

Routes & Roots: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 4. Ian Russell, Chris Goertzen, eds. 2012. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute. 241pp.

LAURA RISK
McGill University

This is the fourth volume of selected papers from the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (NAFCo) and includes thirteen papers and one panel presentation from the 2010 gathering in Aberdeen, Scotland. That year's conference was themed "Roots and Routes"; this collection's editors have chosen to invert the terms in order to "suggest a different relative weighting" (1).

As the editors acknowledge, these two terms coexist uneasily. At the most basic level, roots are "dwelling, belonging, and attachment to place" while routes are "travel, migration, and displacement" (1). Yet the roots of today are the crystallized residue of the routes of yesterday: musical identity is equally "a product of cultural encounters and experiences outside of ... community life" and a sense of "'trueness' to tradition and individual creativity within it." Further, the musical identities of "tradition bearers" were in their own time "shaped by similar dynamics" (2).

This assertion is an ideal jumping-off point for a nuanced theorization of the cultural meanings of routes and roots with regard to traditional musics, and I would have liked to see a more substantive introductory discussion. If roots were once routes, why do the former hold so much more "symbolic capital"—to use Bourdieu's terminology

(1993: 75)—than the latter? How might acts of musical transmission, the institutionalization of a tradition, or mediated reception convert a tradition bearer's routes into the next generation's roots? In framing North Atlantic fiddling along a roots/routes dichotomy, which musical and contextual elements do we highlight and which do we understate? Some of the papers in this collection trace conceptual routes rather than geographic; does the model still hold?

The articles themselves are loosely organized in four sections, the first of which profiles individual collectors, teachers and performers. Lisa Morrissey analyzes the published and manuscript output of 19th-century Limerick (Ireland) collector Patrick Weston Joyce while Colette Moloney profiles an influential collector and fiddle teacher of the following generation, Frank Roche. Taken together, these articles document changing tastes in Irish traditional music publishing over the late 19th and early 20th centuries; Roche's collections included quadrilles, for instance, a genre excluded by Joyce. Moloney's article is primarily historical and biographical and, in a thought-provoking conclusion, describes Roche as the possible progenitor of a distinctive Limerick playing style. Morrissey takes a different approach, using a series of charts to compare tune sources, key signatures and tune types in Joyce's four printed collections and five extant music manuscripts. I found the discrepancies between the manuscripts and printed collections of particular interest: the former repertoire is largely in the keys of G and D and contains a mix of tune types (though primarily reels), while the latter consists nearly exclu-

sively of airs in C, F or G. To me, this suggests that Joyce envisaged the printed collections for domestic music-making on the piano; I hope to see Morrissey engage with the reception of the collections in her further research.

The remaining two articles in this section are rooted, respectively, in England and the United States: Elaine Bradtke traces the repertoire sources of Morris dance fiddler John Robbins (1868-1948) while Gregory Hansen's study of Florida fiddler Richard Seaman examines Seaman's use of pranks and tall tales in performance. Hansen's work is grounded in extensive fieldwork and ethnographic interviews and he draws some interesting links between Seaman's intentional stretching of the truth, including pranking, and the ambivalent social status of fiddlers. Bradtke's study, by contrast, places musical analysis and archival research in dialogue in an effort to assign geographic points of origin to Robbins' tunes. That many of her results are "inconclusive, or even contradictory" (48) points to the difficulty of untangling musical routes of the past.

The second section of *Routes & Roots* focuses on fiddle technique and style, with Gaila Kirdienė on drone-playing in Lithuania, Chris Goertzen on variation technique in Texas fiddling, and Emma Nixon on the teaching of style in Scottish fiddle workshops. Kirdienė analyzed hundreds of field recordings of Lithuanian fiddlers in order to map various types of drone-playing to geographic region. In Aukštaitija, for instance, drone-playing is inscribed in a musical and cultural semantic field linking it with polyphonic vocal and instrumental compositions and, in some cases, with birds

and animals. I found Kirdienė's survey of three additional regions difficult to follow; clear textual separations and a more substantive comparison of regional drone-playing styles would have helped.

Texas contest fiddling has long been marked by performers' wide-ranging, highly individual and frequently virtuosic multi-part settings of tunes. Goertzen compares influential historical recordings with recent contest settings by both younger and veteran performers to dissect "modern variation technique." Goertzen's prose is engaging and his argument convincing: seemingly disparate variants of a Texas contest tune are in fact linked to a shared sense of that tune's "essence," such as the prevalent thirds and distinctive cadence that mark "Sally Goodin."

Formal transmission of traditional playing styles is an area ripe for study and Nixon's article raises an intriguing question: how do workshop tutors transmit both the specifics of stylistic nuance and a sense of interpretive flexibility? However, her methodology is limited to tallying played occurrences and verbal descriptions of selected stylistic features, leading to her primary conclusion that tutors play grace notes many more times than they speak about them. Yet how exactly did these tutors explain the different birls, cuts and snaps? What were the students' responses, both verbal and played? How did the tutors musically contextualize their verbal explanations and were those explanations student- or tutor-initiated? These questions await a more comprehensive investigation.

The NAFCo organizers should be congratulated for placing dance and music scholarship side-by-side both

at the conferences and in this collection. Three dance-focused articles make up the third section of *Routes & Roots*: Lesley Ham discusses a thriving contra dance scene in Western Massachusetts, Mats Melin traces various influences on the Cape Breton dance tradition, and Catherine Foley describes the development of a master's degree program in Irish Traditional Dance Performance.

Each of these articles engages with a different conception of roots and routes. Ham argues that contra dancing in Greenfield, Massachusetts, has matured beyond a revival phenomenon to become a full-fledged "tradition." If indeed Ham has pinpointed an example of routes becoming roots, there is the potential here for a rich theorization—and problematization—of not only the routes/roots dichotomy but also the revival/tradition one. Ham limits this article to claiming the symbolic capital of a "tradition" for Greenfield contra dancing without sufficiently questioning this claim's rationale or offering convincing proof for it.

Melin fleshes out the local implications of the geographically oriented roots/routes model privileged in the introductory chapter. He traces the interactions of Scottish, French and Irish dance traditions in a Cape Breton context and the ongoing connections between Cape Breton and British Isles dancing in the 20th century. This article offers an impressively well-researched model for similar studies tracing the local, global and diasporic over time.

If one of the future routes of traditional music and dance leads through academia (as the NAFCo enterprise itself suggests), how best to include local roots in course curricula? Catherine Foley de-

scribes her solution for the University of Limerick's MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance: embodied and historical knowledge of Irish dance practices, ethnochoreological research skills, and an emphasis on marginalized Irish step dance forms. This article will serve as a useful starting point for anyone developing a traditional music- or dance-based curriculum.

The fourth and final section of *Routes & Roots* engages with issues of transmission and performance. Samantha Breslin describes Newfoundland musicians' localized associations with Irish tunes, Patricia Ballantyne historicizes the disassociation of Scottish Highland piping from dance, and Chris Stone investigates the musical creativity of Scottish fiddler Aidan O'Rourke.

Breslin argues that playing Irish tunes in a social context establishes a set of intensely personal associations that enable a re-identification of that repertoire as "Newfoundland music." This seems to me a convincing example of routes in the process of becoming roots and an excellent case study of localized musical practices engendering a sense of national musical identity.

Ballantyne traces the increased regulation, centralization and emphasis on competition in both Highland piping and Highland dancing over the last century. She argues that technique and execution (ornamentation for pipers, athleticism for dancers) have taken precedence over the ability to play danceable music or to dance *with* the accompanying music, but also points to recent work by pipers such as Hamish Moore to re-establish the links between piping and dancing.

Stone interprets the roots/routes dichotomy at its most intimate level, in the playing of a single individual. He locates Aidan O'Rourke's roots in the playing norms of the Scottish fiddle tradition and then analyzes how O'Rourke stretches or breaks these norms. While I would have appreciated a more solid theoretical framework, I found Stone's musical analyses convincing; it seems to me that several such individual-centred studies might be profitably combined to track the development and alteration of a traditional style and repertoire.

Routes & Roots closes with a transcription of a 2010 NAFCo panel on "teaching and learning traditional fiddling" with Anne Lederman, Claire White, James Alexander and Cameron Baggins. The panelists offered personal histories and practical suggestions that will be useful for anyone developing or teaching in a large-scale, youth-oriented fiddling program.

The breadth of scholarship in this collection makes it a valuable addition to any music library. Multiple North Atlantic fiddle traditions are investigated taking a wide variety of methodological approaches. However, I would have liked to see a more thorough theorization of the roots/routes dichotomy in the introduction and a more consistent level of scholarship in the articles. ❀

REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Crossing Over: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 3. Ian Russell and Anna Kearney Guigné, eds. 2010. Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, in association with the Department of Folklore, the Centre for Music, Media, and Place (MMaP) and the School of Music, Memorial University of Newfoundland. 317pp, index of songs, tunes and dances; index.

RICHARD MACKINNON
Cape Breton University

What results when you bring a group of recognized traditional musicians and dancers from around the North Atlantic and put them together for a week with scholars who have been studying the nuances of fiddle and dance traditions, many of whom are respected performers in their own right? You get more than a few lively, vibrant "kitchen rackets" and "ceilidhs" as they say in Newfoundland, the site of the 2008 North Atlantic Fiddle Convention. You also end up with a fine collection of twenty-one well-researched essays on a variety of fiddle and dance traditions, the third collection of essays to result from this innovative conference.

This volume's contents pertain to traditional fiddling and dancing in Scotland, Ireland, northern Europe, the United States and, of course, Canada. Because of my own expertise in Cape Breton traditional culture and music, I have focused this review on the three articles about Cape Breton and provided a more cursory overview of the other articles in the collection.

Ethnochoreologist Mats Melin investigates how—and why—Cape Breton