

Garry Lepine: Métis Fiddler

Born in Birtle, Manitoba and raised in St. Lazare, Garry moved to Portage la Prairie when he was 16 and lives there this day. In 1987, the senior division of the fiddling competition at “Back to Batoche” was won by Garry Lepine, it was the first time he had entered the Batoche contest. He has also been featured at Métisfest at the International Peace Gardens, and has been regularly featured at Fiddler’s Hall at Belcourt, North Dakota.

In 2005, the Manitoba Métis Federation honoured Garry for his support of Métis music and culture by inducting him into the Manitoba Métis Music Hall of Fame. Garry’s accomplishments include five CDs and composing over 50 tunes, providing dance music for the video “The Dances of the Métis” (li dawns di Michif). His playing can also be heard through the National Film Board video “How the Fiddle Flows”. He has played with numerous bands over the years but prefers these days to participate as a special guest or play for square dances. In 2012, at age 61, Garry Lepine was inducted into the Manitoba Fiddle Association Wall of Fame.



Lepine notes he started playing at the age of two imitating his dad, who was also a great musician, and still plays his dad's fiddle to this day. Lepine remembers fondly an old syrup pail which he sat on and copied his dad for hours and hours, rubbing together two sticks. He says at the age of 9 he began playing at dances and would get paid a case of Coca Cola or a bag of chips and, at that time, that was more than enough. He adds his favourite is playing for people and at dances but his dream is to one day play a stage in Nashville, even if it's for a minute.



Edited and Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Métis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute