

## Local, global, and diasporic interaction in the Cape Breton dance tradition

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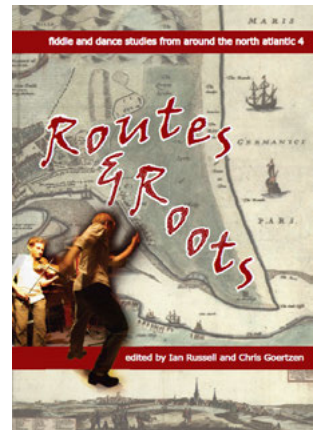
### Routes and Roots

Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 4

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## Local, global, and diasporic interaction in the Cape Breton dance tradition

MATS MELIN

The music and dance genres of Cape Breton Island off the coast of Nova Scotia in Maritime East Coast Canada are noted for their ability to adapt and change with the times.<sup>1</sup> This paper takes a look at some aspects of the island's dance traditions and how internal and external influences have been adapted and thus shaped the local 'dance-scape' as we find it today.

A dance tradition may be a constant 'work in progress' to use Spalding and Woodside's definition of tradition.<sup>2</sup> It is a constant and gradual transformation of material, depending on how the tradition is influenced by internal and external forces. The paradoxical concept of continuity and change in tradition and issues of selectivity, creativity, and ongoing reconstruction within tradition are discussed for example by Feintuch, Rosenberg, Handler and Linnekin, and Nilsson.<sup>3</sup> Even when popular thought dismisses change it still occurs. This paper will concentrate on the current Cape Breton dance traditions in Inverness and Cape Breton Counties, as influenced by the Scottish, French and to a lesser extent by the Irish immigrants. Of course other ethnic groups form part of the Cape Breton make up too, including first nation Mi'kmaq's, but are beyond the scope of this paper.

In 2010, a visitor to Cape Breton Island in search of local cultural expressions in the form of traditional music, song, and dance would find that certain areas of the island promote and celebrate their traditions more than others. It is predominantly the Scottish ethnicity, which alongside the Acadian (French) traditions, which are promoted by local media and the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism leaflets and adverts. Other ethnicities including the first nation Mi'kmaqs, the Irish, English, and Germans are visible but to a lesser extent. Inverness County of the island's west coast is the main area to experience the cultural expressions of the Scots and the Acadians.

It is important to note that some 20,000 mainly Gaelic-speaking Scots settled in Cape Breton between 1802 and 1840. During the late 1820s and early 1830s more Highland Scots emigrated to Cape Breton than to any other destination in British

North America. This was to have a dramatic effect on the population numbers of the island, which increased from about 2,500 in 1801 to almost 55,000 in 1851. Thus, as Hornsby points out, the ethnic composition of the population changed significantly:

By the early 1820s, Scots made up a majority of the population; by 1871, 50,000 of the 75,000 islanders were of Scottish origin, outnumbering by two to one the descendants of Acadian, Irish, and Loyalist families who had settled in Cape Breton before 1800. In large part, Cape Breton had become a Scottish island.<sup>4</sup>

Theirs was a 'folk culture transplanted', using Charles Dunn's phrase, summing up the nineteenth-century immigrant settlement pattern of Cape Breton which created areas of kin-based communities.<sup>5</sup> In fact, even today, many Cape Bretoners still live where their ancestors settled. As already mentioned, Scots Gaels dominated the island with a few tightly concentrated areas of Acadian and Mi'kmaq settlements. These communities were kept apart by the island's rugged geography. This preserved local traditions and kept outside influences largely at bay. Only the principal ports on the island experienced outside influences.

However, the official English-language-based culture of Nova Scotia would, over time, prove to be a strong assimilating force. The Scots Gaelic culture was very much an orally based one, in which music, song, dance, and customs would be handed down in this way for the next 150 years. For most Scots settlers the everyday language was Gaelic. The Roman Catholic Church helped preserve the Gaelic language, as their culture was mainly oral in contrast to the Presbyterians, who relied on Bibles written in English. With the Cape Breton Catholics' greater tolerance towards music and dance, the house-ceilidh culture where pipes and fiddle music could be heard alongside a rich song repertoire helped to preserve the old traditions.<sup>6</sup>

The Highland Scots dance tradition consisted, according to Frank Rhodes who visited Cape Breton in 1957 in search of links with the older forms of Scottish dancing, of a handful of Gaelic dance games, a selection of named solo dances, and a good number of different versions of four-handed and eight-handed reels. The reels used extempore close-to-the-floor percussive foot movements throughout. Most of the dancing, and the learning thereof, took place in the home. The Cape Breton houses, initially built by the settlers, offered more space for dancing than the old croft houses in Scotland had provided. Other indoor places for dancing were barns and schoolhouses until public halls started to be built in the early 1900s. Outdoor dancing took place on wooden bridges and on open-air dance floors at picnics and frolics in forest clearings during the summer months.<sup>7</sup> None of these dances required much space to be performed. The reels, with their alternating patterns of a recurring tightly danced figure (often a circle), interspersed with step dancing on the spot, were ideally suited for the venues at hand. The tradition was very much orally and visually based with only a handful of individuals, predominantly men, teaching

named solo dances such as ‘Seann Triubhas’, ‘Tulloch Gorm’, and ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’.<sup>8</sup> These particular solo dances generally had twelve steps of step patterns on the spot, mixed with some slightly wider movements, alternated with a ‘reel’ or a small circle, which finished with a percussive motif. They were mainly danced to fiddle accompaniment, and sometimes ‘jigging’ or ‘puirt-a-beul’ or mouth-music was used. The latter was more common for the Gaelic dance games.<sup>9</sup>

As with the solo dances, collected by Rhodes and Flett in the Hebrides in the 1950s, these dances were done in hard shoes so they could be heard as well as seen. Dancing was intimate in the home environment where all present took turns playing, dancing, and singing to keep the ceilidh, or ‘kitchen racket’, going. The dancing style was the same for both men and women.<sup>10</sup>

The Irish formed a much smaller segment of the population of Cape Breton and were never sufficiently concentrated to keep the old customs and their language alive.<sup>11</sup> However, Sheldon MacInnes argues that in areas where they were concentrated, such as North-East Margaree, they may have had an influence on the local square dancing and step dancing tradition.<sup>12</sup> Irish tunes are still very much present in the current dance music repertoire, in particular when playing for square dance jig-time figures. Irish reels, hornpipes, and waltzes also feature. The Irish music was, according to Doherty, absorbed and reshaped by the emerging and distinctive Cape Breton musical sound.<sup>13</sup>

Like the Scots, the Acadians’ culture was orally based with a rich musical tradition. Their religion, language, and family links provided them with a social cohesiveness. Even though the Acadian music and dance traditions today are a mixture of Scottish, Irish and French styles, it is worth mentioning that, according to Le Blanc and Sadowsky, early dance in the Cheticamp area consisted of song-dances or *rondes*; ‘*Le reel à quatre*’ and ‘*Le reel à huit*’, which are both based on cotillion and quadrille dance structures, and a progressive longways dance – *La patate longue*. These dances were referred to as ‘the old dances’ (*Les vieilles danses*) by Cheticamp residents and are no longer practised.<sup>14</sup>

On the subject of the mixing of traditions, piper John MacLean makes a strong statement regarding the Scottish communities:

I take great exception to the notion in Scotland [abroad] that the emigrants [heritage] somehow became watered down by mixing with French or Irish. In most places this did not happen. It is a falsehood. Perhaps there was more of this mixing after the 1950s when generations of people had been forced into the steel mill in Sydney and into the coal mines. Until that time, people went away to work but did not mix within or outside of their own communities.<sup>15</sup>

### **Local, Global, and Diasporic Interaction**

Arguably the biggest impact on the traditional Cape Breton dance scene as a whole was the introduction of square dances to the island at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. This coincides with the construction

of the first parish halls around the island. Up until this point, dancing had mainly featured at home, as previously outlined, and at schoolhouse dances and 'Box and Pie Socials',<sup>16</sup> which were particularly popular in the Scottish communities. The word 'Frolic' was used by the Scots for a day of communal work, for example, haymaking or barn raising, followed by socialising which incorporated music and dance. The once popular parish picnic has since the mid-1950s been transformed into daylong village festivals and concerts that are generally followed by an evening square dance. The Scottish concert at Broad Cove in July has now been going since 1957, shortly followed by others such as Glendale. Feast days and weddings are also popular occasions for dancing in all island communities.

The Cape Breton square sets, as they appear today, are the end product of a long process of 'creolizing' to use Manuel's phrase,<sup>17</sup> or changing conceptions, expressing local identity manifest in the attitude towards executing these dances. The dance form begins as a French modification of the longways English country dance; by the mid-eighteenth century a square form of this dance genre became known as the 'French' style (*contredanse française*). This French *contredanse* would evolve into the quadrille. An early form was called 'le cotillion' and appeared in England in the 1760s as the 'cotillion'.<sup>18</sup> Dancing masters modified this two-couple dance into a four-couple square formation. The French also adapted their tradition of stringing several *contredanses* together as 'potpourris', and by the early nineteenth century the French quadrille had acquired its structure of normally five figures, each originally danced to *contredanse* tunes. During the 1820s the formalization process continued and musicians began composing specific music for each figure, each now having acquired a name, and performed with a short pause in between each figure.<sup>19</sup>

By 1815, quadrilles had been introduced in London, Bristol, and Bath in England and shortly afterwards they appeared in Scotland.<sup>20</sup> They quickly became a standard dance of the upper classes during the Victorian era. They did, however, become popular with the middle and lower classes as well and spread across the European continent. In both Scotland and Ireland quadrilles soon transformed to local preferences of footwork, figuring, and choice of music. A named quadrille – 'The Lancers' – was invented in Ireland in 1817 and was popular in Europe by the 1850s.<sup>21</sup> This dance form soon spread to North America, where a new phase of adaptation began, but it only appears in Cape Breton around the early 1900s.

In Scotland, the quadrille became one of the most popular dances of both the urban ballroom and rural village hall due to its popularisation by dancing masters from the 1820s to the 1940s and 1950s, when it began to decline.<sup>22</sup> Unlike Ireland, where a multitude of different versions emerged, fewer named versions are found with the predominant favourites being the 'The Lancers', 'The Quadrilles' (mostly based on Payne's first set), and the Caledonians, which all morphed locally. Today very few Scottish communities dance quadrille-type dances, but some single quadrille figures, such as 'La Russe', have entered into the domain of Scottish country dancing.<sup>23</sup>

In Ireland, 'set dancing' survived the displeasure of the Gaelic League, who, in the context of an essentialist cultural nationalism, branded it foreign because of its origin and not a suitable dance form in the new nation state. At the time it was probably the most widespread and popular form of social dancing in Ireland. Irish set dancing saw two revivals in the second half of the twentieth century and has currently many local versions involving evolved figures and adapted percussive footwork to suit local and teacher preferences.<sup>24</sup>

By the 1830s and 1840s the quadrilles were evident in fashionable society in colonial capitals, such as Halifax and Charlottetown, but did not spread far outside these urban areas.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that John MacGregor compared the vigorous dancing he gave accounts of in Gaelic Nova Scotia with these 'fashionable' dances.<sup>26</sup> According to Kennedy, the quadrilles and 'The Lancers' did not spread to Cape Breton's rural *Gàidhealtachd* from these urban centres, but would be introduced to Nova Scotia in the early 1900s by 'returning émigrés showing off the latest fashions from Boston. It was one of many new imports from the United States, including waltzes and foxtrots'.<sup>27</sup> During the same period the shift in socialising, concerts, music, and dancing began to move first from the home to schoolhouses and then to the public halls, creating what sociologist Oldenburg termed 'third places'.<sup>28</sup> The change of context saw the demise of 'Scotch Fours' and 'Eight-handed Reels'; the latter, as mentioned above, being also under scrutiny of the Church. Again, according to Kennedy, the change in the dance repertoire did not occur suddenly or without protest from the older generation:

as [in] 1929, the *Toronto Star Weekly* featured an article on dancing in Glencoe Mills, an area with a particularly strong musical and dance tradition in Inverness County, indicating that there was still some tension associated with the new dance, with the older people heckling the younger square dancers by shouting 'fours' indicating their clear preference for the older more vigorous style dance<sup>29</sup>.

As the century progressed, the old dance forms were completely ousted by the square sets, apart from the occasional dancing of 'Scotch Fours' as both a social and a ceremonial dance, ('Wedding Reels' were common until post World War II), but more often performed as an occasional display dance. 'Scotch Reels' have today lost their original social function as an integral part of community interaction, particularly at house ceilidhs. Another change was that an admission fee was charged at the door for the square dances and, according to Rhodes, a small fee was also charged for each square set to be danced.<sup>30</sup>

To begin with, most quadrilles danced in Cape Breton had four to five figures, with a short break in between each, and only four couples to a set was the norm. Prompters, who were all men, kept control of the dancing in the public halls, something the earlier Reel dancing in the kitchen had not required. Prompters learned the calls orally or used 'calling cards', advertised in the local newspapers.

Some prompters were in possession of *Dick's Quadrille Call Book and Ballroom Prompter*, published in the USA in 1878 and republished in 1923.<sup>31</sup> This book was brought back by visiting relatives from Boston or Ontario or ordered through Eaton's Catalogue.<sup>32</sup> The particular sets of quadrilles that became popular, according to Rhodes, were 'The Quadrilles', 'The Lancers', 'The Caledonians', and 'The Saratoga Lancers'. The style of dancing changed too, from percussive footwork, as in the reels, to the use of sedate walking steps, waltz and polka steps. The prompters made sure there were 'four on the floor and no more' in each set and, as dancing had to be 'proper', youngsters were known to practice the figures in the back room until they were good enough to dance in the front room at house dances and 'kitchen rackets'.<sup>33</sup> The square dances spread from one community to the next and many figures came into use as a result of the prompters' preferences.

As was the case in Scotland and Ireland, the music used for the quadrille figures was modified locally. In Cape Breton, jigs and reels came to be favoured. The local Scottish repertoire of jigs was relatively small, so to meet the demand of the new dance form, jigs were imported from the Irish tradition and a considerable number of local compositions augmented the musicians' repertoire.<sup>34</sup> As reels had been one of the core tune types of the reel dancing, the style of playing them remained relatively unchanged. That the style of playing remained closer to the older forms shows that the new dance form was being 'Gaelicized', particularly in Inverness County, where the square sets were effectively and deeply absorbed into the local dance tradition. Even though the style of music took on a local flavour, only certain areas, such as Inverness County, embraced a transition of percussive footwork into the sets. The east side of the island generally kept the walking through the figures, while both jig and reel figures on the west side began to incorporate step dancing at least by the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>35</sup>

Round dances of the 1920s, such as foxtrot, polka, and waltz, were introduced by the mid-1940s and were danced to upbeat Canadian-Scottish music. By the 1950s square sets and round dances alternated on the dance floor, but gradually square sets were losing out to the round dances<sup>36</sup>. In the 1960s 'rock 'n' roll' dances for all ages, done to live bands from, for example, Inverness and Margaree entered the scene.<sup>37</sup>

The introduction of 'Pig 'n' Whistles' and a general decline in traditional fiddle music saw interest in square dancing drop. The idea of 'Pig 'n' Whistles' was based on a CTV show, running from 1967 to 1977, depicting a fictional British pub complete with drinking songs. The local Cape Breton version of 'Pig 'n' Whistles' combined dancing with the selling of alcohol. Rock 'n' roll dances served no alcohol, so the presence of a bar meant that the generations were separated at these social occasions. Both square and rock 'n' roll dances had all generations attending together. Pig 'n' Whistle's saw a good many fights and as they were all the 'rage' they were crowded affairs. This meant a segregation of the community where the youngsters did not go out to dances, but stayed at home watching television, as did many of the older people and married couples. For a time there was only the Thursday night

square dance in Glencoe still running, which mostly featured Buddy MacMaster on the fiddle.<sup>38</sup> Even though alcohol would be present at square dances, it was not for sale in the hall, and drinking and the occasional ensuing fight generally took place outside the hall.

By the 1970s interest in square dances had greatly declined, but by the late 1980s interest was revived after the resurgence of dance music in the mid-1970s. This occurred after the airing of the CBC TV programme *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, produced by Ron MacInnes in 1972.<sup>39</sup> The actual level of lack of interest in music and step-dancing, and the number of practitioners, put forward in the documentary was questioned by Marie Thompson.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the programme did provide the impetus for the formation of the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association. The character of the square set dancing also changed. The prompters could easily call from within a square set when dancing at a kitchen racket or a schoolhouse dance, but when calling for larger crowds in the halls they had to move up on the stage next to the musicians. To enable all to hear both the music and prompts clearly; amplification was beginning to be used at this point. From calling a multitude of different figures during an evening's dancing, the prompters felt the dancers were getting mixed up and started reducing the number of figures called.<sup>41</sup> This could partly explain why many communities narrowed down their square set repertoire to one or two sets only, consisting of 3–5 popular figures which would be repeated several times during the evening's dancing.

According to Rhodes, the footwork of the square dances was being greatly neglected too in the mid-1950s.<sup>42</sup> Some communities, in Inverness County in particular, had by the 1980s started using percussive step-dance steps in the square sets. The focus of the dancing was on the socialisation and inclusiveness of the dance to allow outsiders to join in. Sets were no longer prompted (which is still to this day lamented by some dancers and may be the reason why some dancers stay away, particularly in the summertime), and certain parts of each figure are being dropped to simplify the dance.

A good example is the current version of the 'Mabou Set', arguably the most common version of the square set in Cape Breton today. First of all, the sets are no longer danced by four couples only but are danced in large circles forming on the floor, which may split into smaller circles if it gets too unwieldy. The first figure only consists of the first and last parts, the middle parts having been eliminated, as these figures require four couples to work. The second figure has lost one middle part (the right hand and left hand wheel by the ladies in the centre), as it is difficult to dance with more than four couples in the set. The remaining sections are possibly danced for longer to make up for the loss. After the two jig figures, one reel figure has been lost altogether, while probably the most popular figure at present is the current third and last reel figure. One may observe that some couples will sometimes not join on the floor until the reel is played, thus indicating that the jig figures may be seen as merely a lead or warm up to the final figure in their eyes. Also the reel could be seen as more important as it is generally danced for much longer than the jig figures,



and it incorporates a great deal more step dancing than do the jigs.<sup>43</sup> The 'Mabou Set' is commonly repeated 5–7 times during an evening's square dancing. In its current simplified state, this set has become very inclusive in nature, and many summertime tourists and visitors 'returning home' flock to the most popular halls, such as Glencoe Mills, to partake.<sup>44</sup> The result is that many locals now stay away from the dances that become mobbed by visitors and only go to some particular hall, such as Brook Village and West Mabou, or only go dancing in the off-season during the winter months, even though fewer dances are held then. Another recent feature is that during the summer months some halls provide a run-through of the dance for visitors before the dance starts properly.

In other parts of the island, particular sets are still danced but perhaps less regularly than they used to be. In 2002, Jørn Borggreen, a Danish dance enthusiast, published a collection of sixteen local versions of distinctly different square sets from various parts of West and North Cape Breton.<sup>45</sup> Few other printed sources of local sets are available.

In some respects on the sidelines, but still part of the Cape Breton dance tradition, there exist the modern forms of Scottish Country Dancing and Highland Dancing as well as some forms of Irish dancing. Currently, only one Irish dance school exists and it is in Sydney.

While country dancing in mainland Scotland was being taught by dancing masters from the late seventeenth century, it was only introduced to the Highland and Island areas well after the main emigration period to Cape Breton and the rest of North America.<sup>46</sup> In most parts of mainland Scotland it had become a well established dance form by the late nineteenth century and in 1923 a national, now worldwide, organisation – Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) – was set up. Only in 1939 did Scottish Country Dancing appear in Cape Breton when introduced at the Gaelic College at St Ann's. The modern version of Highland Games Dancing appeared at the same time and place. Highland Dancing has, since the 1950s, become a predominantly competitive dance form, governed by official organisations, which have standardised the form worldwide. St Ann's Gaelic College invited teachers from Scotland and mainland Canada from the outset of its existence to promote these two 'Scottish' dance forms. Their appearance should be seen against the backdrop of a constructed Scottishness of the whole of Nova Scotia, and did lead to some locals doubting the Scottish connection with step dancing, for example.<sup>47</sup>

### **Tartanism**

The province of 'Nova Scotia "became Scottish" in the second quarter of the 20th century', writes Ian McKay in his article, 'Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia 1933-1954'.<sup>48</sup> McKay outlines the forces at work in constructing the Scottish identity of Nova Scotia as a whole and how the foundations of this notion are largely built on shifting sands and modified truths, as he outlines the facts which tell of a very different cultural ethnic immigrant reality. No serious historian would dispute that fact that the Scottish presence in the province is both

strong and important, particularly in the northern counties (Antigonish, Pictou, and Cape Breton Island). The current words, objects, symbols, and practices that are summed in the notion of 'The Highland Heart' of Nova Scotia conflict with the origin of the Scottish immigrants, as far from all of them were Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. These notions refer to the idea of a pre-capitalist Highland culture surviving in the midst of an advanced capitalist society. This image of 'Scottishness' was created in a little over three decades where stereotypical ethnic identities and collections of vague generalisations of Nova Scotians were 'transformed into a natural and obvious "common-sense" about Nova Scotia identity'.<sup>49</sup>

McKay gives two main reasons for this: firstly, in a broad sense, this was a local version of an international anti-modernist wave where a general middle class searched for something better from beyond their crisis-ridden modern world. Secondly, the narrow answer to the triumph of tartanism was Premier Angus L. MacDonald's personal romantic framework and essentialist reading of the Scottish tradition, coupled with the redemptive impact of cultural tourism. Thus a constructed anti-modernist influenced Scottish identity came to be diffused. Romantic ideals and invented traditions replaced a culture that needed support to survive. The language and the older customs of the people were exploited rather than sustained by it. The Gaelic language was fast disappearing even as tartanism covered Nova Scotia and in particular Cape Breton. One part of the many facets involved in encouraging North American cultural tourists to Cape Breton (and Nova Scotia as a whole) was the establishment of the Gaelic College at St Ann's in 1939 in the hope that it would become the 'new Scottish Shrine for Cape Breton, if not North America'.<sup>50</sup> The College did initially only engage with selected aspects of the Scottish tradition based on the romantic view in favour. The College has today, however, embraced and now promotes the local step dancing tradition as well as its fiddling and song tradition, which in the early days were not included.

### **Step Dancing**

Alongside the dance forms that the official 'Scottishness' introduced, the local step dancing kept evolving and transforming. The older named step dances, including percussive forms of the popular 'Sword Dance' and the 'Fling', began to decline and the extemporized close-to-the-floor stepping as once used in the old reels took over. Passed on orally and visually in the homes, it began to be taught more formally in classes around the island in the 1970s. Even though women were always part of the informal process of passing on dance skills, the 1970s saw a number of women, including Minnie MacMaster, Geraldine MacIsaac, Margaret Dunn, Jean MacNeil, Betty Matheson, and later Mary Janet MacDonald, start teaching classes.

As other related percussive dance forms became more readily available through media and ease of travel, some outside influences began to be absorbed if deemed acceptable by the dancing community. Currently, a pattern can be detected, in that dancers practising other forms of dance to some degree incorporate those styles in their Cape Breton step dancing. Modified steps from Ottawa Valley and

Irish dance genres have crept in, mainly among the younger generations of step dancers. No doubt the influx of dance enthusiasts from many parts of the world to the Celtic Colours festival, St Ann's Gaelic College, and Cape Breton in general, will have an impact on the dance tradition to some extent. The impact of this, however, calls for a separate study.

Stylistically those who practise Highland dancing can often be seen dancing higher off the ground, which goes against the close-to-the-floor basis of the Cape Breton style. The dancing of ready-made routines is also becoming more common, especially for performances at concerts and festivals. Fewer people learn exclusively at home from family and relatives and instead go to classes round the island, so individual styles are perhaps becoming less common and a pattern of recognition of whom you were taught by is emerging; this is in place of the family or area style one would once have observed. By no means does this account for all dancers, as a fair amount of the old-fashioned personal stamp on the dancing can still be seen in dancers of all ages.

Step dancing is very much the emblem of the local dance tradition as it features at most, if not all, traditional music events on the island. Be it a square dance, an afternoon concert, or a festival, step dancing always features as a natural part of the musical expression of the current Cape Breton identity.

### **Coda**

The difference between contemporary Cape Breton and Scottish dance music and dance was clearly evident at a fiddle concert and dance in Eriskay Community Hall during the South Uist based Ceòlas Summer School, 8 July 2010. The swing and drive of the Cape Breton fiddle and piano-based dance music for a prompted square set and turns of step dancing contrasted with the up-tempo pipe and fiddle led music of the local ceilidh dance tradition, played for couple and set dances. Even though the tune repertoire was in some cases similar and often crossed over, the difference in the two traditions and their style of music was clearly played out as transformed moves from both sides of the Atlantic met on the same dance floor on an island where some Cape Bretoners' ancestors had once lived. Thus two different sound- and dance-scapes, of related backgrounds, were tangible that evening.

This was, however, only a surface level indication of difference between two communities that has developed along separate paths for some 250 years or more, keeping the changes to the Cape Breton Square dance in mind, as detailed earlier, but perhaps best summarized as concentrating on actual 'dancing' (and human interaction) and dance/music relationship; and where the actual dance repertoire is small. The Scottish ceilidh dance scene has, moreover, become greatly diversified. Whereas the old Scotch Reel has disappeared in South Uist and Eriskay, the quadrille, which was introduced in the late 1800s has seen a small resurgence since the mid 1990s. The core social or ceilidh dance material consists of a variety of couple dances and country dances introduced from mainland Scotland and Europe over the last 100 to 150 years. The emphasis here is rather on knowing 'dances' and

movement patterns, placing 'dancing' and human interaction more in second place. In my view, the dance/music relationship in Scotland has become disconnected as the two disciplines are often seen as quite separate entities. It is therefore evident that the local, global, and in the case of Cape Breton dance, diasporic contexts and influences, have had a profoundly different impact on, attitude to, and use of these two dance traditions.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Anne Doherty, 'The Paradox of the Periphery: Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition c.1928–1995' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Limerick, 1996); Burt Feintuch, 'The Conditions for Cape Breton Fiddle Music: The Social and Economic Setting of a Regional Soundscape', *Ethnomusicology*, 48 (2004), 73–104.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Eike Spalding and Jane Harris Woodside, eds, *Communities in Motion: Dance, Community, and Tradition in America's Southeast and Beyond* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Burt Feintuch, 'Musical Revival as Musical Transformation', in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, ed. by Neil V. Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 183–93; Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition*, pp. 1–26; Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', *Journal of American Folklore*, 97 (1984), 273–90; Mats Nilsson, 'Den Tidlösa Traditionen', in *Brotningar Med Begrepp*, ed. by Birgitta Skarin-Frykman and Helene Brembeck (Gothenburg: Etnologiska Föreningen i Sverige, 1997), pp. 101–14.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Hornsby, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton: A Historical Geography* (Montreal; Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Charles W. Dunn, *Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Cape Breton and Eastern Nova Scotia* (1953; corrected edn, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968; repr. edn, Vreck Cove, Cape Breton: Breton Books, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> R. J. Morgan, *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island: Book 1*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: Breton Books, 2008), pp. 165–93.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia', *Appendix in Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, by J. F. Flett and T. M. Flett (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1985), pp. 269–271.

<sup>8</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', pp. 267–85; Allister MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh* (Cape Breton, NS: Sea-Cape Music, 1988), pp. 24–25.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Rhodes, 'Step-Dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia', *Appendix in Traditional Step Dancing in Scotland*, by J. F. Flett and T. M. Flett (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), pp. 188–89.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Le Blanc and Laura Sadowsky, *Inverness County Dance Project, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia* (Quebec: Centre for Canadian Folk Culture Studies, 1986), pp. 11–16; A. A. MacKenzie, *The Irish in Cape Breton* (Wreck Cove, Cape Breton Island, NS: Breton Books, 1999), pp. viii, 152; R. J. Morgan, *Early Cape Breton: From Founding to Famine, 1784–1851: Essays, Talks and Conversations* ([Canada]: Breton Books, 2000), p. 170; Morgan, *Rise Again! Book 1*, Vol. 1, pp. 179–81; R. J. Morgan, *Rise Again! The Story of Cape Breton Island: From 1900 to Today, Book 2*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: Breton Books, 2009), pp. 185–220.

<sup>12</sup> Sheldon MacInnes, 'Stepdancing: *Gach Taobh Dhe'n Uisge* ("Both Sides of the Water"), in *The Centre of the World at the Edge of a Continent*, ed. by Carol Corbin and Judith A. Rolls (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1996), p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> Doherty 'The Paradox of the Periphery', p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> Le Blanc and Sadowsky, 'Inverness County Dance Project', p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> John MacLean, 'Gender Roles in Cape Breton Dance', email, 22 June 2010, Halifax.

<sup>16</sup> Derived from 'Pig 'n' Whistles' CTV show, see below (Mats Melin, fieldwork notes, 2007).

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- <sup>17</sup> Peter Manuel, ed., *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean: Studies in Latin American & Caribbean Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).
- <sup>18</sup> Manuel, *Creolizing Contradance*, pp. 6–7; Ellis A. Rogers, *The Quadrille: A Practical Guide to its Origin, Development and Performance* (Orpington: C. & E. Rogers, 2003; 4th edn, 2008), pp. 1–37.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Flett and Flett, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* (1985).
- <sup>21</sup> George Sinclair Emmerson, *A Social History of Scottish Dance: Ane Celestial Recreation* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), pp. 145–48.
- <sup>22</sup> Flett and Flett, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland* (1985); Rogers, *The Quadrille*, pp. 1–37.
- <sup>23</sup> Melin, fieldwork observations, 1995–2009.
- <sup>24</sup> Rogers, *The Quadrille*, pp. 1–37; Helen Brennan, *The Story of Irish Dance* (Kerry: Brandon Press, 1999), pp. 32–37; Pat Murphy, *Toss the Feathers: Irish Set Dancing* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1995), pp. 31–38.
- <sup>25</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural and Social Impact Study*, Curatorial Report no. 97 (Halifax, NS: Nova Scotia Museum, 2002), pp. 221–22.
- <sup>26</sup> John Macgregor, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of the Maritime Colonies of British America* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1828), p. 261.
- <sup>27</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 221–22.
- <sup>28</sup> Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through the Day* (New York: Paragon House, 1989).
- <sup>29</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 221–22.
- <sup>30</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', p. 274.
- <sup>31</sup> *Dick's Quadrille Call-book, and Ball-room Prompter* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald [c.1878]), see Library of Congress: <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/dihtml/dicatlg.html>> [accessed 3 March 2011].
- <sup>32</sup> Le Blanc and Sadowsky, 'Inverness County Dance Project', pp. 8–9.
- <sup>33</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', p. 274.
- <sup>34</sup> Glenn Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2006), p. 96.
- <sup>35</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 222; Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, p. 189.
- <sup>36</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', p. 274; Le Blanc and Sadowsky, 'Inverness County Dance Project', pp. 8–9.
- <sup>37</sup> Feintuch, 'The Conditions for Cape Breton Fiddle Music', p. 130.
- <sup>38</sup> Feintuch, 'The Conditions for Cape Breton Fiddle Music', p. 130. The accounts come from an interview with Margie and Jimmie MacInnes, who run the West Mabou Saturday night family dance.
- <sup>39</sup> MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh*, p. 25; Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, pp.100–104.
- <sup>40</sup> See Marie Thompson, 'The Myth of the Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler: The Role of a CBC Film in the Cape Breton Fiddle Revival', *Acadiensis*, 35, no. 2 (Spring 2006), 5–26. Thompson's abstract reads: 'In 1972 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) aired a half-hour documentary that conveyed the message that traditional Scottish-style fiddle music in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, was in decline and would soon die out. The film, *Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, argued that modern music was more popular with the young generation of the 1960s and 1970s and that, as a result, transmission of the style and tunes handed down from nineteenth-century Scottish immigrants to Cape Breton would be broken. Following the broadcast, momentum gradually developed to counter the message in the documentary. The first Festival of Scottish Fiddling was held in July 1973, the Cape Breton Fiddling Association was established, and opportunities to learn traditional music became more widely accessible to people of all ages, thus allowing the Cape Breton music tradition not only to survive but also to evolve in new and exciting ways.'
- <sup>41</sup> Le Blanc and Sadowsky, 'Inverness County Dance Project', p. 9.

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<sup>42</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', p. 274.

<sup>43</sup> Melin, fieldwork observations, 1995–2009.

<sup>44</sup> Melin, fieldwork observations, 1995–2009. See also Feintuch, 'The Conditions for Cape Breton Fiddle Music', pp. 73–104; Emily L. Addison, 'The Perception and Value of Dance Halls in Inverness County, Cape Breton' (unpublished honours bachelor thesis, Trent University, 2001), pp. 63–108.

<sup>45</sup> Jørn Borggreen, *Right to the Helm – Cape Breton Square Dances: A Collection of Square Sets* (Jyllinge, Denmark: Jørn Borggreen, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Flett, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Rhodes, 'Dancing in Cape Breton Island', p. 274.

<sup>48</sup> Ian McKay, 'Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia 1933-1954', *Acadiensis*, 21 (1992), 5–47 (p. 8).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> McKay, 'Tartanism', p. 22.