs available to purchase at the competitions. If the music is not available for purchase at the competition, it is often available for download.

Recordings provide “non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market.”\(^3^9\) Glen Graham asserts in his Cape Breton work that commercial recordings provide “quality material” and “exposure” for people to hear this type of music, a “goal” for young musicians to aspire to, and “added income for professional artists.”\(^4^0\) He also states that recordings are a “tool for learning old and new tunes.”\(^4^1\) Graham further describes home recordings, or non-commercial quality recordings as an “excellent way of showing a true traditional atmosphere in which the music is played” and “a way of capturing the music in a ‘free,’ relaxed atmosphere.”\(^4^2\) In a world where music transforms so quickly and easily, any recording is helpful when maintaining a musical style and culture. Aural traditions, such as Scottish fiddling, are especially susceptible to change. Scottish fiddling is recorded commercially and non-commercially.

Competitions are typically recorded by F.I.R.E., especially the National Championship. The final video of the entire competition is edited with downtime eliminated. The winners, of most, if not all categories, are posted to the F.I.R.E. website. This has unique consequences as aspiring winners can see what impressed the judges at previous competitions. Players can tailor their next championship performance based on what they saw and heard either at the competition itself or online.

\(^{39}\) Livingston, 69.  
\(^{40}\) Graham, 151.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 94.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 151.
A recording is portable and easily distributed, allowing for the music, and therefore the revival, to circulate quickly. Livingston describes recordings as “objects that can be collected and categorized, which in turn influences the definition of the genre for other collectors, consumers, and players, not to mention the recording industry.” Over time, recordings will standardize a tradition or the “definition of the genre.” Continued elements from a tradition that occur in multiple recordings help define the style and how players are expected to sound.

The recording industry, the Internet, and applications such as iTunes or Spotify create readily accessible recordings. Further, in such a rapidly changing world, it is conceivable that the revival may not be successful without recordings. Should a revival collapse, the music could be revived again with the information recordings provide. In this circumstance, recordings become a type of “original source.” Recordings are also a form of original sources in the current revival when students and teachers use them as teaching tools.

While music is ever changing, recordings preserve music in its current form. There is value in “hearing [music] performed exactly as it was originally intended to be heard,” notes one judge. This is valuable for a student hearing the music in an authentic light, thereby learning a style as faithfully as possible. However, the paradox is that recordings are only one interpretation. Others might not assess the interpretation as entirely authentic or traditional.

Opinions regarding interpretation can vary greatly. That is why experts are needed when keeping a traditional musical style intact. An incorrect stylistic interpretation might become problematic for students that are learning Scottish fiddling by copying a specific fiddler’s style verbatim off a CD. Further, a single fiddler may not interpret a recording the same way as another, and there might be different, personal ideas on how to play the same melody. While

43 Livingston, 71.
44 John Turner, e-mail message to author, March 22, 2012.
45 Jan Tappan, e-mail message to author, March 29, 2012.
individual interpretation is encouraged, there is an acceptable range of variation and personal flair permitted on a melody. These learning elements, as well as the competitions and jam sessions as learning tools, also contribute to different learning styles and techniques.

Scottish fiddling has considerable range regarding personal interpretation. Most Scottish fiddling tunes are written with little additional notation. It is up to the player to perform the music stylistically in the absence of notation for bowings, dynamics, and nuanced stylistics. Knowledge of the different Scottish fiddling regional styles, such as West Highland or North-east, is critical considering each regional style has its own unique characteristics and complexities. A player must be well versed in each regional style if they intend to play each Scottish fiddling regional style correctly and separately from one another.

In order to play each distinct style correctly and as authentically as possible, aspiring fiddlers must have an accurate foundation to build upon. According to one judge, “It is important that there be a certain core of knowledge from which all players pull, in terms of stylistics.”46 A mastery of this core knowledge allows players more stylistic freedom. In the words of F.I.R.E. judge Pat Talbert:

“One must master the basics of an art in order to earn the privilege of varying away from that art. If you do not first establish yourself as competent in the fundamentals of Scottish fiddling, then you will not be taken seriously when you attempt variations.”47

Accurate knowledge of a style is important to competitors and judges alike as it is reflected in the competition rubric and comments. By making adherence to regional styles a key concern in the competitions, the importance of the regional styles and their histories is affirmed. A faithful portrayal of the style maintains the style’s integrity and ensures the revival’s continuation.

46 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to the author, March 31, 2012.
47 Ibid.
If there is a key concept to the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States through the organization F.I.R.E., it is this one. While new interpretations are not forbidden, a player must adhere to and understand the core knowledge, or fundamentals of a style. If they remain within the framework of a style’s musical parameters, they are permitted to express the music according to their personal interpretations. If there is an ideology, or set of principles, in this revival, it is that concept: personal interpretation within a specified framework. The ideology was established by F.I.R.E. founders and continued by the competition judges. By participating in the competition, the players agree to and accept this ideology.

“Ultimately, the music has to say what the player wants it to say,” states Pat Talbert. The tunes themselves also support this concept since they are written with expectations that each player will perform the tune differently and uniquely. This margin for interpretation can be entertaining to an audience but provides a unique complication for competition judges.

While there are specific criteria for each category evaluated, there is a certain human element on the part of the judges. Even with specific scoring criteria, there is considerable room for opinion on how to score a competitor. This is significant because different judges may place different values on different aspects of a competitor’s performance and could, over time, impact which aspects of the fiddling revival receive emphasis over other aspects. Each judge might hold a different opinion on the interpretation of a particular style. Long term, varying opinions could have consequences for the revival.

These differing opinions manifest in what several judges described as a “generational effect.” Older judges grew up listening to more “traditional fiddling” while younger judges could be influenced by newer trends that take Scottish fiddling to “new places.” Some judges noted

48 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
49 Calum MacKinnon, e-mail message to author, April 6, 2012.
that they have personal preferences for older styles, but that newer trends are “OK.”
Individual judges also expressed that what they listen for changed over the years, as they perceive an overall improvement in playing ability. “I’m looking for more subtlety,” notes John Turner with emphasis on fiddlers that “portray the style” most like the “Golden Era” of fiddling, or the 17th and 18th centuries. More advanced players and naturally changing traditions makes judging “progressively harder.”

It was not just the judges that commented on the improving levels of playing. Comments from older players concerned their pride in the tradition in the United States and how far it has developed. “When John Turner and the Brockmans started this, I didn’t think it would be this successful,” said one judge before announcing the winners at the National Competition in 2014. Audience members commented both in passing and to the author directly that each year becomes more challenging to predict the winner. “These competitions get better every year; I don’t envy the judges their jobs,” noted one audience member. When asked to clarify, the audience member remarked: “No one thought it would be this big. I thought it was a passing, nostalgic idea in the 70s, but I like the music so I come every year. With so many young people playing this tradition, and at the level of playing that it’s at, I’ll be coming to these until I die!” Though this specific statement is one person’s opinion, the idea that the revival succeeded seems common. Another audience member remarked, “They call themselves ‘Fiddling Revival’… well it is revived!” One judge echoed this sentiment when he commented, “The Brockmans have

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50 Anonymous judge, e-mail message to author, 2012.
51 John Turner, e-mail message to the author, 2012.
52 Melinda Crawford-Perttu, e-mail message to author, March 14, 2012.
53 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
55 Field notes, September 5, 2014.
56 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
nothing to fear. Scottish fiddling in the United States is in a really good place. They should be proud of what we hear.”

Increases in playing ability, taking the styles to new levels, and newer trends are not the only consideration for overall change in the contests. Newer trends can be authentically “Scottish” and are not automatically invalid, but judges may hold differing opinions on what is acceptable in a competition setting where they are attempting to maintain the most culturally authentic styles and interpretations possible. The increasing difficulty of evaluating competitors is seen through the changes in the competitions, and specifically the criteria used to judge the competitions.

Judges frequently comment that they struggle to select a top player for first place, and that when scores are equal; it comes down to opinion between them on who wins. In the 2014 National Competition, it was remarked: “You were all so close to first place. Don’t think that because you didn’t rank, that you didn’t do well or that you weren’t close. Nearly everyone nearly won first place today.” Since modern winners are selected on stylistic choices and the resulting judges’ opinions, it is conceivable that the score forms will change again in the same way that they changed when the importance of Highland dress was lessened to musical importance in the early stages of the revival.

According to the judges interviewed, the improving quality of players caused changes in the competition’s score forms. The number of required tunes increased and “more emphasis has been put on musicality and the technical aspects of playing” compared to scoring and judging non-musical elements such as clothing. There is even an ongoing discussion of what kind of

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57 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
58 Ibid.
59 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
scoring system and what sort of judging criteria should be used at competitions. Some of these discussions include the criteria themselves or the question of how detailed the information is that the competitor receives.

One judge may comment at length on a player’s performance while another might only remark on one or two aspects of the performance. Most judges prefer giving detailed feedback since they care greatly about players and the tradition. They want players to improve and understand both their own performance and the tradition. The fact that the judging forms required an update is significant as it shows the need to adapt to a developing revival. The shift in emphasis from non-musical elements to a more musical concentration also suggests a focus on the quality of the music in the competition rather than the spectacle of the competition itself.

While evaluating the music’s quality, judges are concerned with what is “authentically Scottish.” There have been instances where judges select a winner between two competitors: one with some technical flaws, such as a misplaced fingering or an incorrect bowing, but more consistent with the Scottish styles and sound. The other competitor was technically flawless but did not adhere as closely to the Scottish styles. One competitor’s interpretation is more “Scottish” while the other is more technically accurate. In each case, judges selected the competitor closer to the Scottish sound despite technical errors. This remains consistent with the revival ideology of faithfulness to the foundation of Scottish styles. It also shows the judges’ commitment to their philosophy.

All of these debates, discussions, and changes are a result of a transforming revival. More recent audiences appreciate “different shadings and different innuendos” that were not

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60 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
61 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, April 6, 2012.
62 Interview, anonymous, June 24, 2014.
63 Melinda Crawford Perttu, personal comm., April 26, 2012.
appreciated a generation ago, notes Pat Talbert.\textsuperscript{64} An audience member comments in 2014: “I feel like this year was the best! The ornamentations were so clear and only a few players had them at this level last year!” With the establishment of a successful revival, and its current growth, it remains to be seen what will happen next. The level of playing and the various “shadings” and “innuendos” create more complex playing in an already rich tradition. These subtle nuances bring into question how change impacts the revival.

\textsuperscript{64} Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, April 6, 2012.
CHAPTER VI

CHANGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR F.I.R.E.’S FUTURE

This chapter discusses changes in the competitions, related revival, and any related consequences. These changes include the results of personal interpretation within the Scottish style frameworks as per the revival ideology, the possibility of the revival and related music transforming into something new, and developing differences between the competitions and the revival. Limitations of the study and possibilities for future research follow this discussion.

The revival’s growth and change occurs in more than adjusted competition score forms or music circulating through various locations. Circulating a genre of music has complications. While Scottish fiddling influenced other genres of music, it is possible that Scottish fiddling itself can be transformed in ways other than progression of technical proficiency and the range of acceptable variations. It is possible for the Scottish regional fiddling styles to begin mixing together. This is similar to how early fiddling styles in America combined with other musical elements. With so many possibilities from the regional styles, players could begin to play elements from more than one regional style in a tune. This type of fusion is often a natural side effect of cultures and sub-cultures interacting with one another.

Interacting cultures, musical styles, and sounds contain unique consequences for competitions. In the minds of many judges, there are strong opinions on judging. There is a “clear definition and specific stylistics that define Scottish fiddling music,” notes judge Pat Talbert.¹ For example, Irish fiddling techniques and ornamentations, such as stronger pitch bending compared to Scottish fiddling, are undesirable in a competition setting. Mixing styles undermines what a Scottish fiddling revival is attempting to achieve. The revival ideology

¹ Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
maintains adherence to the foundation of Scottish fiddling styles. Merging different fiddling styles is not consistent with such discourse as it creates something new.

If a mix of Scottish regional styles is heard, there will be a drop in points and the comments note the jumble of styles. Though a combination of regional styles is still “Scottish,” it does not show mastery or respect for the unique histories and techniques of each region. Even when a player attempts a variation, “the variations still fit within the larger parameters of Scottish fiddling,” says Talbert. The style should be “consistent throughout the performance” in a competition. For example, if strathspeys are supposed to be played within the West Highland Scottish fiddling style, a player cannot add elements of the North-East Scottish fiddling style to that strathspey. The distinction between these styles is heard by a trained ear and seen in the bowings and fingerings of a trained eye. Combining regional styles is undesirable for a revival valuing each Scottish style on its own merits.

Livingston says: “After a tradition has been ‘revived’ the question always arises as to the balance between ‘preservation’ of the tradition (i.e. strict adherence to revivalist stylistic parameters) and innovation, even innovation that is intended to win over a greater audience for the tradition. Frequently, this tension is responsible for the collapse of a revival.” Perhaps this is another reason why recordings are significant. They provide a way to maintain traditional styles while allowing for the development into something new.

The “something new” often comes from personal interpretation. How much personal interpretation should be permitted within the framework of the traditional? That question is the point of tension Livingston is referring to. The “something new” could eventually distort the

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2 Patricia Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
3 Ibid.
4 Jan Tappan, e-mail message to author, March 29, 2012.
5 Livingston, 71.
style and change the concept and definition of “traditional,” notes John Turner.⁶ On the other hand, if composers, arrangers, and players only repeat the traditional, music struggles to grow. “This is a healthy thing,” says Pat Talbert in reference to both different regional styles and new nuances in playing, “as it requires judges to stay abreast of the current playing styles and to not fossilize Scottish fiddling into one specific approach to playing.”⁷ Another judge, Jane MacMorran, states that the tradition “can’t be static, there has to be room for creativity.”⁸ Perhaps this is why personal interpretation is so valued by the Scottish fiddling revival ideology. As long as the foundation of each style is adhered to, personal interpretation allows the styles to grow without undermining tradition. The Scottish fiddling styles are maintained while allowing players to incorporate new ideas without damaging authenticity or causing disintegration.

Clear understanding of the Scottish fiddling styles in the minds of performers and judges alike prevents the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States from “breaking down.” Livingston warns of such a disruption when she suggests: “when there is no longer an overriding concern for ‘authenticity’ (i.e. style markers that are consciously employed for historical reference) and the ‘tradition’ is felt to be too constricting of a reference point by the majority of revivalists, that revivals split into different styles.”⁹ In this case, Scottish fiddling already contains many regional styles underneath the umbrella of what is acceptably “Scottish.” Perhaps the acceptable variety of regional styles actually supports the Scottish fiddling genre rather than tearing it apart. With so many acceptable options available to players, performers have many variations to explore before attempting variety from outside of the styles.

⁶ John Turner, e-mail message to author, March 22, 2012.
⁷ Pat Talbert, e-mail message to author, March 31, 2012.
⁸ Jane MacMorran, e-mail message to author, February 15, 2015.
⁹ Livingston, 80.
“The balance between individual innovation and adherence to stylistic norms of the tradition are a basic point of tension within revivals,” says Livingston.\textsuperscript{10} This tension point is evident, though not necessarily problematic. Judges conveyed to the author a deep conviction of what Scottish fiddling sounds like to them. They know this genre of music better than anyone in the United States and have strong opinions of what should and should not be permitted in competitions. Adherence to stylistic foundation is not in question. The F.I.R.E. revival champions its history and insists on reverence to tradition in competition. The judges also expressed that they encourage individual interpretation so long as it fits within the regional styles’ parameters, though the criteria for new, acceptable variations is less clear, supporting Livingston’s concepts of tension. While this “tension” stage of a revival is apparent, and supports the notion of a revival happening in the first place, the remaining question is: what will this revival turn into? Will it remain faithful to pure “Scottish” fiddling or will it transform into a new “American Scottish style?”

When asked about the possibility of some sort of Scottish-American style, all judges admit that it is possible, but opinions on why that would occur vary greatly. Some judges state that the revival itself would not change the music, but individuals might, such as prominent fiddlers or other organizations promoting hybridized fiddling styles. While many judges admit that they and their students like many contemporary styles of fiddling, such as newer Boston fiddling styles, there was general concern that the newer styles are promoted without adherence to history and tradition, hence causing the loss of Scottish fiddling that created this community. Rebecca Lomnicky notes: “they may be the movement that creates the ‘Scottish-American’ style,

\textsuperscript{10} Livingston, 71.
but how can you claim something is rooted in the Scottish style if you’ve never studied that original tradition?”\(^{11}\)

Other judges admit that the judges themselves could cause key changes: “Some judges think slides are acceptable and others do not,” notes a judge and competitor, separately.\(^{12}\) Other judges suggest that the music has already changed or is in the process of changing. “Some judges listen with an ear based in the 1970s or 1980s. I’m more in the 1980s, so more progressive in style.”\(^{13}\) However, all judges interviewed agree that Scottish fiddling in United States should not be considered “Celtic” without also specifying it as “Scottish.” Frequently heard from numerous sources, without prompting, was the adamant comment: “They are not always the same!” So long as the music remains “Scottish,” rather than Pan-Celtic, or any similar variation thereof, no one seemed too concerned with musical change. Competitions might become even more important in the future to this musical genre. “Perhaps the role of the competitions in the future will be to keep an established base of the roots and old traditions within this changing scene,” notes Rebecca Lomnicky.\(^{14}\)

While judges seem to agree on what the foundation and limitations are for this music, they seem to differ in what interpretations are appropriate. When more than one judge is evaluating a competition, there is the opportunity to discuss their opinions and come to a consensus. This is not always the case when a judge is the only authority at a competition. Over time, this could cause changes. This is not unexpected, however. People will not always interpret music in the same way even if they agree on commonalities and standards in that music.

\(^{11}\) Rebecca Lomnicky, e-mail message to the author, February 10, 2015.

\(^{12}\) Anonymous judge and competitor, personal interview, 2014.

\(^{13}\) David Gardner, personal interview, November 8, 2014.

\(^{14}\) Rebecca Lomnicky, e-mail message to the author, February 10, 2015.
Any revival is made up of individuals with different experiences and opinions. To some extent, these individual revivalists “invent” something new within a revival even while they are simultaneously trying to preserve a tradition. While it is unclear how the Scottish fiddling revival will continue to change or even what its lifespan will be, it is present in the United States with its own momentum and direction. It is no longer a footnote influence in the history of other American styles of fiddling; it is a distinct, singular genre of fiddling in the United States.

Once a tradition is revived, what happens next to both the music and the revivalists? Revivals seem to have a variable lifespan especially when authenticity is no longer the main concern for revivalists and the original tradition is too limiting as a reference point. When this happens, the revival collapses into other styles and the music transforms into something else. The old revivalist styles of music then exist parallel to new forms of the genre or merged with the traditional music the revivalists originally intended. There is also the possibility of a revival’s collapse and future revivalists would have to start over.

Regarding the Scottish fiddling revival in America, a collapse seems unlikely. The additions of Scottish fiddling summer camps are an indication of the revival’s vitality. F.I.R.E.’s adherence and emphasis on what is fundamental and basic to the Scottish regional styles gives them a solid foundation to fall back on. Changing score forms reflect better players indicating that the revival is improving and growing, not breaking down. Recordings provide stability. Should a schism or collapse occur, there is a growing body of “original” material. Also, the revival, at the time of writing, has occurred thus far for 40 years. This length of time, combined with the evidenced level of growth and change, is an indicator of strength in the revival.

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15 Livingston, 78.
16 See Livingston, 80.
17 Ibid., 81.
The other possibility is the revival transforming into something new. The Scottish fiddling revival in America contains and encourages individual interpretation. If the interpretation of the Scottish fiddling styles’ foundation varies enough and with a significant amount of people, it is possible that the tradition will transform, though what it will change into is difficult to say. Further, the “generational gap” described by the judges is part of Livingston’s “basic point of tension within revivals” due to the question that arises regarding “tradition versus authenticity.”18 Younger judges, being more open to new ways of interpretation may inadvertently cause key changes that eventually transform the fiddling styles, even though all judges expressed the importance of remaining true to foundations. On the other hand, older judges, with stricter adherence to tradition, may slow down such transformation.

Another indication of a possible transformation occurs when technical proficiency and adherence to style is exemplary. When the regional styles are intact, the “Scottish-ness” is accurate, and the technical accuracy is flawless among all competitors, the revivalists and the community must decide how to evaluate the next level of fiddling. A competition implies a winner or winners where the “best” is selected. When players are evenly matched in all areas of evaluation, how do you select the winner?

During the 2014 National competition, the judges all remarked that the top players were technically excellent and the style was “alive” and “well expressed.”19 One judge remarked: “with the fiddling in the competitions so good, selecting winners is now about risk.”20 Players at this contest were set apart and selected as winners because they “pushed the style.”21 They took risks and some competitors even composed their own tunes.

18 Livingston, 71.
19 Field notes, September 6, 2014.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
The 2014 winner, Tim Macdonald, took a particularly unusual approach with dynamics and musical shape. According to judge David Gardner, he told a “unique story.” All of these unusual dynamics and musical shapes, however, did not violate any rules concerning Scottish fiddling regional styles. Despite this “something new” heard by the judges, the winning competitor also remarked about the importance of tradition and emphasized his point by playing on a gut-stringed fiddle. “For this contest, I was specifically trying to make a point about historically informed performance,” Macdonald said. “All of my pieces were written before 1793. I was playing on period instruments. The baroque violin is very different from the modern instrument.” By both adding to the style and honoring the tradition’s history, namely through the older-type instrument, Macdonald reinforces the revival ideology of continuing a tradition without forgetting where it comes from.

Such innovative players add something new to the tradition without disrupting tradition, and the judges recognized and rewarded that effort. If innovation and creativity are the new standard by which fiddlers are evaluated, and then over time, Scottish fiddling in America could turn into a distinct style separate from Scotland, though this is unlikely. The winner of the Scottish Fiddling Championship in American is automatically invited to Scotland to compete in the Glenfiddich competition in Scotland. John Turner, who won the first F.I.R.E. contest,

22 David Gardner, personal interview, November 8, 2014.
arranged this. The Scotland contest meets annually in October at Blair Castle, Blair Atholl, Perthshire, Scotland in their main ballroom.25

The event is quite prestigious. Eight finalists compete by invitation only and a specified composer gives each competitor their own recital incorporating all the different regional styles and a set of pieces.26 The winner is given a trophy, silver Quaich, and a cash prize.27 In 2013, the first place winner of the Glenfiddich fiddling competition was from North Carolina and qualified through the F.I.R.E. 2012 national competition.28 The 2014 Glenfiddich champion was from Massachusetts and also qualified through F.I.R.E.29 The 2014 winner will also compete in the 2015 Glenfiddich competition.

If the “best” and “most innovative” Scottish fiddlers from America are also competing with the Scottish fiddlers in Scotland, then potentially equivalent levels of playing are indicated. Further, if fiddlers from the competitions in American are winning fiddling competitions in Scotland, then that could validate the F.I.R.E. revival in the United States as “Scottish.” The cultural and musical source of this fiddling style, Scotland, acknowledges the fiddlers in America. Such a comparative standard and the verification on the style from Scotland would, at the least, slow down any changes in Scottish fiddling in America. Scotland’s acceptance of the fiddlers in the United States creates a life link for the revival and potentially creates another type of original source.

This is assuming that both Scotland and the United States maintain comparative fiddling styles and standards in both sets of competitions. It is interesting to note that the 2014 competition in America did not include a judge from Scotland, as National competitions apparently did in the past.\textsuperscript{30} “Perhaps this is a signpost that a revival has taken place?” notes MacMorran. In terms of musical change, many judges expressed that “music changes anywhere” and that Scotland is more open to new ways of fiddling compared to the United States.\textsuperscript{31} More than one judge expressed that some Scots are uncomfortable with Americans winning their competitions, though they “respect the music coming from over here.”\textsuperscript{32} More research is required to determine further implications.

Finally, the last point of discussion concerns any differences between competitions and the revival. When asked if they perceive any differences between the competitions and the revival, judges and competitors alike expressed differing opinions. One judge, Melinda Crawford Perttu, stated that the competitions and the revival are not the same, but competitions are a key point of the revival.\textsuperscript{33} Another judge, Calum MacKinnon, believes competitions are the only focus of the revival.\textsuperscript{34} Colyn Fischer expressed that competitions are essential to the revival and the two cannot be separated, but also admitted to disconnect between Scottish fiddling activities on the west and east coasts of the US.\textsuperscript{35} A few judges expressed a wish that F.I.R.E. could do more to promote the tradition. More promotion of informal sessions, a common collection of tunes, and more presence in higher education are examples of such wishes.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{30} Jane MacMorran, e-mail message to the author, February 15, 2015.
\textsuperscript{31} Anonymous judge, personal interview, 2014.
\textsuperscript{32} Anonymous judges, personal interviews, 2014-2015.
\textsuperscript{33} Melinda Crawford Perttu, e-mail message to the author, January 24, 2015.
\textsuperscript{34} Calum MacKinnon, e-mail message to the author, January 18, 2015.
\textsuperscript{35} Colyn Fischer, personal interview, January 3, 2015.
\textsuperscript{36} Jane MacMorran, personal interview, February 15, 2015.
While the revival and the competitions are essential to one another in the United States, the author believes that the revival has grown beyond the competitions, while still using contests as an essential element. The competitions started as the main form of revival, shown through F.I.R.E.’s history. However, if other organizations developed out of F.I.R.E. and its efforts, and also develop and contribute to Scottish fiddling in the US, those newer groups and camps must be acknowledged as part or as a result of the revival. In fact, judge Jane MacMorran raised the question that perhaps fiddling camps could be a better gauge on the revival, as they include non-competing participants.\footnote{Jane MacMorran, e-mail message to author, February 15, 2015.} Further, if pedagogy and education are acknowledged by F.I.R.E.’s revival as important, then teaching activities outside of a competition, especially since they most likely improve competition playing, are also seen as part of the revival but separate to the competitions. The competitions helped start the revival and continue its maintenance and growth, but other elements make the revival stronger. Since there are relevant elements outside of the competition, as discussed throughout this thesis, the revival has grown beyond its original intent.

F.I.R.E. began a Scottish fiddling revival in the 1970s through competitions at Highland Games across the United States. Many shifts occurred since its inception, such as adjusted score forms, additional Scottish fiddling organizations, and debates about authenticity and what is traditional. These shifts indicate a changing and growing revival, rather than disintegration from within. New interpretations are embraced while keeping the traditional as a “foundation” for new players. It seems that Scottish fiddling in the United States is established and has the necessary foundation to sustain itself. Even if the tradition were to transform into something new, it still has a proud history and heritage to draw from. One way or another, this musical genre will likely continue to grow and expand, adding to an already rich musical tradition.
Limitations and Areas for Future Research

There were two primary limitations in this study. The author was unable to communicate with as many competitors as would be ideal. Though informal discussions with some competitors during competition settings did occur, the author felt limited in her ability to communicate with various members due to age. Many competitors are under 18 years old and the author felt limited in approaching younger players. Further, the author was unable to successfully contact adult competitors for follow up. Following up with competitors, especially the players competing and winning in Scotland, would further this research.

The second limitation comes from the location of competitions experienced. Though numerous Highland Games festivals and competitions were attended during a four-year period, many of these competitions were in the same region of the US and some events were repeatedly visited over the four-year period. While advantageous in the respect that change in the same context could be evaluated over time, competitions and festivals in different parts of the United States under the F.I.R.E. umbrella would improve the study.

Future research for this topic includes a comparison of Scottish fiddling competitions in the United States as well as Scottish fiddling competitions in Scotland. This would consist of examining both criteria for competition evaluations. The community structure in both locations also reveals points of potential research. Several judges in this study expressed a wish for a deeper cultural community structure in the US that exists in Scotland but is not as prominent in the United States.

Another potential area of examination includes the Scottish fiddling stylistic differences between the US and Scotland. Many players expressed subtle differences in playing styles, even within the regional styles, between both locations. This is expected due to physically removed
contexts separated by the Atlantic Ocean. What the differences are and why is an area of future research.

Another area of research would be a closer examination of the Cape Breton influence on the American F.I.R.E. competitions. The organization does not exclude this Canadian fiddling from their competitions, considering the Scottish heritage. However, many judges, audience members, and competitors confided to the author that there are concerns with this fiddling in the F.I.R.E. competitions. Moreover, many Cape Breton fiddlers are not interested in competing both in general and in the US. Also, some judges expressed that they do not believe they can fairly evaluate the Cape Breton fiddling style in a traditional Scottish competition.
Conclusion

This thesis demonstrates that the organization F.I.R.E. is primarily responsible for the Scottish fiddling revival in the United States, though other organizations later furthered the resurgence and development of the tradition in the US. F.I.R.E.’s competition format gives a structured method for reviving Scottish fiddling according to parameters established in Scotland. This is shown through the history of the Scottish fiddling tradition and the history of the organization F.I.R.E. and subsequent organizations that emerged from the original F.I.R.E. contests. Examinations also reveal that the revival is changing the music it seeks to revive, though these are slow and unavoidable changes. This point is seen in the judges’ comments about musical change already occurring or likely to occur, changes in score forms over the years, and an overall improving playing level in competitions.

The revival has grown beyond its original intent and now has implications for the fiddling tradition in both the US and Scotland. Musical communication through fiddling competitions between Scotland and the US will have consequences of a currently undetermined nature. Long term, this tradition in the United States will likely transform into something new, though it will probably always retain its Scottish roots and heritage. Since the contests through the F.I.R.E. revival revere Scottish fiddling musical tradition and history above all else, it is likely that Scottish association will not shift, though musical change is unavoidable in any context. Recordings/modern technology, intentional pedagogy, and a strict adherence to the guidelines in completions also help slow down such change. Ultimately, F.I.R.E. successfully - and single-handedly - revived Scottish fiddling in the US, and in doing so has created a growing fiddling community dedicated to the preservation of a distinctively Scottish musical style.
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