



Artwork by George Gingras

F is for Fiddle

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The fiddle is the most popular musical instrument used by the Métis. The Métis' Scots and French-Canadian ancestors brought lightweight fiddles to what is now Western Canada during the fur trade era (1670-1869). The Métis took a liking to this instrument, which is also known as a "violin." Soon the Métis began playing and making their own tunes, often mixing **First Nations**, Scots, and French-Canadian rhythms. The Métis fiddle tunes had a new and distinct sound. These tunes made their listeners want to dance. The Métis soon became very good at fiddle playing and dancing. They often celebrated for two or three days at a time. At present-day Métis celebrations, such as **Back to Batoche** and **The John Arcand Fiddle Fest**, there is a great deal of fiddle playing and dancing. Some of the more popular Métis fiddle tunes include the "**Red River Jig**," "**Whiskey Before Breakfast**," and "**Drops of Brandy**."

Other Resources:

Arcand, John et al. *Drops of Brandy Vol. 1 and 2*. CDs. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

Burton, Wilfred, C. Troupe and J. Arcand. *Master of the Métis Fiddle – John Arcand: The Man, The Music, The Festival*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute Press, 2019.

Dorion, Leah et al. *Drops of Brandy: An Anthology of Métis Music*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

John Arcand and His Métis Fiddle. Video. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2002.

The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture (www.metismuseum.ca).

