

Fiddle Music and the Constitution of Musical Affect on (and away from) the Gaspé Coast: Interpreting Musical Affordance, Motion, and Emotion through Turino's Peircian Framework

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Abstract: Combining ethnography with theories of musical “affordance” (DeNora 2004), semiotic affectivity (Turino 1999), and phenomenological senses of place (Casey 1996), this paper explores how the joint sonic structures of a local Gaspesian fiddle style and certain mass-mediated fiddle styles have fused into a deeply affective cultural resource for many of the older English-speaking residents of Douglastown, Quebec despite ongoing demographic decline and outmigration. I suggest that experiences of musical affect and focused modes of listener engagement are rooted in the affordance of the sounds themselves, which have engendered patterns of cultural “work” (DeNora 1999) that have imbued these sounds with a profound indexicality (Turino 1999; 2008; 2014).

Résumé: En combinant l'ethnographie et les théories de « l'affordance » musicale (DeNora 2004), l'affectivité sémiotique (Turino 1999) et le sens phénoménologique du lieu (Casey 1996), cet article se penche sur la façon dont les structures soniques conjointes d'un style gaspésien et de certains styles grand public d'airs de violon ont fusionné en une ressource culturelle aux profondes résonances affectives pour de nombreux résidents anglophones âgés de Douglastown, Québec, malgré une émigration et un déclin démographique continus. J'émet l'idée que l'expérience de l'affect musical et de l'engagement attentif de l'auditeur s'enracinent dans « l'affordance » des sons eux-mêmes, qui ont engendré des schémas de « travail » culturel (DeNora 1999) ayant imprégné ces sons d'une profonde indexicalité. (Turino 1999; 2008; 2014)

O child of mine with tender care
I've fashioned rib and scroll
Till you become a living thing
Possessor of a soul—(“On Making a Violin,” Coull 1991)

On a warm August evening in 2010, about 150 spectators are gathered under the big white tent on the hill overlooking the Bay of Gaspé in Douglstown, Québec. On stage are a piano accompanist and seven fiddlers—local and visiting, amateur and professional. Renowned Canadian fiddler Pierre Schryer—brother to the pianist, Julie—asks, bilingually, into the microphone: “*On a tu le temps pour un autre « medley » ensemble?* Do we have time for one more medley?” A brief applause and a few shouts of approval. “... Mmmm how 'bout ‘Maple Sugar’?” Applause swells. The man next to me: “Yeagh!” I chuckle at all this enthusiasm. Schryer instructs and announces: “We’ll go into La Chicaneuse—the Growling Old Man and Growling Old Woman.” There are a few plucks and bowed open strings to check the tuning and Schryer sputters a few final treble string double stops before launching into the iconic A-major pickup with off-string staccato. Caught between applause and clapping in time, the audience is soon latched on to the down beats of Ward Allen’s classic Canadian two-step. “Yass!” The clapping is intense as the music glides twice through the tune, fiddlers improvising harmonies, the piano chugging along in the old-time left-hand/right-hand bass-chord style, the crowd responding with spontaneous yips and whoops. The fiddles and piano collectively hammer out the four tonic chords ending the third strain in E major as ears and hands anticipate the same A-major pickup notes that first brought their hands and ears into the tune. But instead, Schryer’s fiddle snaps an off-beat, treble-string double-stop before all the fiddlers come down on their bass strings for the grumbling A-minor low strain of the “Growling Old Man and Woman.” Julie



Fig. 1. Eastern North America. The Gaspé Peninsula is circled. The marker “A” is Douglstown. (Image from GoogleMaps)

Schryer switches her accompaniment to one chord per bar, using sparse block chords and suspended harmonies. Perhaps caught in the vacuum of extra rhythmic space, the crowd begins clapping in relentless double time, 1-and-2-and-1-and-2-and ...

Two nights later, under the same tent, the audience encountered Pierre and Julie Schryer's talents once again, this time joined by All Ireland Champion concertina player Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin for "An Evening of Traditional Irish Music" (Douglastown Irish Week Committee 2010). Their music was warm and graceful, never rushed, played with passion, reverence, and finesse. Throughout their set, the audience listened quietly and applauded respectfully at the end of each medley of tunes.

Douglastown was wrapping up its annual Irish Week festival celebrating two and a quarter centuries of Irish culture in this small, historically anglophone village at edge of Québec's Gaspé Peninsula (Fig. 1). I'd come to Douglastown as part of a hobby project I had started earlier in the year with a friend and guitarist from Montréal, Brian Morris. Brian and I had recently co-created a blog featuring the music of his father Erskine Morris (<http://gaspefiddle.blogspot.ca/>), a fiddler originally from Douglastown who moved to the Montréal area in the late 1940s. Brian had driven the thousand kilometers from Montréal for a short vacation with his extended family in Douglastown, and almost every day during my stay, arranged visits with older residents where we played for an hour or so in their kitchens and parlours.

Much of my career as an amateur fiddler in bluegrass and old-time country ensembles playing for listening audiences, fiddle music seems to occupy somewhat of a novel space, a "lighter fare" or musical diversion to be sandwiched between lyric country or bluegrass songs of greater substance. As Brian and I shared our renditions of local Gaspesian and Southern Appalachian tunes during our visits in Douglastown, I was struck by how closely our hosts—mostly non-musicians—listened, and by the depth of their emotional responses. Their attention seemed to hang on every note. Fiddler and musicologist Laura Risk, who I met at the festival and with whom I have subsequently collaborated with as a musician and researcher in the area, expresses her experiences playing in Douglastown for the first time:

I was really struck by the community's love for fiddle music. I've played at lots of festivals but it's not often that I have the feeling I had in Douglastown: that people are following every note and bowstroke. It's the way fiddlers and dancers listen. (Risk 2011)

In this paper, I explore why many of the people in the Douglstown area and its diaspora in Montréal and Toronto—both musicians and non-musicians—listen to the fiddle with such intensity and experience such strongly affective responses to *certain* fiddle genres.¹ Why, for example, during a festival of Irish heritage might the lively and iconic (some might say clichéd) classic Canadian two-step “Maple Sugar” inspire spontaneous whoops, hand-clapping, and extroverted applause, while expertly delivered traditional Irish medleys of reels, jigs, and hornpipes by three world-class musicians elicit an appreciative but nonetheless more reserved response? Many older Douglstown residents express a deep attachment to their Irish heritage through expressive forms like fiddle music and social dance (Leggo 2013) and so ostensibly, “An Evening of Traditional Irish Music” bringing in three of Canada’s finest practitioners to this remote village carries significant symbolic value.² I suggest, however, that to better understand various emotionally charged responses (verbal, cognitive, or embodied), we must return to lived experiences and consider how certain fiddle sounds have been individually and collectively appropriated in community life. Central to my investigation is DeNora’s notion that music is an “affordance structure” for listeners, providing them aesthetic materials for embodied responses, self- and world-making, and the interpretation and experience of social life (2000: 40).

I begin by briefly describing the history of the area before presenting several structural features of a local fiddle style that some musicians in the community have called the “Gaspé Sound.”³ I follow with three ethnographic explorations using Turino’s Peircian semiotic framework (1999; 2008; 2014) to interpret how community members have used fiddle music as an “affordance structure” to appropriate specific local and mass-mediated fiddle sounds (the latter notably of radio celebrity Don Messer) and, in the process, have created a powerful affective resource for community life. I argue that embodied cultural expressions, including social dance and a ubiquitous local practice that I simply call “musical visiting,” have been central sites in the production of fiddle music as an affective community resource. I conclude with a brief contemplation on the implications of my analysis in an ongoing cultural revival taking place in Douglstown between local and diasporic community members, a new and prominent local francophone demographic, and various actors (including traditional musicians and government agencies) situated outside the community.

Settlement and Demographic Trends on the Gaspé Coast (1785-2006)

In recent publications (see Patterson 2014; Patterson and Risk 2014), I have described the history and culture of the Douglastown area. Here, I offer a concise summary, referring the reader to my sources for more detailed portraits. European coastal settlement along the Gaspé Peninsula was sparse before and just after the British Conquest of New France and Acadia (1758-1763), which saw Wolfe's forces destroy four small permanent fishing settlements and deport most of the French settlers to France (Bélanger, Frenette, and Desjardins 1981; Mimeault and Sinnett 2009; McDougall 2013). However, the American Revolution (1765-1783) soon brought an influx of Loyalist refugees and discharged soldiers into two new refugee settlements along the peninsula. The first was at New Carlisle (est. 1784) and the second was at Douglastown, which saw about 25 settler families with Irish, Irish-American, French-Canadian, French, English, Scottish, Channel Islands, and First Nations ancestries arrive in 1785 and

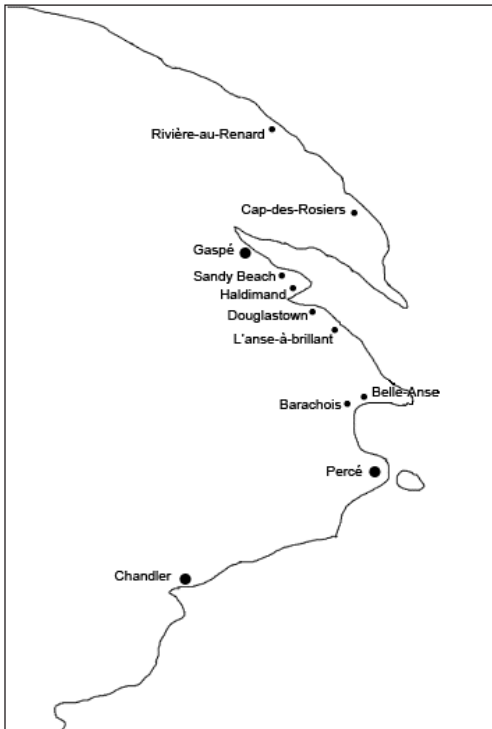


Fig. 2. "Lands End" of the Gaspé Coast including Douglastown and its neighbouring villages. Courtesy of Laura Risk, 2015.

1786. By 1800, most Loyalist families had left Douglastown, and intermarriage among the eight remaining families created a core English-speaking, Irish Catholic population that quickly rose to predominance (White 1999, 2000). Economic life along the coast until the mid-20th century was generally defined by seasonal fishing and lumbering with subsistence farming (Bélanger, Desjardins, and Frenette 1981). Douglastown developed within a larger cultural landscape involving neighbouring communities of mixed ancestries similar to Douglastown's first settlers, both francophone and anglophone. As elsewhere in Québec, fiddle music and social dance were commonplace

in Gaspesian villages alongside religious music and folk and popular song (see also Roy 1955; Rioux 1961; Various Artists 2014).

Although anglophones are increasingly marginal in today's Gaspesian cultural and economic landscapes, Douglstown—where English-speakers represented 95% of the local population until the mid-20th century—was not unusual as a historically majority anglophone community (C.A.S.A. 2010; LeMoignan 1967; Rudin 1985: 183).⁴ Decades of economic outmigration from the peninsula combined with an influx of young, urban francophone families to the Douglstown area since the 1990s have seen local demographics reversed: many in the town estimate that today, about one-quarter of current residents are a part of its historic anglophone, Irish Catholic demographic, a group characterized by a rapidly aging population and continued youth outmigration. Today, Douglstown functions largely as a bedroom community for the Town of Gaspé, the economic and cultural hub 20 kilometers away (Leggo 2013).⁵

The Gaspé Sound

I was introduced to the notion of the “Gaspé Sound” in 2010 by several diasporic community members living around Montréal; principally the guitarist Brian Morris, whose parents were from Douglstown, and Cyril DeVouge (1915-2011), who was from the neighbouring village of L’Anse-à-Brillant. Brian’s father Erskine Morris (1913-1997) learned fiddle largely from brothers Joe Drody (1884-1965) and Charlie Drody (1888-1972) and his mother, Beatrice Fortin (1888-1969), who did not play but was locally renowned for her liling and foot percussion.⁶ As an adult, Erskine added to his repertoire of local pieces a large body of tunes learned from commercial recordings of his favourite fiddlers Don Messer, Isidore Soucy, Joseph Allard, Andy DeJarlis, Jean Carignan, and Ti-Blanc Richard. Cyril DeVouge learned principally from his father Leslie DeVouge and his friend Roland White of neighbouring Bois-Brulé. As an adult, Cyril continued to learn tunes from recordings of Down-East and Acadian fiddlers like Eddy Poirier (New Brunswick) and Eddy Arseneault (PEI). Although Erskine and Cyril’s music was quite different, along with other local musicians, they used a set of techniques that seem to define the Gaspé Sound for several musicians in the community.

STUTTERS AND HOOKS

What Brian Morris and I began calling “stutters” when first discussing his father’s music in 2010 has been described in Meghan Forsyth’s research

among Acadian fiddlers on PEI and *les Îles-de-la-Madeleine* (Forsyth 2012: 361). By de-emphasizing or dropping the first or third note in a group of four consecutive eighth notes, fiddlers create a perception of two consecutively accented off-beats for many listeners.⁷ Forsyth notes some younger Acadian fiddlers learning from archival recordings conceive of the stutter not merely as a technique, but as a *style* of playing, which one player claimed is “true to its Frenchness” (362); an interesting proposition given its ubiquity also among older anglo-Gaspesian fiddlers and one which raises interesting questions about cross-cultural influences around the Gulf of the St. Lawrence.

What Cyril DeVouge called a “hook” replaces a single quarter note with two eighth notes of the same pitch. Despite their simplicity and perhaps counterintuitively, hooks can also create a perception of syncopation, especially on strong downbeat moments in the melodic development with the second note of the hook disrupting our expectation of a strong quarter note.⁸ I only became aware of the presence and apparent importance of hooks when Cyril DeVouge (no longer able to play in old age) kept stopping me mid-phrase as I played tunes for him, tilting the correct phrasing to indicate where I needed to add hooks.

Much local repertoire in the Douglstown area seems to be largely built around these two techniques, melodic ideas fundamentally intertwined with their characteristic rhythms. Many deceased players whose music I have encountered through home recordings seem to have also applied stutters and hooks to repertoire learned from mass-mediated sources.⁹ When I asked Brian Morris what he thought about my assessment of the centrality of the stutter and hook in the Gaspé Sound, he commented these techniques were not just unique to local fiddle music:

That Gaspé sound was around long before my dad and Cyril began playing the fiddle. I remember my Grandmother when she was tilting a tune she used the same techniques ... by singing in a highly syncopated manner with a lot of emphasis on the stutter and the hook. Everyone was using this technique, including my aunt Harriet. I also remember her mention[ing ...] Acadian fiddlers down the coast and how the Gaspé fiddling was similar to their style of playing. I agree with you about Cyril's and my dad's playing being built around the stutter and the hook, these became the foundation by which they expressed themselves musically. By using these techniques they were able to generate a lot of music from a simple 4 or 5 note tune. And when you add the feet you have the perfect combination. (Email communication, March 3, 2013)

SEATED FOOT PERCUSSION

Erskine, Cyril, and others often accompanied their playing with several seated foot percussion patterns, a practice ubiquitous and somewhat iconic of traditional music in francophone Canada (Lederman 1988: 207; Duval 2012: 428; see also Forsyth 2012). The primary pattern creates a quarter-note and two eighth-note rhythm by rocking between the heel and toe of one foot and tapping the other foot after the second downbeat (think: “one, two-and”). The second pattern—what one Gaspesian fiddler described to me as “double toeing”—is a variant on the first and creates a steady stream of eighth notes in cut time by tapping the non-rocking foot (with either toe or heel) between the transitions of the rocking foot. According to Brian, his father considered foot percussion an essential part of his music, and even refused to return to a local fiddle contest when the organizers insisted contestants play standing. (Email communication, February 2, 2010). I’ve been teased for not “stamping my feet” when playing in the community, something I interpret as a belief that foot percussion, as Brian suggests, is an essential part of the music for many local listeners.

The Cockawee - Traditional

As played by Erskine Morris (fiddle) and Brian Morris (guitar), September, 1985

- Transcribed by Glenn Patterson (May 5, 2015) -

s = stutter
h = hook

A G G D G D(C) G D(C) G
 [00:22] s/h s/h h h h

B C D C C G C G D.C.
 h s h s s s [00:52]

Fig. 3. “The Cockawee”, a little tune, as played by Erskine and Brian Morris (fiddle, guitar) in 1985. Hooks are notated by an “h” and stutters by an “s.” This little tune shows the alternation between riffs clustered around the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords. In the first strain, Erskine’s hooks become stutters and vice versa on consecutive repetitions. Note the ternary repetition structure (which Erskine did not use throughout this performance). The transcribed segment UHMo corresponds to 0:22 to 0:55 during the performance heard here: <https://youtu.be/nqQCqSyoUHo>

LITTLE TUNES

In Douglstown, the bipartite (AABB) cut-time reel dominated instrumental repertoire from at least the last quarter of the 19th century until the early 1940s, with a nearly complete absence of jigs, hornpipes, waltzes, and other dance forms.¹⁰ Many of these cut-time reels have one or both sections half as long as a conventional reel (four instead of eight bars in either section) and might be considered closer to what are sometimes called “rants” or “*reel jig*” in Scottish and Québécois traditions (Joyal 1999). Further, the repetition structure in little tunes can be flexible throughout a performance (for example, AAABB or AABBB are quite common in the little tunes played by Erskine and Cyril; see Duval 2012: 243-245). Lacking a common-sense term, Brian Morris and I have started simply calling these short pieces “little tunes.”¹¹ Many of these tend to have a melodic-harmonic development based on two-bar alternating “riffs” that cluster around the tonic and dominant or possibly the subdominant chords (for a perspective on little tunes in the American fiddle repertoire, see Wells 2003: 141-142).

Fig. 3 shows a transcription of Erskine Morris playing “The Cockawee,” a little tune unique to Douglstown and neighbouring communities that demonstrates the rhythmic and formal aspects of the Gaspé Sound I have described.¹² The four musical structures—stutters, hooks, little tunes, and seated foot percussion—should not be understood to exhaustively define the Gaspé Sound for every listener in the local and diasporic community. Rather, their identification and naming is something that emerged principally in discussions between Brian Morris, Cyril DeVouge, and me as we engaged with the music of older Douglstown area fiddlers. Once I began adding stutters and hooks to my playing, both Cyril and Brian began to comment that I was getting the Gaspé Sound and, at the same time, emotional responses to my playing from community members seemed more intense and immediate.¹³

“It Touches Your Heart”—The Power of Fiddle Music in the Douglstown Area

Everard Coull’s poem prefacing this paper conveys a sentiment I regularly encounter in ethnographic interviews and overhear in informal conversations in the local and diasporic community: the belief that the sound of the fiddle holds a remarkable—even universal—affective power. Perhaps appropriately, Coull was a Gaspesian fiddler, luthier, and writer who lived in New Carlisle

and was well known around Douglstown, where he often entertained in kitchens and at house parties.

During my first visit with Cyril DeVouge at a nursing home near Montréal, he was moved to tears as Brian, Brigid Drody (rhythm guitarist and daughter of Joe Drody), and I played through our instrumental version of the popular waltz, “I’ll Be All Smiles Tonight.” After we finished, they began contemplating the emotional power of the fiddle:

Cyril: I’ll tell you boy, I used to love the fiddle. Well, my father used to play it when I was a little boy about this high. Every Sunday. And I’d sit and listen to him and the first thing is tears. I had to go upstairs I loved the fiddle so much. It used to go right into my heart.... Even in my younger years, when I heard good music, I’d cry.

Brigid: Yep, that’s quite normal though. There’s something about a fiddle. It touches your heart, eh?

Brian: Well, we grew up with the fiddle. I mean, I did too. The fiddle was the first instrument in the house.

Cyril: Well, at home we were four brothers. And there were four fiddles hanging on the wall, on nails. And they had a little cord around there. And my mother said there was never the four of them there together at the same time.

(Personal communication with Cyril DeVouge, Brigid Drody, and Brian Morris, May 22, 2010)

Their exchange highlights the central debates about musical affect contemplated by 20th century scholars, from philosopher Theodor Adorno to musicologist Susan McClary (DeNora 2000: 1-32). DeNora describes the central question as: how do musical sounds derive their affective powers such that they can engender various emotional and embodied states for listeners (18-19)? As Brigid and Cyril first suggest, perhaps the fiddle’s power comes from an intrinsic sonic essence, perhaps—as Coull’s poem describes it—a human-like soul carved into the instrument through the sharp edges of the luthier’s chisels. In their last remarks, however, Brian and Cyril acknowledge that the instrument’s powers may also derive simply from its prevalence throughout their lives.

DeNora cautions against subscribing to either of the twin poles of technological or sociological determinism—as many scholars have been so inclined—when exploring musical affect: although musical sounds themselves do not fully determine the “meanings,” embodied responses, or emotional

states listeners experience, neither are musical sounds “empty semiotic spaces” whose powers derive solely from the contexts of their perception and appropriation (2000: 38). DeNora proposes the sociological idea of “affordance” as a middle ground. Here, the objective properties of technologies (including musical sounds) afford, but do not fully determine, particular ways of being appropriated by human users. For example, a ball affords rolling or bouncing in a way that a chair does not (2000: 38-41); similarly, an old-time waltz and a reel afford quite different movements for most dancers. Her ethnography explores how particular musical sounds afford particular ways of being appropriated in the moment of their reception, including certain embodied responses and cognitive states. She considers music an “affordance structure,” an aesthetic resource providing users “a place or space for ‘work’ or meaning and lifeworld making ... a workspace for semiotic activity, a resource for doing, being and naming the aspects of social reality, including the realities of subjectivity and self ... ” (40; see also DeNora 1986). Importantly, music’s power—what DeNora calls its “semiotic force”—cannot be specified in advance of its reception by users, being “contingent upon the circumstances of music’s appropriation ... the product of ‘human-music interaction’” and “is constituted reflexively, in and through the practice of articulating or connecting music with other things” (2000: 33). Seeing music as an affordance structure, DeNora argues, is a crucial starting point for exploring how music’s power is generated in real-time interactions between specific sounds and human users, becoming a resource for interpreting, experiencing, and organizing social life (2000: 40-45).

Although DeNora (1986, 2000) acknowledges music’s semiotic nature, she notes that traditional semiotic approaches that attempt to read music’s powers through objective structures independent of listener reception fail to adequately account for music’s “semiotic force,” especially its processual dimensions. Because “human-music interactions” are individually and culturally specific, ethnography is essential (2000: 21, 38). Turino (1999, 2008, and 2014) has convincingly argued that despite the general aversion to semiotic theories in contemporary ethnomusicology, Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotics resonate strongly with the discipline’s insistence on ethnography and phenomenological understandings of musical affect (2014: 186). In Peircian semiotics, unlike Saussurian-inspired structuralism, the effect of a sign (musical or otherwise) cannot be specified before its reception by perceivers. Instead, its power rests in the specific ways (past and present) that living beings engage with the sign (2014: 188-189). However, the premise of “semiotic realism” is crucial in Peirce’s theories: the effects of the sign are indeed partially determined by the objective world, which influences “the capacity

of something to operate as a sign” and “our perceptions and experiences in the world” as mediated through signs (2014: 192). In Peircian semiotics, the manner in which perceiving beings connect a sign to an object is crucial in understanding the sign’s effect in the moment of its perception as well as its social potentials (Turino 2014: 192).¹⁴

For these reasons, I suggest that Turino’s Peircian framework dovetails with DeNora’s formulation of the reflexive constitution of music’s power through both the affordances of objective musical structures and individually and culturally specific “human-music interactions” that connect musical sounds with other musical and extra-musical things (DeNora 2000: 33). Turino’s framework (with its admittedly idiosyncratic vocabulary inherited from Peirce) provides a powerful and compact conceptual tool kit for exploring “human-music interactions” in a way that clarifies, rather than flattens or obscures, how musical sounds take on their powers.

In the next section, I use Turino’s Peircian framework to demonstrate how the local Gaspé Sound and various mass-mediated fiddle sounds jointly provide local and diasporic community members an affordance structure for the experience of both embodied and emotional states and ultimately, their larger social reality. I begin with a brief review of Turino’s theory, encouraging readers to consult his extensive treatment in separate publications (1999; 2008; 2014).

Turino’s Peircian Framework—In Brief

Turino describes Peirce’s three basic sign types—the “icon,” “index,” and “symbol.” Musical icons work through resemblance between the sounds (musical signs) and the objects they denote for listeners (1999, 2008: 6-7, 2014: 192-195). The sound of the bass drum passages in modern renderings of Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, for example, are often interpreted iconically as listeners hear resemblance between the sound of the bass drum and the sound of cannon fire.¹⁵ The musical index works through co-occurrence between the musical sign and the denoted object (2008: 8-9, 2014: 195-197). For example, when hearing a song that we heard years ago on a first date and then associating the song with this event and reflecting upon or perhaps even re-experiencing the emotions we then felt, we are interpreting this song (the sign) indexically.

Although Peirce never finished his conceptual description of the “symbol,” Turino has taken up the task and defines what he has recently begun calling the Peircian- or P-symbol as the ascription of musical meaning through

linguistic definition and nominal social agreement about this definition; further, Peircian-symbols necessarily involve a level of generality about the object being described and thus are removed from specific, lived instances of the sign (2014: 197-201). When we read musicological scholarship that has used historical methods and academic discourse to locate ostensibly transcendental “meanings” encoded in the sounds of a composition, irrespective of any specific performance and reception of the composition, we are interpreting and experiencing the music through Peircian-symbols (2014: 199-200, 2008: 10-11).

Turino believes that most people experience musical meanings through icons and indices rather than Peircian-symbols (1999: 228, 2008: 13), and that the affective potential of musical signs “is inversely proportional to the level of mediation, generality, and abstraction” (1999: 234). In this way, musical icons and indices, which directly “tie us to actual experiences, people, and aspects of the environment” are “invested with greater feeling and intimacy” (2008: 16) than Peircian-symbols, which are the most mediated of the three Peircian sign types.

Musical Affordance, Iconicity, and the Body

Brian Morris and I have often contemplated how local step dancers may have interacted with formal features of the Gaspé Sound like hooks, stutters, foot percussion, and little tunes:

Brian: You know, those old tunes are funkier.

Glenn: The melodies don’t go predictable places.

Brian: It’s almost—they loop.

Glenn: Your dad’s tunes are more up and down.

Brian: Yeah, they’re more rhythmic. They’re more rhythmic instead of melodic, because the dancers loved that. I mean there’s syncopated, off-beat stuff. Man, it’s good for dancing. (Interview, July 12, 2011)

On another occasion, Brian stated that little tunes “were perfect for step dancers because they could easily remember the simple melody and rhythmic patterns” (Email communication, March 3, 2013). Here, Brian suggests that step dancers latch on to formal and rhythmic structures (shorter tunes that seem to loop and syncopated, off-beat rhythms) that afford them the transition to extended periods of intense step-dancing, something he often witnessed at

house parties hosted by his parents and by his uncles and aunts in Douglstown (Interview, July 12, 2011).

Although community members seem to appreciate a wide range of fiddle music styles, my playing experiences suggest that not all fiddle sounds equally afford them the movements of square dance and step dance, two core activities associated with fiddle music in the area. For example, although listening audiences appreciate the Southern Appalachian tunes I play during house visits, dancers seem to struggle to “feel the beat” and confidently orient their dance movements within the music. Although Southern tunes have a long history of use for square dancing in the United States, and despite sharing common meter (cut-time), bipartite reel or “rant” form (AABB), and various melodic/harmonic structures, these tunes do not appear to seamlessly afford the same kinds of dance movements known by community members. Why might this be the case?

DeNora proposes the concept of “musical latching” to explore how musical structures afford particular embodied states (2000: 85-88). Here, listeners consciously or unconsciously configure their bodies in order to “fit in” with the contours of their sonic environment and achieve a feeling of “embodied security”—a state where they can locate and anticipate aspects of their sonic environment (83-85). Locating sonic patterns is crucial in the latching process. In music, “pattern is engendered through the regularized relationships between tensions and resolutions, sound and silences ... and rhythmic arrangements over time that afford expectancy” (85). Despite some similarities between the local and mass-mediated fiddle sounds historically appropriated by dancers in the Douglstown area, and the Southern tunes I occasionally play there, there are differences that I speculate may explain the apparent difficulties dancers have in “latching on” to Southern tunes. I consider two rhythmic aspects.

First, a characteristic feature of many Southern Appalachian fiddle styles is the tendency to anticipate the downbeat slightly (by about a 16th note) with a strongly accented down bow when beginning a two-bar phrase. Many Southern fiddlers consider this essential in providing that ineffable rhythmic quality commonly called “drive” that provokes and sustains square dancers’ movements. Second, Southern fiddling frequently uses a strong backbeat, accenting beats two and four (see also Burman-Hall 1975; Wells 2003).¹⁶ These rhythmic features are absent in the local Gaspé Sound that I’ve explored and, largely for that matter, in the diverse constellation of mass-mediated fiddle genres (generally, various old-time Anglo- and Franco-Canadian styles) that have been locally appropriated. Rather, in what we might call “Northern” fiddle genres, musicians seem to construe “drive” rather differently, through

a very precise and regularly located downbeat and limited use of backbeat emphasis (see also Hennessy 2008; Spielman 1972). These two modes of drive, I suggest, create vastly different senses of rhythmic expectancy for dancers, thereby affording quite different forms of embodied musical latching, despite other sonic similarities.¹⁷

As the music unfolds in real time, it is not only the affordances of specific musical structures that govern how easy it is to “latch on.” Considering the historic ubiquity of local and mass-mediated Canadian fiddle music at square dances in Douglstown and its environs, also at play is what DeNora describes as larger “collaborative dimensions” (2000: 96), a history of use where dancers have reflexively appropriated certain sounds to fit with their movements.¹⁸ Following the work of memory theorists (see Connerton 1989, 2009; Nora 1989; Schacter 1987), I suggest that the repeated modes of embodied latching onto specific musical structures have become sedimented in the dancers’ procedural (embodied) memory.¹⁹ Thus, latching on to Southern fiddling at a square dance in Douglstown might prove doubly difficult: If dancers cannot use decades of procedural memory work to seamlessly connect previously executed motions with familiar unfolding sounds, they may have to listen elsewhere, possibly in unpredictable places, to find new structures to latch on to—structures which in turn, might afford quite different movements to those they know best. If sufficiently frustrated when I’m playing a Southern tune, I’ve come to fully expect that the dancers will request that I just play “Saint Anne’s Reel” for the next twenty minute square set.²⁰

I propose that DeNora’s idea of musical latching can be interpreted as a two-stage process that crucially begins as a form of “kinesic iconicity,” whereby bodies come to resemble various aspects of their sonic environment (Turino 1999: 234). Such culturally situated modes of musical latching, however, are bolstered by the dancers’ embodied procedural memories, which leverage aspects of repetition to predict where both their movements and the music are going, and orient their motion within this dialectic. Repetition manifests on numerous sonic and embodied levels, but consider, for example, the reuse of pre-established figures and routines for square dancing, the recurrence of tunes like “Saint Anne’s Reel” considered especially good for dancing, and the repeating idiomatic melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic devices across the repertoire. In that such sounds and movements and the ways of linking them together seem habitual for dancers, the development of their embodied procedural memory can be considered a simultaneously iconic and indexical process: as bodies interpret the present sonic environment through *resemblance* with previous sonic and embodied experiences, they leverage the iconicity between the past and present; when dancers harness previous *co-occurrences*

between consecutive dance figures to predict where their bodies are going, they are interpreting their sonic environment indexically (see Turino 2014: 196, 208).

Turino describes icons as fundamental signs of identity: an important social potential of icons, whether sonic or kinesic, is to identify insiders and outsiders and therefore construct core ideas about the boundaries of social identities. In a place like Douglastown, where music and social dance were once commonplace, Turino tells us that sonic and kinesic icons take on a particularly strong power because, during these occasions, such signs were the focal point of attention (1999: 234). This may explain why today, step-dancing and especially square dancing are considered by many to be the symbols *par excellence* of the local Irish cultural identity and, consequently, why organizers and participants at the annual Irish Week go to great lengths to ensure these can occur in multiple contexts.²¹

Musical Visiting and Indexicality in Douglastown and its Diaspora

Norma McDonald (Fig. 4) was born in Douglastown in 1940 and has lived and made music there throughout her life as a singer and guitar player and, more recently, a fiddler. When I asked her why the older people in Douglastown love the fiddle so much, she replied:

... they visited more that time. Most every house had a fiddle in it, you know? They always had a fiddle, an old organ, or a piano. And people would gather together and visit in the evenings and they would make music. It was a lot of that in my time, back in the 40s and 50s, it was *all* that ... It's changed so much. Well, now ... you have to be almost invited somewhere to go there now, you can't just drop in like you used to years ago. (Interview, March 1, 2013)

Norma describes the tenor of the daily visits her family received from the McGregor twins of L'Anse-a-Brillant:

And they would come down every day at dinner time and—from the mill at their hour off, bring their lunch with them, and sit down and play their fiddle for us. And we enjoyed that so much. Mummy would have a pot of soup on the stove and she would give them a bowl of soup too. But they would play the fiddle all during



Fig. 4. Norma McDonald. Douglastown, Québec. August 2012. Photograph by the author.

their dinner hour. And the children at home would like that too, because my—mummy was musical too and my dad played the violin himself. (Interview, March 1, 2013)

Spontaneous and informal musical visits figure prominently in many musical memories shared with me by community members. Alfred Thompson was born in Douglastown in 1941 and has lived in the Toronto area since the 1970s. When I asked him to broadly describe his musical experiences growing up, he immediately recalled his visits with brothers Joe and Charlie Drody:

We used to go by Joe Sr.'s, Mother and I, going to visit her cousin in the second concession and we'd pass right beside their door ... And he, Mr. Joe ... he would be maybe sawing wood, he might be doing carpenter work, he may have been out in the farm with the potatoes, or working with his horse, or whatever. And she'd say to him: "Joe, do you think you could come in and play me a tune." And he'd stop for a little bit and he'd say, "Well, Mary, yeah I guess I could." ... So he would drop whatever he was doing and

he'd come in and he'd play her maybe two, three tunes and he'd go out about his business and we'd leave [laughs], on our business, you know? And he'd never, he'd never say no.... That's Mr. Joe. And now his brother, Charlie ... we were actually next field to them ... we used to go down to, Uncle Charlie's we called him, every Mardi Gras ... And Mardi Gras all the villagers ... around the town would dress with masks on. At that time it wouldn't be bought masks, it would be maybe a pillow case or something and we'd cut the eyes out of it, that kind of thing. And we'd dress up, you'd never put on your clothes you wore everyday because people would recognize that.... Now you're talking about 20, 25 below zero. And of course we'd go down to Uncle Charlie's because everybody came in there, "oh, Mr. Drody, can you play us a tune?" and he'd put on his shoes, and he'd play the violin, and *every*, every Mardi Gras there were at least three or four step dancers would dance, you know? Now they came in with snow on their boots and, you know, black boots. And his hardwood floor, you know the next day, would not have [been in] real good condition. But that was always a laugh. And the Mi-Carême ... which came about in three weeks, in the middle of Lent roughly, it would be the same thing again. (Interview, March 3, 2013)

Both Norma and Alfred point to a way of sharing music in the area where neighbours would informally drop by for a bit of music both in everyday and specific ritual contexts. The ubiquity and flexibility of musical visiting in Douglstown, I suggest, has contributed to what Turino calls "semantic snowballing": sounds acquiring new layers of indexical meanings through reuse in various settings. Semantic snowballing allows these sounds to "condense great quantities and varieties of meaning" rooted in multiple dimensions (e.g., interpersonal, aural, tactile, affective, etc.) of the visits each person experienced (1999: 235).

An important consequence of semantic snowballing through musical visiting is the production of senses of place (see Cohen 1995; Feld and Basso 1996). Philosopher Edward S. Casey's emphasizes the interaction between body, place, and motion in the production of senses of place with a place's power partially found in its dynamism—its "encouragement of motion in its midst" (1996: 23, 24, 36-38). In many musical visits, when step-dancing or square dancing occurred, the places were both especially *motive* and *emotive* as visitors' bodies latched on to their sonic and social environments in order to orient their movements. Irrespective of whether dancing occurred, Alfred and



Fig. 5. Joe Drody Sr. Douglastown, Québec.
Courtesy of Debbie Sams, used with permission.

Norma both describe musical visits as events where interpersonal bonds were shared through eagerly anticipated music and neighbourly dialogue, creating a place of heightened emotional connection for those present. Keith Basso argues that it is on occasions of “focused thought and quickened emotion that places are encountered most directly, experienced most robustly, and ... most fully brought into being” (1996: 54). The production of place in such moments resonates with Turino’s description of the experience of Peircian “Secondness,” where bodies and thoughts react directly to the dimensions (social, physical, sonic, etc.) of their immediate environment through icons and indices, rather than the generalities

and abstractions of Peircian-symbolic thought (2014: 205-210; see also 1999: 248-249).²²

The centrality of motion in Casey’s framework for producing senses of place also includes moving *between* places (1996: 23-24). He claims that “we also dwell in the intermediate places, the interplaces of travel—places which, even when ... merely traversed, are never uneventful” (39). Musical visiting necessarily involved this type of motion before arriving at and after leaving the place of a musical visit. Sarah Cohen (1995) describes the embodied production of senses of place achieved by the physical experience of one’s environment through long-distance travel and walking. In particular, the “more repetitive movements such as day-to-day journeys” can “have a deep impact upon individual and collective memory and experiences of place, and upon emotions and identities associated with place” (443). Because one explicit purpose of musical visits in the Douglastown area was to either encounter or provide fiddle music, I suggest that the senseful journeys themselves make up layers in the accumulation of affective indices pointed to by fiddle music, something Alfred’s reflections on his musical visiting suggest.²³ Importantly for this discussion, musical visiting has continued in expatriate Gaspesian

cultural life since the Second World War in diasporic hubs like the Montréal and Toronto areas. During the 1950s and 60s, Brian Morris remembers cars full of Gaspesians living in Montréal that would make the hour-long drive to his parents' country farm on weekends and, upon arriving unannounced late at night, would wake his parents so they could dance to his father's music (Interview, July 12, 2011). Brigid Drody and her husband frequently made the 12-hour drive from their home south of Montréal to her sister's cottage in Haldimand (across the river from Douglstown), arriving around 10 p.m. for a few hours of music and dancing followed by a few hours of sleep before driving back early the next morning so her husband could return to work in the afternoon (Interview, June 13, 2013).

In this way, we can see how the social realities of this increasingly diasporic community, by requiring greater investments of time, distance, and logistics to reach the site of a musical visit, might serve to thicken the semantic snowball while simultaneously deepening the connections between the sound of fiddle music and the embodied senses of the places (and interplaces) indexed through a musical visit. It bears emphasizing that with respect to the production of musical affect, fiddle music didn't just happen to be there during musical visits. Rather, any given co-occurrence of sound, people, and places required collaborative labour (including travel) among those present, which, following Connerton (2009) and DeNora (2000), I suggest significantly contributes to fiddle music's power in their social life.²⁴ Indeed, DeNora might argue that the great lengths people have gone to attend to fiddle music through musical visiting is crucial in building the music's semiotic power as sounds, people, and places are reflexively brought together across increasingly greater distances (2000: 41-42).²⁵

Locating Iconicity: Local and Mass-Mediated Fiddle Sounds

Both Norma and Alfred were born just after Don Messer began his broadcasts from CFCY in Charlottetown, PEI in 1939, and they both described Messer's weekly half-hour broadcast as a family ritual in Douglstown.

Glenn: Did a lot of people listen to Don Messer back home?

Alfred: Oh yeah, we used to too, at home with the radio, yeah.

Glenn: Did it bring the whole family together to listen or would it just be one person?

Alfred: Oh yeah. You'd put the radio on, everybody's sitting around the table to listen ...

Glenn: Would neighbours come in or was it just sort of a family thing?

Alfred: No, it was pretty much a family thing for Don Messer. Everyone with a radio practically would tune in for Don Messer ... (Interview, March 3, 2013)

When contemplating the next generation of fiddlers in Joe Drody Sr.'s family, Alfred offered an assessment of Joe Sr.'s son Johnny:²⁶

Alfred: Boy oh boy, he was a good fiddler! I think Johnny might have been, probably, I would give Johnny a shade maybe, of the better of them, of the three or four of them [his brothers and sisters]... Now sometimes Johnny would play a little lazier. You know, he didn't feel like playing maybe? But when he wanted to play, oh boy he was good! Played a lot like Don Messer, you know? ... Joe Sr., he loved Don Messer too, him. He used to play a lot of Don Messer's tunes, you know? ...

Glenn: I didn't know that. Okay.

Alfred: Oh yes, for sure. Loved Don Messer. They wouldn't miss Don Messer! On the radio there, [from] Charlottetown. Oh, for sure. Every week ... Charlie and Joe, both of them wouldn't miss that... Because those guys picked up a lot of their tunes off the radio, listening to Don Messer ... (Interview, March 3, 2013)

Alfred's description of Don Messer's multi-generational appeal in Douglstown and the incorporation of aspects of his music among local fiddlers highlights a significant cultural dynamic that occurred in many regional Canadian fiddle cultures (Rosenberg 2002). According to Rosenberg, Don Messer successfully consolidated his national appeal as a fiddler through careful management of repetition, innovation, and representation in his repertoire, technique, and commercial image. An important segment of his audience, and a group especially inclined to purchase his recordings and tune books, were local non-professional fiddlers across Canada and the northern United States (2002: 204). For the post-1930s generation who grew up with Messer's broadcasts in Douglstown, I agree with Rosenberg's general observation that his repertoire and aesthetic took on a basically canonical status; listeners and fiddlers often felt that he played the tunes correctly with regards to their melodic settings and overall aesthetic dimensions (2002: 201-202). Further, Messer's massive repertoire was central in putting him "in good stead" with local fiddlers who played mostly at home and who were drawn "to his

products for four decades” (204). In the Douglastown area, Messer enjoyed appeal among both the younger generation of fiddlers born after about 1930, who often sought to directly emulate his style and repertoire, and the older generation born in the late-19th and early-20th centuries (like Joe and Charlie Drody and Erskine Morris), who appropriated Messer’s music principally at the level of new repertoire.²⁷ Indeed, although I’ve gone to great lengths to meticulously learn both the local repertoire and the aesthetic I describe as the Gaspé Sound, listeners and older fiddlers in the community seem equally likely to request that I play a traditional Don Messer favourite like “Kiley’s Reel” as they are a local standard like “The Cockawee,” with full use of the stutter and the hook.

The appropriation of various aspects of mass-mediated fiddle sounds like Don Messer’s is another key site in constituting the fiddle’s affective power in Douglastown’s local and diasporic social life; one that I propose hinges on several forms of iconicity. It bears repeating Turino’s observation that perceiving iconicity in cultural expressions has a strong identity function, allowing humans to identify expressions and their practitioners as belonging to “us” or some “other.” It is reasonable to assume that both fiddlers and casual listeners in Douglastown perceived a nominal iconic likeness between their local culture of music and social dance and Messer’s mass-mediated representations. In this way, Messer’s music would have joined the pool of fiddle sounds used to interpret and experience significant aspects of their own musical and cultural identity. For example, as we saw with Alfred’s assessment of Johnny Drody, the perceived ability to play like Don Messer often serves as an evaluative criterion of a fiddler’s talent in the community.

With this in mind, we may question whether Messer’s sonic materials alone were enough to allow that first generation of local listeners to create the necessary iconic links to consider his sounds as fit for use as their “own.” To my ears, the structures I foregrounded in the Gaspé Sound are largely absent in Messer’s music: his melodies seldom hook or stutter, instead tending to sequentially flow through evenly articulated scales and arpeggios with sparing use of syncopation (reserved mainly for stock phrase endings). However, achieving an ethnographically grounded and in-the-moment account of the resemblances perceived by such early listeners’ between locally familiar sounds and Messer’s new, mass-mediated sounds is (it seems to me) an impossible task, not least because these moments happened over six decades ago. Since then, so many aspects of Messer’s sound have found a place in the lived experiences of local musical culture that to untangle these two broad aesthetic streams in listeners’ present-day perceptions also seems, for all practical purposes, impossible.²⁸

Thus at the level of purely sonic iconicity, what I can offer is necessarily speculative: Perhaps resemblances were located in sonic structures beyond those I identify in the Gaspé Sound. Certainly, a core group of late 18th- and 19th-century tunes ubiquitous across North American fiddle traditions (for example, “Soldier’s Joy,” “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” or “Rickett’s Hornpipe”) figured large in Messer’s repertoire. On a deeper structural level, there are also common stocks of melodic and harmonic content and the strong prevalence of the bipartite (AABB) cut-time reel form in North American fiddle repertoires. While any of these shared dimensions could have provided the necessary iconicity for local listeners and fiddlers to hear themselves in Messer’s music, it is likely that much of Messer’s music would have been quite novel, including his massive repertoire, the use of big-band orchestration, flat keys (Bb, F, and Eb), the lack of both drones and *scordatura* tunings,²⁹ and tune forms that were non-existent or rare in the late-19th and early-20th repertoire of the Douglstown area.³⁰ However, these novel dimensions were crucial in Messer’s appeal as several of the community’s remaining fiddlers have told me; it would therefore be a serious mistake to evaluate the successful local appropriation of aspects of Messer’s music solely on aspects of sonic resemblance.

Rosenberg proposes that Messer’s success depended on his ability to navigate a dialectic between novelty and familiarity (or innovation and repetition) at both musical and extra-musical levels (the latter, namely Messer’s explicit cultural contextualizations of his music) to ensure his music appealed to the local cultures encountering his sounds (2002: 199-203). Along with the sounds themselves, I think that extra-musical materials were a significant iconic resource for allowing local listeners to link Messer’s sounds to their own and eventually appropriate his music for their social life. Despite its tight orchestration and choreography, Messer carefully curated his image, discursively situating his music as both modern and simultaneously the stuff of informal maritime kitchen parties similar to the house parties and musical visits familiar to listeners in the Douglstown area (Rosenberg 2002: 202-203). Further, the deployment of mariner and lumberjack iconography and discourse likely resonated with the two forms of seasonal labour—the summer cod fishery and the winter lumber bush—that defined family and social life in the area until the 1960s (198).³¹ Turino’s examples (1999; 2008; 2014) do not explicitly deal with extra-musical resemblances as a key semiotic vehicle for perceiving musical iconicity. However, I feel this extension fits comfortably with his Peircian framework and his observation that we often process cultural phenomena iconically, seeking resemblances with phenomena from previous experiences to determine “where” something belongs, whether to us or some

Other. Similar to the process of genre formation described by Turino, where listeners use sonic resemblance to group distinct pieces of music together, extra-musical materials were likely a key resource for locating iconicity between local and mass-mediated fiddle sounds in the Douglstown area and in making a sort of conceptual adoption of Messer's music as their own.

What are some of the social implications of such hypothetical musical and extra-musical icons in community life? Norma and Alfred provide insights into how mass-mediated sounds come to be a resource for interpreting and experiencing their social reality. I asked Norma what she thinks about when she hears the sound of the fiddle:

It brings back memories there now to me of all the fiddlers that, I just go through their life and the kind of life they had and think of the hard times they had, you know? They were good times for those people because they never knew any better. They'd walk for miles and play the fiddle and work all day, they ... enjoyed that so much. (Interview, March 1, 2013)

Here, the sounds provide Norma space for general reflection on the lives of fiddlers she has personally known. Alfred gives some insights into how mass-mediated sounds in particular come to be a resource for interpreting and experiencing a very specific aspect of his social reality:

Glenn: When you hear fiddle music on the radio, does it bring back the same memories that listening to the Drodys does, or is it a little bit different?

Alfred: Oh no, it brings back, whenever you hear it, it brings back the music, for sure it does. Those are memories that stay with you.

Glenn: So it makes you think of growing up in Douglstown and all the times you spent with the Drodys?

Alfred: Exactly. Exactly. Those memories stay with you, you know, and for me anyway, the fiddle, whenever I hear it I think of those people right away.... Oh yeah, I can see them playing the old fellas, like, sittin' there playing, for sure. (Interview, March 3, 2013)

Because Messer's broadcasts clearly allowed Alfred and his family to structure and experience family relationships, my expectation was that mass-mediated fiddle sounds might first index the scenes and feelings of the moments when he

directly consumed Messer's music: together with his family, gathered around the table, with the feeling of eagerly tuning in to the weekly broadcasts. If not these direct contextual indices, then perhaps the sounds would index the show's various discursive and musical iconography, the sort of mental images that many listeners could perceive through a range of available sonic cues (these later reinforced visually when Messer began his Saturday night CBC television series in 1959). For Alfred, however, these mass-mediated sounds point right back to his experiences visiting Joe and Charlie Drody.

For both Alfred and Norma, I would not suggest that the locally rooted indices that arise first in their focal awareness preclude the eventual experience of other indexical or iconic connections—such as those I had expected or innumerable others—through semiotic chaining (see Turino 1999: 223).³² Rather, these are the thoughts that generally come *immediately* to mind when they hear fiddle music, whether mass-mediated or in person.³³ I suggest the privileged location of these indices in the semiotic chain derives from the motion- and emotion-laden nature of the sites of musical visits which, following Turino, imbues them with high degrees of Peircian “Secondness.” That is, these were places where people motively and emotively reacted with their immediate physical and social environment. According to Casey (1996), at such places—where both motions and emotions are deeply situated—robust senses of place are produced. Here, the place’s “hold is held” (25). Indeed, Alfred also spoke at length about how the musical generosity of two generations of Drody family musicians towards him is a significant dimension of the power of fiddle music in his life (Interview, March 3, 2013). Turino notes that “the emotional potency of an index is in direct proportion to the emotional potency of what the sign stands for” (2014: 196), and for Alfred, fiddle music largely stands for the Drody family and his experiences of their musical generosity during musical visits going right back to patriarchs “Mr. Joe” and “Uncle Charlie.” Norma, who has always lived in Douglstown, has a more heterogeneous set of experiences visiting and being visited by a large number of local fiddlers up to the present day, many with whom she developed close social and musical bonds. The layers of motion and emotion prevalent in both of their histories of musical visiting may then explain why, it is the thoughts and feelings tied to musical visits that so often occur first in their focal awareness when they hear fiddle music, local or otherwise.

From the perspective of musical affect, mass-mediated fiddle sounds seem to be iconically fused through musical and likely extra-musical resemblances to the fiddle sounds of neighbours that, in turn, strongly index a vast range of personal experiences with people and places they've profoundly known in the Douglstown area. While Alfred and Norma deeply appreciate the experience

of live fiddle music in the home, mass-mediated sounds provide a convenient semiotic vehicle for feelingfully re-experiencing cherished bonds of kinship and community life as opportunities for musical visits become increasingly uncommon in the face of continued outmigration, aging demography, and urbanization in the Douglastown area.

Conclusions: Icons, Indices, and Peircian-symbols in Cultural Revival

By considering the iconic fusion of local and mass-mediated fiddle sounds just described, I can return to the question posed at the outset of this article: why might an expert performance of traditional Irish repertoire from highly professional musicians not elicit the same enthusiastic response as a well-loved Canadian two-step during a festival celebrating Douglastown's Irish heritage? The simple answer is that most in the community have had limited or no engagement with the fiddle sounds generally classified as Irish.³⁴ However, having considered the specific experiences indexed by the iconic fusion of mass-mediated and local sounds in this paper, I hope to have shed some light on the subtleties of many crowd members' perceptual experiences that night under the tent. It is not enough that the music was discursively situated (Peircian symbols) in song introductions and festival promotional materials as being authentically Irish, "from the source" as it were, a discursive process Line Grenier (2001) calls "being named"; these discursively framed Irish sounds are largely outside of the sonic constellation in which so many in the community have invested both motion and emotion. Given Turino's claim that more generalized Peircian-symbolic meaning-making is less directly experienced by listeners, it is then not nearly so surprising what really pulls the crowd in (through iconic and indexical links to shared, local experiences) as opposed to what is appreciated with an interested, but more reserved, engagement. In a festival of Irish culture in Douglastown, a clichéd Canadian two-step or a local amateur francophone fiddler from down the coast can paradoxically boast an astonishing affective capital, much to the surprise of some first-time festival participants (myself included).

Locating the Irish Week as a pivotal institution in a local cultural revival currently taking place in Douglastown that seeks to build bridges between the "old" Douglastown of mostly anglophone and Irish heritage, the "new" mostly francophone Douglastown, curious summer tourists, and members of various traditional music scenes in Canada, it is interesting to ponder the ongoing musical and extra-musical semiotic work at the festival. Cultural

revivals necessarily rely on Peircian-symbols through overt linguistic discourse to explicitly select, describe, generalize, and appraise ostensibly representative cultural texts and their aesthetic dimensions (Livingston 1999; Handler 1988; Rosenberg 1991). The Douglstown Irish Week can be seen as a significant site in an ongoing revivalist discourse between various local and diasporic actors (and government funding agencies) about what constitutes the community's local Irish heritage, and possible actions that should be taken to revive this heritage in present-day social life. Considering the ongoing outmigration and aging of Douglstown's anglophone Irish population, it is reasonable to assume that during future iterations of Irish Week, musical experiences—whether of “faithful” interpretations of local tunes, or tunes which entered community life through commercial broadcasts and recordings, or the global Celtic music of featured “trad” bands from Montréal and Québec City—will be increasingly mediated through Peircian-symbolic discourse as musicians, lecturers, volunteers, and organizers seek to linguistically describe and frame them. This is not to preclude simultaneous or eventual “richer” semiotic experiences for participants through icons and indices, but rather to suggest that such Peircian-symbolic discourse will be a crucial factor in pulling people into the festival and allowing them to understand the area's cultural history.

At the same time, as a yearly ritual context for musical performances and a variety of intersubjective experiences, we can expect new indexical and iconic meanings—rooted in unfolding co-experience and divergent personal musical histories—will be produced for various participants. When I recently spoke with the professional Montréal-based musician, step dancer, and square dance caller Jean-François Berthiaume about his experiences as an instructor at the 2011 Irish Week where he first encountered this music and the people for whom it means so much, he told me that:

Ça m'a fait grandir de rencontrer les musiciens de part là-bas. J'ai même rencontré un calleur de Douglstown, nommée James Baird. Grâce à ce village, j'ai trois nouveaux sets carrés dans mon répertoire de danse. Des « squares » de Douglstown que j'ai appris lors de mon passage et j'ai aussi plusieurs faits de danse de la région.

(Meeting the musicians from there allowed me to grow. I even met a caller from Douglstown, named James Baird. Thanks to this village, I have three new square sets [dances] in my repertoire. The Douglstown squares that I learned during my trip and a few more facts about dance in the region.) (Email communication, May 5, 2015)

Part of this growth, as he described it in an earlier conversation, also came from seeing certain similarities between the challenges faced by anglophones in Douglstown in the late 20th and 21st centuries and those faced by francophone Quebecers in an era of aging population, urbanization, and global culture—challenges that have shaped his musical and pedagogical activities promoting Québécois music and dance at home and abroad. What’s more, he was surprised by the close resemblance between the music and dance of local anglophone fiddlers and that found elsewhere in the province among its francophone citizens (Personal communication, April 18, 2015). For Douglstown, then, I see the various levels of musical and extra-musical iconicity between the local traditional musical culture and that found elsewhere in Québec as extremely fortuitous: as participants hear and see parts of themselves in the sounds, movements, and social contexts of others, easy opportunities arise for new affective intersubjective experiences. As diverse festival participants collaborate to embed new layers of meaning for experiencing Self and Other through sound, motion, and emotion, possibilities emerge for an increasing voice for an often invisible (and inaudible) rural minority-language community in regional and provincial culture discourses³⁵ and for a new lease on life for its local musical culture. 🍁

Notes

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1. Defining who constitutes a “diaspora” is a contentious subject in recent scholarship. Clifford (1994) shows how the language and claims to diaspora are constantly shifting in new global contexts and the enforcement of an “ideal type” (e.g., modelled on the historic Jewish diaspora) is not sufficiently flexible to deal with contemporary cultural phenomena. Clifford notes that the language of diaspora is “increasingly invoked by displaced peoples who feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home. This sense of connection must be strong enough to resist erasure through the normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing” (310). This language and felt-sense are commonly expressed by both francophone and anglophone out-migrants from the Gaspé Peninsula. See also Element (2003) for more on the language and experience of migration of anglophone Gaspesian youth.

2. Pierre Schryer is renowned in both in old-time Canadian fiddle circuits and more recently as an Irish-style fiddler. His accolades include Canadian Open Fiddle Champion, Canadian Grand Masters Fiddle Champion, Violoneux Championnat, and North American Irish Fiddle Champion (Schryer, 2015).

3. In Patterson (2014), I describe the “Gaspé Sound” in greater detail. Re-presenting this musical analysis in a condensed version here will help readers unfamiliar with the music appreciate key insights in the following section.

4. This area—sometimes colloquially called “Land’s End” or “*Bout du monde*”—covers much of the present-day administrative regions known as *la Côte-de-Gaspé* and *du Rocher-Percé*.

5. Douglstown lost its political autonomy in 1971 when it was amalgamated with the Town of Gaspé (Leggo 2013). For this reason, current census data gives no official language statistics for each village belonging to the new amalgamated municipality.

6. What is often called “lilting” among anglophone and Gaelic-speaking traditions or *turlutte* among North American francophones was simply called “singing the tunes” in Douglstown—see also Jutras (2003). Similarly, what is referred to as foot percussion or *podorhythmie* is simply called “stamping (or stomping) the feet” in local practice.

7. Curiously, some of Forsyth’s consultants also used the “stutter” adjective for this technique.

8. Many mass-mediated anglophone and francophone Canadian fiddle styles have a somewhat predictable use of strong down beat quarter notes at key points in the melodic development of bipartite (AABB) reels and jigs.

9. There are relatively few living fiddlers active in the anglophone Gaspesian community or its diaspora today (almost certainly less than a dozen). Nonetheless, these two techniques are still noticeable, especially in performances of local repertoire. Brian Morris is an example of a guitarist who has incorporated these two techniques into his bluegrass-influenced flatpicking style (see Patterson 2014).

10. This observation is based on a combination of oral testimony by older players who learned from fiddlers born in the last quarter of the 19th century and the repertoire that community members have safeguarded on home recordings since the late 1950s. Mass-mediated music from celebrity fiddle players like Don Messer, whose influence is discussed at length later, seem to have ushered in a mild penchant for jigs, waltzes, two-steps, and polkas (among other novel dance forms) among local musicians and listeners, although a preference for reels still predominates today.

11. This descriptor seems to accord well with the local practice of describing music by simply “calling things what they are,” using literal descriptions like “stamping your feet” for seated foot percussion and “singing the tunes” for lilting.

12. Local lore suggests this tune was composed by a fiddler from a nearby community (possibly Fred Dumas of Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie) to imitate the call of the cockawee, a colloquial term for the long-tailed duck, a species of sea bird that

used to winter on the Bay of Gaspé and was somewhat of a delicacy in other villages (Douglas Community Centre 2014; Personal interview with Cyril DeVouge, Brigid Drody, and Brian Morris, May 22, 2010).

13. I don't credit their responses to any virtuosity on my part and, in truth, I was still a novice with the style and repertoire, something I'm painfully made aware of now as I re-listen to the recordings I made during these visits.

14. Peirce invented the word "interpretant" to denote the physical, emotional, and cognitive states that are (often simultaneously) engendered when a sign is perceived. An interpretant can be understood to include what many call variously the "meaning," "interpretation," or (as I do) the "effect" of a sign (Turino 1999: 224, 2014: 202). The idea of "interpretant" undermines several dichotomies (e.g., mind-body, subject-object, emotional-intellectual, etc.) that hinder our understanding of the fluidity of perception and ways of being-in-the-world (Turino 2014: 203).

15. Tchaikovsky didn't intend for listeners to make the iconic connection: his original score called for the use of actual cannons to be fired during the open-air performances.

16. Both observations are, of course, large generalizations based primarily on my own experiences with Southern fiddle styles through archival recordings and in the old-time revival scene at Canadian and American festivals and music camps. Distinctions between "Northern" and "Southern" fiddle styles are not unproblematic, both historically and especially in the age of 20th- and 21st-century mass-media.

17. This speculation could certainly be bolstered with more extensive ethnographic work with community members, especially dancers. I'm nonetheless inspired by DeNora's approach (2000: 75-108) and contemplate the affordance of sonic structures by considering what happens when the articulation between moving bodies and sound seems laboured or is halted.

18. Square dancing in Douglstown proper took place in private homes and at improvised outdoor dance platforms on different properties (so-called "picnic dances").

19. Procedural memory is a type of implicit (i.e., non-conscious, non-declarative) memory for the execution of routine physical tasks and is developed through repetition of such tasks. Unlike declarative memory ("knowing that") it can be thought of as "knowing how." The literature is vast, but see Schacter (1987). In Brinkhurst's dissertation (2012) on proactive archiving with London's Somali community, she suggests that individuals' procedural music-body memories involving music used regularly in specific domestic activities pre-migration are often more robust and more easily rearticulated than declarative memories for diasporic communities (168-171).

20. "Saint Anne's Reel" is perhaps Canada's most ubiquitous fiddle tune and one that Douglstown square dancers know exceptionally well and seem to never tire of hearing.

21. For example, festival organizers ensure that dancing can occur during staged fiddlers' evenings, at informal after-show get-togethers, and through formal

workshop instruction. When the festival performances took place under a large tent, a dance floor was always constructed in front of the stage; when the performances were moved to the nearby parish hall, a dance platform was erected right outside the side entrances so that off-program, impromptu square dances could migrate there.

22. See Turino (2014: 191-192, 203-213) for an extensive description of the Peircian states of “Firstness,” “Secondness,” and “Thirdness.”

23. Besides the Mi-Carême and Mardi Gras rituals described by Alfred, many community members would return from Murdochville (a mining town in the peninsula’s interior) for the annual St. Patrick’s Day concerts in Douglastown which always featured fiddling, step dancing, and popular Irish and country music. Other consultants have described a panoply of forms of musical visiting along the everyday/ritual spectrum. These visits were shaped by factors including individual preference (a favourite local fiddler for example), expressions of family kinship and social affiliation, labour patterns, and geographic and transportation constraints. Musical visiting included informal visits to a fiddler’s home to do some step dancing, dropping in during a house party, and going to both “picnic dances” and “hall dances.” See Various Artists (2014); Patterson and Risk (2014); Patterson (2014); and Risk (2013, forthcoming).

24. Connerton proposes that labour (and especially collaborative labour) makes places and objects memorable. Without seeing or being part of the labour in our immediate surroundings, our experience of place comes to have an objective, ahistorical patina of shallow affect (2009: 42). I feel his observation extends well into the realm of aesthetic materials such as music in a place like Douglastown.

25. The sound of the fiddle continues to gain power: In Patterson (2014), I describe the great distances and preparations made by diasporic Gaspésians who yearly congregate at the “Gaspé Tent” during the Fiddle and Stepdance Festival in Pembroke, Ontario.

26. Joe Drody Sr. and his wife Pearl Grant had ten children. Six children learned fiddle although it is most specifically associated with brothers Johnny, Joseph, and Anthony. Johnny was also proficient on the guitar and mandolin. Brigid is known primarily as a rhythm guitarist for fiddlers while her sister MaryEllen was best known for singing Irish and country songs.

27. Don Messer performed in Douglastown’s parish hall in the 1940s and after his show, visited Charlie Drody’s house where the two musicians played together in the parlour while various local residents packed in to listen and dance (Various Artists 2014).

28. As opposed to non-musicians, the few remaining traditional musicians I have met in this community are better equipped with the necessary (Peircian-symbolic) language for perceptually distinguishing between what I refer to as the Gaspé Sound and Don Messer’s mass-mediated style (see Turino 1999: 248-249).

29. For much of the local repertoire in the keys of D and A, the A-D-A-E and A-E-A-E *scordatura* tunings were used respectively. Older players like Erskine

Morris also used these tunings in their settings of tunes learned from commercial sources which were almost invariably recorded in standard violin tuning (G-D-A-E).

30. These novel tune forms in Messer's music would have included 6/8 time jigs, two-steps, foxtrots, and even waltzes all of which—to our knowledge—were rare or non-existent in the repertoire of 19th- and early-20th-century fiddlers from the Douglastown area. Many local musicians have told me that the older repertoire was, for all intents and purposes, composed of reels and very few, if any, jigs and waltzes. My archival work with the community seems to confirm this: the repertoire of players born before about 1930 shows the preponderance of duple-time reels and to a lesser extent, a body of triple-meter reels (sometimes called “brandys” in Québec). Despite the Irish ancestry of the community, and unlike other regions of Québec or the Maritimes, 6/8 time jigs, which are so often attributed to Irish influence, appear to have been absent in the late-19th- and early-20th-century repertoire. Oral testimony and textual records do not provide a sense of what the local repertoire was like in the Douglastown area before the last quarter of the 19th century (when several of my research participants' parents and neighbours were born).

31. Before becoming “The Islanders” in 1939, Messer's first radio ensemble was the “New Brunswick Lumberjacks,” which featured his principal male vocalist, Charlie Chamberlain, a former lumberjack (Rosenberg 2002: 191, 198).

32. Turino describes semiotic chaining as a process where the experiential effect (“interpretant”) of linking a sign and its object becomes a sign for another object and produces yet another effect, *ad infinitum*. In our interview, after my first question when I asked her why older people in Douglastown love the fiddle so much and after her initial generalized observation (Peircian-symbols) about the ubiquity of visiting, Norma then proceeded for five minutes through a range of specific indices associated with different neighbours with whom she encountered fiddle music, then through specific family and neighbours with whom she had had singing parties (Interview, March 1, 2013).

33. I am not sure if mass-mediated Southern fiddle styles bring forth the same range of indexical associations for Norma and Alfred to the same extent that mass-mediated Canadian fiddle music does.

34. Fiddle music typically defined as Irish includes, for example, the early- and mid-20th-century commercial recordings of Irish traditional musicians, commercially released field recordings, or the post-1960s Irish “trad” ensembles. Despite multiple expressions of Irish identity in Douglastown, local fiddle music since at least the late 19th century shows greater resemblance with that found in Québec and l'Acadie compared with that found in Ireland in terms of repertoire, structure, and rhythmic and melodic contours. Pinning down musical origins is a tempting but notoriously tricky affair as Nettl has discussed (1983: 262-264). Nonetheless, considering fiddling in the upland South, folklorist Alan Jabbour suggests that, despite conventional wisdom, many “New World” fiddle styles might be better thought of as

“cultural cousins” rather than direct descendents of the instrumental dance music of Ireland, Scotland, England, and France (Jabbour 2001).

35. The CD project *Douglastown: Music and Song from the Gaspé Coast* initiated by the Douglas Community Centre (and on which Laura Risk and I worked as co-producers) was awarded the 2014 *Prix Mnémo* by the Centre Mnémo for a work deemed remarkable in the research and documentation of music, dance, or folktale in Québec (<http://www.mnemo.qc.ca/spip/les-prix-mnemo/article/le-prix-mnemo-2014-musique-et>). A recent community centre initiative to save and repurpose Douglastown’s Holy Name Hall was awarded the 2015 *Prix du Patrimoine (Action institutionnelle)* from the regional *Conseil de la culture de la Gaspésie*.

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