

A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CANADIAN OLD TIME INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC BOOKS

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In Canada, folk instrumental music is most often associated with traditional dancing. The most popular instruments employed for such music — which is often described as “old time music” — are the fiddle and the accordion. The different styles and varying repertoire of Canadian old time music reflect both direct immigration from different parts of Europe and migration within the nation. One phenomenon which sets Canadian folk instrumental music apart from the equally varied styles and repertoires found south of the border is the relatively large number of tune books which have been published for Canadian musicians. Why there should be a large number of these books is not at all certain — no one has asked the musicians or the publishers about this as far as I know. Probably it is a result of the carryover of Scottish and Irish traditions of musical literacy. Another probable factor is the recent popularity of fiddling as commercial entertainment within the context of Canadian country and western music. Moreover, although instrumental music traditions vary considerably within Canada, they share in common a tendency toward the accumulation of a large number of tunes within the repertoire, with the concept of the tune being quite fixed. This stands in contrast to some of the other North American traditions in which fiddlers have a smaller number of tunes in their repertoire and a practice of variation and improvisation. We may hypothesize that the traditions of musical literacy and a larger repertoire, which go along with the purchase of new books of tunes so as to keep the performer’s repertoire “fresh,” created a market for the radio and television instrumentalists like Don Messer, Gaby Haas, Ned Landry and Andy De Jarlis. The size (8 1/2 X 11”) and format (glossy covers, photo sections) of most of these books are identical to those of the country and western songbooks which were published during the forties and fifties. Indeed, many of the publishers for the instrumental music books also produced song books — Gordon V. Thompson, Empire Music, BMI Canada, etc. We know further that there was often a tie-in between the publishing of such music and the issuing of records. Sometimes this was quite direct, as in the case of Empire Music of New Westminster, B.C., which published the music recorded by Aragon Records and often included record numbers in its song and tune books. Of course, not all the songs published in these books were newly composed, although the venerable practice of combining new names with old tunes often gives that impression. Whether the tunes are old or new, such books are valuable documents for the student of instrumental

music traditions, for they allow analytical comparison between the performance as set forth ideally in music with the performance as realized by the composer and by other musicians. We are indeed lucky to have in musical notation the original form, for example, of Ward Allen's "Maple Sugar," a tune which has varied considerably (even acquiring a set of words) in its life in tradition. Similar examples abound.

Much remains to be done in the study of Canadian instrumental music, and it is with this in mind that I have compiled the following preliminary list of tune books. Most of the books cited are in my personal collection. Those which are not in my collection I have identified by giving a brief annotative statement indicating my source. Generally the sources have been ads in other tune books or in the monumental fiddle music bibliography published by Michael Mendelson in the John Edwards Memorial Foundation *Quarterly* (= JEMFQ). The list is not complete, and I welcome additional entries.

Ward Allen Canadian Fiddle Tunes Books 1 and 2. Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd., 1956; 1961.

Avon, Adrien. *Adrien Avon's Reels and Jigs.* Don Mills, Ontario: BMI Canada Ltd., 1961. (JEMFQ 11, p. 105.)

Avon, Adrien. *Reels et Jigs de chez-nous.* Lachute, Que.: Parnasse Musical, 1945.

A Collection of Favorite Scandinavian Music, Volume One, As Played By Canadian Accordionist Joe Morelli. New Westminister: Empire Music. (Advertised on back inside cover of *Gaby Haas, Vol. 3.*)

Cormier, Bill. *44 Original Canadian Jigs and Reels For Square Dances.* Toronto: Harry F. Jarman and Co., 1947. (JEMFQ 11, p. 107.)

Andy De Jarlis' Canadian Fiddle Tunes From The Red River Valley, Books 1 and 2. Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd., 1958; 1961.

Manitoba's Golden Fiddler Andy De Jarlis. Don Mills: BMI Canada, 1969.

Dressler, Bob. *Square Dances for Accordion.* New Westminister: Empire Music, 1951. (JEMFQ 11, p. 108.)

King Ganam's Canadian Fiddle Tunes. Toronto: BMI Canada, 1957.

Gaby Haas Old Time Instrumental Favorites, Volumes 1 to 4. New Westminister: Empire Music, 1955; 1958; 1961; 1964.

Guest, Bill. *A Hundred Fiddle Tunes in Down East Style.* Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1980.

Jarman, Harry E. *The Cornhuskers Book of Square Dance Tunes.* (Rev. ed.) Toronto: E.E. Jarman & Co., 1944. (JEMFQ 11, p. 155.)

Ned Landry's Favourite Fiddle Tunes. New Westminister: Empire Music, 1952.

Bowing The Strings With Ned Landry. Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1959.

Meredith, Mal. *Old Time Tunes.* New Westminister: Empire Music, 1954. (JEMFQ 11, p. 157.)

- Messer, Don. *Original Old Tyme Music By Don Messer and His Islanders*. Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1942.
- _____. *Don Messer's Way Down East Fiddlin' Tunes*. Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1948.
- _____. *Don Messer's Square Dance Tunes*. Toronto: Canadian Music Sales, 1952.
- _____. *TV Favorites with Don Messer And His Islanders*. Toronto: Canadian Music Sales, 1960. (As advertised on back of *Don Messer's Square Dance Tunes*. Ad lists tunes. *JEMFQ* 11, p. 158.)
- _____. *Fiddlin' Favorites with Don Messer and his Islanders*. Toronto: Canadian Music Sales, (?). (As advertised on back of *Don Messer's Square Dance Tunes*; ad lists tunes.)
- _____. *Don Messer's Barn Dance Breakdowns*. Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1954.
- _____. *Don Messer's Canadian Hoedowns*. Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1957.
- Miskoe, Sylvia, and Justin Paul. *Fiddle Tunes of Omer Marcoux*. Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French, 1980.
- Music From Scandinavia For Accordion, Vol. 1*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?), (As advertised on back inside page of *Old Time Music, Vol. 1*.)
- Music From Scandinavia, Volume 2*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (Advertised on back of *Gaby Haas, Vol. 3*.)
- Old Time Music For Accordion, Volumes 1 to 4*. New Westminster: Empire Music, 1950, (1953?); (1955?); (?).
- Polkas For Accordion, Volume 1*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (Advertised on back of *Gaby Haas, Vol. 3*.)
- Original Fiddle Tunes By Danny Romaniuk and the Tumbleweeds*. New Westminster: Empire Music, 1959.
- Bob Scott's Canadian Fiddle Tunes*. Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd., 1955.
- Square Dances For Accordion*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (As advertised on back inside page of *Old Time Music, Vol. 1* . . . "in their original keys.")
- Olaf Sveen's Old Time Instrumental Music*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (Advertised on back of *Gaby Haas, Vol. 3*.)
- Graham Townsend's Canadian Country Fiddle-Tunes, Volumes 1 and 2*; Scarborough: Berandol Music Ltd., (ca. 1971).
- Welling, William B. *Welling's Hartford Tunebook*. Hartford, CO: William B. Welling, 1974. (Includes Canadian tunes. *JEMFQ* 12, p. 11.)
- Western and Cowboy Songs For Accordion*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (Advertised on the back cover of *Old Time Music . . . Vol. 1*.)
- Western Hit Parade For Accordion, Vol. 1*. New Westminster: Empire Music, (?). (Advertised on back inside page of *Old Time Music . . . Vol. 1*; Songs by "Wilf Carter, Hank Snow, Slim Whitman, Alberta Slim, Stu Davis, Keray Regan & Scotty Stevenson.")