Acadian Accordion Music in South Eastern New Brunswick

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Graduate Department of Music
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Instrumental folk music has flourished in south eastern New Brunswick and the accordion, while a relative newcomer to the region, enjoys great popularity. Over the years, accordion players have filled many roles, from providing wedding music, to entertainment for house parties. However, there has been a lack of scholarly work done on the subject, especially when compared with folksongs, which have been the object of many studies. To date, little has been written on Acadian instrumental music in New Brunswick and there has been nothing written specifically on the accordion.

The main focus of this work is a study, transcription, and analysis of accordion pieces collected from players in south eastern New Brunswick between 2007 and 2011. Some time is also spent on detailing the history of the accordion in the region, talking about the players themselves, as well as looking at the role of the instrument and its repertoire in a constantly changing world.

The pieces in question were collected over a four year period in various venues, including accordion festivals and players’ places of residence; archival recordings were also consulted. The pieces were transcribed and afterwards analyzed and categorized. Multiple recordings of the same piece were checked for variations, which were found to be an important part of the style of
the region. Historical data is often based on personal accounts, which were taken during interviews with players from the region.

The accordion remains popular in the region and is adapting to changing circumstances. The annual accordion festivals occurring in Moncton every summer are providing new venues to keep the instrument relevant. This study will help to bring further attention to the instrument, stimulate new research, and perhaps even attract new younger players.
Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of a great number of people. I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Robin Elliott, whose knowledge, guidance and support helped make this dissertation what it is today. I can’t thank you enough for all your time. Your presence is felt throughout the dissertation.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Prof. Russell Hartenberger, Prof. Midori Koda, Prof Gary Kulesha (internal examiner), and Prof. Richard Hornsby (external examiner). Your insights were invaluable.

I would like to thank all of my informants for inviting me into their homes and into their lives. To Eugène LeBlanc, Georges Leblanc (both of them), Clément LeBlanc, Billy Leblanc, Valerie Leblanc and Clarence Gould, it was an honor learning from you and I appreciate all the time that you spent teaching me about your music.

I would like to thank Robert Richard, ethnological archivist at the Centre d’études Acadiennes, who first guided me to this topic and helped me navigate the Centres d’études.

Finally, I would like to thanks all my friends and family who have supported me during the completion of this work. I especially wish to thank Ashley for her encouragement every step of the way. Without you, I never would have even started this.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Georges LeBlanc (1944-2010).

The ripples that you created are still going strong and your love of the accordion lives in every player still playing today.

I enjoyed learning from you.
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Preface

Folk music, instrumental and otherwise, was not always an area of expertise for me. As a child and making my way through school, my knowledge of music was limited to what I heard on the radio and television, and I was completely uninterested in folk music. This experience was shared by many of my peers. Most had vague knowledge that some sort of traditional music, mostly fiddle, in south eastern New Brunswick existed. We all knew a person whose father or grandfather played the instrument, but rarely had any opportunities to hear these people play first hand. The limit of our traditional music experience was hearing some adaptations of certain folk songs by popular rock bands such as 1755. These groups offered a showcase for traditional instruments including the fiddle and other instruments such as the accordion. These groups were especially successful in re-introducing many traditional folk songs into the popular cultural knowledge of the region. However, they never offered any real sense of what the traditional repertoire and customs sounded like. In other words, the experience that people had during live concerts of these bands was not quite the same as the experience of live traditional music at kitchen parties or weddings. Because I had no exposure to any real traditional music experience while growing up, the idea that there was a large group of traditional players both on the fiddle and the accordion was simply out my field of vision, as well as out of the field of vision of others my age. Simply put, traditional players did not exist at all in our day to day lives.

All of this drastically changed while studying for my undergraduate degree at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. Along with two other students, I was approached by a professor at this university, Martin Waltz, who needed some extra singers for an all-male choir, the Choeur Neil Michaud, a popular ensemble in the region which specializes in traditional Acadian folk songs. They needed extra singers to fill their ranks for a trip to Romania that they were planning. We were to rehearse and sing with the choir for a year and a half before the trip. A free trip to Romania was too good to pass up, so I eagerly joined.

The experience that I had during the course of that year and a half was completely transforming. For the first months, we rehearsed every week, and we learned many traditional
Acadian folk songs. All were arrangements of course, but the style and melodies were maintained as much as possible. Also, the conductor, Neil Michaud, was thoroughly knowledgeable about distinct characteristics which would make the songs sound as authentic as possible. He would show the choir how to pronounce the words and how to sing correctly for the songs to be true to their nature. All of this was completely new to me.

It was not until our first concert that I became aware of the amount of information that I did not know about my own culture. Our first concert was largely attended by an older population. Most traditional songs that we sang were recognized by a majority of the people in attendance. During many songs, people even sang along. I was struck by what I was seeing and hearing. The huge cultural knowledge that was once obviously very strong was being completely lost. Before joining the choir, I had no idea these songs even existed, even though they were part of my own culture. On the other hand, this knowledge was obviously very important to the older generation. I wondered how this knowledge could have been lost in so short a time, and why it had not been passed down.

The choir eventually sang for the funeral of Anselme Chiasson, a priest and scholar who made a very significant collection of folk songs in the 1930s. The Moncton cathedral was filled with people. The choir sang many of the songs that he had collected over the years as a tribute to his work. However, at the time, I was largely ignorant at the importance of the person to whom the choir was paying tribute. I was aware that he had collected some of these songs, but because folk music was never part of my life, I did not appreciate the full significance of what he had done, and of his work.

After the trip to Romania, my studies became my first priority and I had to leave the choir in order to have time for other projects. While I wasn’t actively singing with the choir anymore, or experiencing any real exposure to any source of folk music, there was still a spark of interest and curiosity that remained.

It wasn’t until I applied for the DMA program seven years later at the University of Toronto that I once again dove into the world of Acadian folk music. Since my main exposure had been to folk songs during my time singing with the Choeur Neil Michaud, my initial interest was in this field. While looking at scholarship on Acadian folk music, I realized that much of the
music research revolved around folk songs. Anselme Chiasson had collected such a large group of songs that the scholarly community followed suit with many works based on these songs.

There was virtually nothing to be found on instrumental music however. When I asked Robert Richard, the ethnological archivist working at the Centre d’études acadiennes Anselme Chiasson, some questions about instrumental music, he was largely unable to answer them because the field had not been researched at all. While there were some archived instrumental recordings, there were no transcriptions of any kind present at the Centre d’études and no analytical works. There were some works available about instrumental music from other regions, but all of them were on the fiddle. While these presented me with certain information on surrounding areas, they did not fill the hole that was present with regards to studies on instrumental folk music in south eastern New Brunswick.

Richard did mention that there was a significant accordion population in the region, especially in Memramcook, a small village south of Moncton. He proceeded to give me a VHS tape of an accordion festival that had been held for the first time in Memramcook the previous year. After watching this tape, I was once again amazed at the rich cultural repertoire that was present in the region and that once again I was completely unaware even existed, as had been the case previously when I had been singing with the Choeur Neil Michaud. This was even more shocking to me, because Memramcook was only about 30 minutes away from where I grew up. I was determined to look more into these players and their repertoire.

Preparing for this research, there were some questions that had to be answered:

1- How important is the accordion culture in south eastern New Brunswick? How long has it been present? Where do they play?

2- What makes the accordion repertoire unique compared to the repertoire of other instruments or compared to other styles of music?

3- Why hasn’t this culture been passed down to the younger generation?

This dissertation is the result of my attempt to answer these questions. In order to answer these questions, I set myself specific goals. I would first need to interview accordion players to get first-hand knowledge on the topic. This was necessary as I found that very little scholarly
work done on the subject had been done. Next, I would collect, transcribe, analyze and categorize the accordion repertoire, which up to date has never been collected or transcribed. My ultimate goal was to begin to bridge the gap between folk song research and instrumental music research in Acadia. In doing so, I hope to spark some interest in more research projects on New Brunswick instrumental music, accordion and otherwise. I elaborate on the lack of instrumental music scholarly work in chapter 1.

As I set these goals, I especially wanted to answer further questions regarding the third question posed above: Why wasn’t this musical culture passed down. These further questions are as follows:

1- Have there been similar problems in folk music transmission in other provinces, in Acadian culture or with other cultural groups?
2- If so, what solutions, if any, have they implemented to fix this problem?
3- Do Acadians in south eastern New Brunswick recognize this problem, and if so, are they taking steps to fix it?

During the four years after I initially asked myself these questions I was guided through an amazing cultural landscape. With the help of many of the area’s players, I was able not only to explore this previously unstudied portion of Canada’s folk music, but I was able to experience for the first time an aspect of my own culture that was previously unknown to me.
Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 A Brief History of Acadia

French settlers landed in what would be known as Acadie (Acadia in English) for the first time in 1604. Although other nations had visited the “New World,” the French were the first to establish a lasting colony. Pierre du Gua, Sieur De Monts, with the permission of Henry IV, sailed to this new land to establish a fur trade. In exchange for the colonization of this land, he was granted a ten year monopoly on the fur trade in the region.

After sailing up the Bay of Fundy, the merchant chose Île Sainte-Croix as the area to build the new colony and settle for the winter. The winter was much harsher than predicted, and more than half of the colony died from scurvy and from lack of food and drinking water. After this first unsuccessful attempt at colonization, they resettled the following year on the mainland and established Port-Royal (present day Annapolis-Royal) which would eventually become the capital of Acadia. The following years saw De Monts quit his contract. The fur trade was proving difficult and financially unsustainable. Another merchant, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, took over the operation. Acadia was in fact founded and largely built as a fur trade operation for private interests and would largely remain that way, at least officially, for many years to come.

In the years that followed, largely ignoring outside politics, the Acadians spread across Acadia (present day Nova Scotia) and Île Saint-Jean (present day Prince Edward Island) where they built numerous small communities and cultivated farmlands. By 1667, Acadia had already been exchanged between France and England twice, returning to France with the Bréda Treaty. Amongst all the political chaos, the Acadians kept founding new villages. Partly because of the lack of real outside government, they were a self-sufficient people, creating what they needed to survive in this new land. For instance, they invented the aboiteau, which is a series of dykes used to irrigate the numerous unfarmable marshlands. While still officially under foreign rule,
they created self-governing independent councils made up of Acadian elders. This in itself was a revolutionary idea in a time where monarchies were accepted without question elsewhere.

The Acadians did have many problems however. The first official purpose for the colony was fur trade, and colonization of this region was usually outsourced to private companies. Therefore, the Acadians rarely got help – financial, military or otherwise – from the reigning state (British or French). The merchants in charge at the time would only bring what was necessary. This included supplies as well as settlers. Compared with New England, the population of Acadia was abysmally low during the entire period up to 1755. Furthermore, without any real significant military presence, the Acadians had to face many obstacles, including piracy and various attacks on their villages. Due to this lack of an armed presence, Acadia changed hands – and names – many times over the following years. France and England were the two countries that fought over this land the most, neither country ever really fortifying its new conquest. In fact, in the first hundred years of its existence, Acadia was exchanged seven times between the two warring countries before ultimately remaining with England as a result of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

The next thirty years under British rule following the Treaty of Utrecht were relatively peaceful for the Acadian people, but these years were not without their problems. After the signature of the Treaty of Utrecht, the stabilization and the colonization of Nova Scotia became an issue of utmost importance for England, especially since France still had possession of Île Royal (Cape Breton) as well as present day New Brunswick. The construction of Fort Louisbourg, which was begun shortly after the treaty, only made this issue all the more important. But the goal of stabilizing Nova Scotia would prove difficult because the British were forced to govern a French majority and there were obviously many problems associated with this. First, the Acadians largely refused to sign an unconditional oath to the British monarchy. The Acadians held the most fertile lands and under British law, no subjects could hold property unless they swore full allegiance to the British crown. The Acadians did however agree to a conditional oath which stated: “[The Acadians] will not be obliged to take up arms against France […] and have further promised that they will not take up arms against the King of
England or against its government”\textsuperscript{1}. This seemed, at least temporarily, to satisfy the British and because of this oath, the Acadians were known as the “French neutrals.”\textsuperscript{2} The unconditional oath was always a thorny subject for the British, as many governors tried to have the Acadians sign it. They of course always refused, stating that they had already signed a conditional oath. The Acadians were also notorious for not paying taxes to the British officials. Rarely having to pay taxes before this, the Acadians would find all sorts of reasons to avoid payment. They were also very uncooperative with any aspect of the British government. For example, they were known to often refuse to provide officials with census information, and they would mostly appoint their own representatives to govern themselves. In short, they tried to live as they had lived before the British occupation, largely ignoring this new power.

This all changed however with the appointment of Charles Lawrence as the new Governor in 1753. All other Governors before him had failed to have the Acadians swear an unconditional oath, but Lawrence gave the Acadians an ultimatum: swear the oath or be deported. Having faced this ultimatum multiple times before, the Acadians chose once again to swear the conditional oath and refuse Lawrence’s offer. In 1755, the English colony had already been at war with France for over a year. During this year, they captured two major French forts, Fort Gaspareaux and Fort Beauséjours, after which they accused the Acadians of breaking their neutrality when they helped with the defense of Fort Beauséjours. This was only partially true as the vast majority of Acadians stayed out of the whole affair. Nevertheless, this provided Lawrence with the sufficient justification, in his opinion, to finally hold true to his word and deport the Acadians, with the eventual goal of giving their fertile lands to new English settlers.

The Acadian Deportation or \textit{Grand Dérangement} is the single most important event in Acadian history. Between the years of 1755 and 1763, around 13,000 Acadians, out of a total of approximately 14,000, were displaced from their native homes in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, with approximately 6,500 being deported in 1755 alone. They were either moved forcefully by the British or they escaped and hid. The British boats brought them to new and sometimes unwelcoming, areas including New England, England, France, and New France.

\textsuperscript{1} Daigle, Jean (ed). "Acadia from 104 to 1763: An Historical Synthesis." Acadia of the Maritimes. Chaire d’études acadiennes. Université de Moncton. 1995

(Quebec). With the help of their native allies, for many years some Acadians evaded capture. Many died as well, with estimates of casualties being in the range of 7,500 to 9,000.

The year 1763 marks the end of the deportation, after which the British once again allowed the Acadians to return to the colony. There were many conditions however. They first had to swear allegiance to the British crown. They could not return to their former lands as these were now occupied by English settlers. Therefore, they were forced to disperse in smaller groups, mostly along New Brunswick’s coast, but also in western Nova Scotia as well as western Prince Edward Island.

The years that followed saw the Acadians silently re-establish themselves in the Colony and eventually, in the Canadian maritime provinces. There were however many challenges to overcome. Acadians could not own land in Nova Scotia until 1783. Some Acadians had to rent land or housing, and most would eventually have to move once again due to their inability to pay their rent. In education, they did not have their own schools until 1786. These schools were also mostly run by people other than Acadians, usually priests of Quebec, French, Scottish or Irish origin. Acadians only obtained the right to vote in 1789 in Nova Scotia and in 1810 in the other colonies. It was not until 1836 that Acadians had their first elected member of the legislative assembly in Nova Scotia, and 1846 for New Brunswick.

In 1847, an American poet, Henry Longfellow, wrote his famous poem: *Evangéline*. This fictional poem, set during the time of the Acadian deportation, describes the search of Gabriel by her love Evangéline. The poem significantly affected the Acadians. In the words of Léon Thériault, Evangéline marked “the beginnings of a collective conscience among Acadians [...] A myth and a legend were created. Acadians recognized their development as a people, their dispersion to the four corners of the world, but also their reunion. For many of them, it was as if Acadia had finally been recognized.”

In the years leading to 1881, the Acadians were successful in making much important advancement. In 1854, the *Séminaire Saint-Thomas*, the first Acadian institution of higher

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learning, opened its doors. It would eventually change its name to the *Collège Saint-Joseph* in 1864. In 1867 *Le Moniteur Acadien*, the first Acadian newspaper, printed its first issue. During these years, many Acadians also fought for French language textbooks in schools. In 1877, Acadians got their first textbooks in French, although it would be many years still until all materials would be in French. Acadians also saw their first French-speaking hospitals during these years, the first one being in 1868 in Tracadie, New Brunswick.

In 1881, the first Acadian National Convention was held in Memramcook, New Brunswick. During this event, which more than 5,000 delegates attended, many important decisions regarding the future of the Acadians were taken. Education, agriculture, problems of emigration and journalism were all topics that were discussed. A flag was created and August 15th was chosen as the Acadian national day. The Acadian national anthem was also chosen. In subsequent years, these conventions took place approximately every five years. They were important events, because the Acadians defined their culture and set goals to meet their needs.

In later years, the Acadians continued to play a major role in the history of the Maritimes. During the 20th century, the Acadians fought to have equal rights in politics, in the job market, education, and in all aspects of life. In 1969, the first elected Acadian Premier, Louis-J. Robichaud, passed a law recognizing French and English as the two official languages of New Brunswick. Many new information outlets were created, including media outlets such as the French newspapers *L’Acadie nouvelle* and *Le Moniteur*, both of which still exist today. *L’Université de Moncton* was founded in 1963, and it remains the largest French-language university in Canada east of Quebec. Due to all these factors, there was a slow but steady Acadian re-emergence, and the Acadians continued to redefine themselves. In 1994, the first *Congrès Mondial Acadien* was held, where Acadians from around the world returned to New Brunswick for two weeks to attend a series of lectures, concerts and massive family reunions. Acadians from all around the world that were affected by the deportation were able to return to their roots and visit long-lost relatives. The convention is now repeated regularly every five years.
1.2 A Short History of Folk Music and Folk Music Research in Acadia

Amidst all the chaos and relocations, music remained an important part of Acadian life. There exists little material on instrumental music from before 1755, but it is known that in the early 1600s, Acadians staged plays where choral music was sung and a bit later trumpets were added. The fiddle made its way to Acadia by the 17th or at latest the early 18th century and other instruments followed. While instrumental music was slow to get to Acadia, folk songs were always present, and this was the musical idiom that flourished most abundantly in the area.

Folk songs have always been a major part of Acadian tradition. Especially in years of hardships when there was no money to fund the purchase of instruments, the people could always turn to songs when they were in need of music. Consequently, this is the area of Acadian folk music that has seen the most research. While Marius Barbeau, who is considered by many to be the founder of scholarly folk music research in Canada, was the first to officially collect Acadian folk songs (he collected more than four hundred folk songs from Gaspésie in the early 1900s), Père Anselme Chiasson is considered by many to be the founder of serious Acadian folk music research. He played many roles during his life, as a professor and a pastor, but he is best known for his field research working with folk songs. During his time in the field, he recorded hundreds of folk songs, mostly from Chéticamp, Nova Scotia. During the years that followed, he published many of these songs in a series of books entitled Chansons d’Acadie. The preservation and promotion of folk music and folk traditions was his main cause. To honour his life’s work, the Centre d’étude Acadiennes was renamed the Centre d’études Acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson.

Due to Chiasson’s fieldwork, many of these songs were revived and spread throughout the Maritime provinces and even Canada. His example also paved the way for countless more researchers to continue his work, collecting more songs. Researchers such as Conrad Laforte

\[\text{4} \quad \text{Cormier, Roger E.} \quad \text{"Music and the Acadians." Acadia of the Maritimes. Chaire d’étude acadiennes. Moncton, Canada. 1995.}
\]

\[\text{5} \quad \text{Copeland, Gary. Fiddling in New Brunswick. Gary L Copeland Associates. Moncton, Canada. 2006.}\]
have also published many important scholarly works studying songs. Laforte has a very extensive catalogue classifying most of the Acadian folk songs. Chiasson’s work has also gotten much exposure through various popular rock and folk bands as well as choirs that specialize in Acadian folk songs. Choirs such as the Choeur Neil Michaud have been singing Chiasson’s songs throughout the world for many years, and continue to do so to this day.

Folk songs were indeed very popular in Acadia but instrumental music was still an important part of Acadian culture. This is an area of research however that, unlike folk songs, has not been explored and that is severely lacking in scholarly sources. New Brunswick especially suffers from a lack of scholarly research in instrumental folk music as both Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have some scholarly studies of their fiddle traditions. The only work that has been published on New Brunswick instrumental folk music, entitled Fiddling in New Brunswick, was released in 2006\(^6\). This work is an extremely valuable and much needed resource and it presents a very comprehensive picture of fiddlers in New Brunswick as well as a brief historical overview of instrumental music in New Brunswick. However, it does not explore much of the music or repertoire from New Brunswick, choosing instead to concentrate on the players and their lives as musicians. Therefore, New Brunswick folk repertoire in general suffers from a severe lack of analytical studies. There certainly exists no work concentrating primarily on instruments other than the fiddle in any Maritime province. There has also been no comprehensive collection of Acadian instrumental music specifically from New Brunswick and once again, only fiddle music collections have been assembled in other provinces.

### 1.3 The Accordion in New Brunswick

One of the important instruments other than the fiddle used in folk music is the accordion. In south eastern New Brunswick, there exists a very important, and as yet largely undocumented, history of accordion performance. The accordion has been present there for over a century, and it has held an important role in the lives of the people living in the region. In past years, it was heard during many functions such as weddings, receptions, and smaller house

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parties where the players would often play all night. The accordion players often played the lead melodies in their bands, which typically included various other instruments, including the fiddle, guitar, piano, and percussion instruments.

In recent years however, accordion playing has diminished in popularity. With newer forms of entertainment emerging, this form of musical knowledge has not been passed down to younger generations, at least not to the same extent as in previous years. For this reason we can see that the accordion player base in the region is getting older. Furthermore, many accordion players had stopped playing for years. While there are some who have started to play the instrument again, the accordion has mostly disappeared from social functions over the years, to be replaced by other forms of music. That being said, there are still many regions that boast a strong accordion presence.

South eastern New Brunswick is particularly rich with accordion music. Memramcook, a small village south of Moncton, boasts a wealth of accordion music and a healthy number of talented players, such as Eugène LeBlanc, Olivier Gould, and Georges LeBlanc. In recent years, these players have begun to try once again to bring the accordion to larger audiences and promote it as much as possible. Even with this new found enthusiasm for the instrument, certain problems exist. We can notice a definite ageing of the accordion player base. Most of the players are in their fifties, and many are much older. There are some younger players of course, but the majority of players are in this age category. Few children are learning the instrument. These issues will be discussed in detail further in this work.

1.4 Methodology

The larger goal of this research study is first to better understand the accordion culture in south eastern New Brunswick. In order to accomplish this goal, significant fieldwork had to be done and this fieldwork was done primarily in south eastern New Brunswick. While there are many Acadians in the northern part of New Brunswick, this study focuses exclusively on the southern part of the province (Figure 1.1). More precisely, fieldwork was conducted mainly in Westmorland County. Most players were from three municipalities, Memramcook, Cap-Pelé
During my fieldwork, I held extensive interviews with multiple informants, sometimes multiple times each. These interviews were conducted between 2006 and 2011. These longer interviews (usually around one hour long) consisted of open-ended questions which were adjusted from one informant to another, as needed. These interviews were all recorded and notes were taken for analysis at a later time. They were usually held at their houses or places of work and there was usually no accordion music played. The goal of these interviews was to gather each participant’s views and observations on their musical histories, their communities, their repertoire, and culture. During these interviews, the following issues were addressed:

1- Family history (personal history, family musical history, past and current settlement, instruments played by siblings, living conditions, musical transmission)

2- Musical style (characteristics of the Acadian accordion style, comparisons with other accordion styles, the musician’s views on their own style and on the style of their colleagues)

3- Repertoire (number of pieces in each informant’s repertoire, comparison with past repertoire with current repertoire)

4- Musical influences (to determine musical influences past and present)

I was also able to meet with a few players on other occasions, such as at music festivals, for much shorter interviews, which usually consisted of a few short questions, usually pertaining to the situation at hand. These interviews were generally not recorded. The information acquired during these shorter interviews would usually be concerning the nature of pieces that players were playing, or questions on musical style. Finally, I kept in contact with my informants through email and telephone if the need to contact them ever arose. These short conversations were usually needed for brief clarifications of previously collected materials.
During my research, I attended multiple accordion festivals. These were held in Dieppe, New Brunswick. During these festivals, I was able to do extensive networking and meet most of the region’s players. I was also able to meet players from other regions such as Quebec, where the accordion is also very popular. Also, in addition to be able to talk to accordion players, I was able to talk to audience members and get their feedback on the accordion culture. During these festivals, notes were taken, and most of my own personal recordings of the Acadian repertoire were made. I also attended the Congrès Mondial Acadian where I was able to get a broader understanding of the Acadian history, and its place in the world. Since this event was held in
northern New Brunswick, I was also able to listen to accordion players in this region. While I do not take into consideration the northern New Brunswick accordion style in this work, I found it useful to listen to these players for comparative purposes.

A major part of this work is the multiple transcriptions found in the appendix. This collection provides the foundation for this entire work and is used to offer insights into the Acadian musical style. These works have been collected from various sources. First, they have come from various live events that I have attended. These were recorded using a personal recorder and the pieces were later transcribed. Next, I used various previously recorded materials as source materials. These included CDs released by the players (usually self-released), archival recordings found at the Centre d’études Acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson, as well as personal recordings from players (usually from small personal recorders). In the case where different versions of the same piece were found (different version sometimes spanned decades), a comparison could be made between versions to help determine if and how the Acadian style has evolved.

1.5 Description of the Instrument

There are many different versions of the accordion instrument and they can generally be separated into two categories: piano accordions, which are equipped with a right-hand keyboard similar to the piano, and button accordions, which are equipped with buttons on the right-hand side. The button accordion can further be separated into two categories: the chromatic button accordion on which the right-hand buttons are arranged chromatically and the diatonic accordion on which the right-hand buttons are arranged diatonically. On all accordions, the melody is played with the right hand, while the left hand plays a combination of chords and bass line. Buttons are always found on the left-hand side although piano accordions and chromatic button accordions will always have a greater number of buttons when compared with diatonic accordions. Acadians in south eastern New Brunswick generally play with diatonic accordions, with very few exceptions. Most Acadians play with German (Hohner) or Italian made accordions.
On the diatonic accordion, sound is produced by pulling on the bellows to move air. When a button is pressed, this opens a valve in which the air flows to reach a double reed that produces the sound. Two different reeds (and so two different pitches) can be activated by one button, depending on the direction of the bellows.

Buttons on the diatonic accordion are arranged by rows and there are three different kinds of button accordions found in south eastern New Brunswick: single row accordion, double row accordions and triple row accordions. New Brunswick Acadian players generally play on double and triple row accordions. Each row can play a different scale and these accordions are named by their scales. For example, a G-C-F is a three row accordion. The scale of G major can be played on the first row, the scale of C major can be played on the second row, and the scale of F can be played on the third row. Similarly, a G accordion would be a single row accordion that can play the scale of G major. All of these scales are played with a combination of pushing and pulling on the bellows to achieve different notes.

The left-hand side of the instrument has the chord buttons. There are typically four left-hand buttons for each right-hand row, although sometimes single row accordions only have two left-hand buttons. The left-hand buttons are in groups of two; one button plays a chord while the other plays only the root of that chord. Figure 1.2 shows the placement of each note on a typical three row G-C-F accordion. In this image, the notes on the side of the bellows are achieved by pushing on the bellows and the notes on the outside are achieved by pulling.
1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to use the previously described materials that have been gathered to help bridge the gap between the vast amount of research that has been done on Acadian folk song and the small amount that has been done on Acadian instrumental music. The collection of transcribed pieces is a large part of this effort. The other part is the analysis of these pieces. Furthermore, the following themes are explored:

1- This study first looks at accordion playing in the region and places it in its historical context.

2- This study analyzes the general musical style of the Acadian accordionist.

3- This study explores past and present influences and where the accordion culture is headed. It especially looks at new influences that are taking shape in the region, and how these new influences will ultimately affect the accordion culture.

4- This study also looks at what fuelled the recent renewal seen in the area and this renewal is compared with other renewals from neighbouring provinces.

5- This study explores whether the efforts by south eastern New Brunswick players have matched the efforts of their neighbours to preserve this part of their culture.
Chapter 2
The Accordion in New Brunswick and its Players

Acadian accordion players from south eastern New Brunswick have played an important role in the region’s musical history. Along with other musicians, they have helped shape the cultural identity of the region. These musicians have succeeded in incorporating a relatively new instrument into an already flourishing musical landscape and have gradually developed their own repertoire. In the process, they have created a specific role for the accordion as the main instrument for various traditional events.

This chapter takes a deeper look at the history of the accordion inside New Brunswick and it looks at the accordion players’ lives as musicians inside the larger Acadian culture. I begin by attempting to pinpoint when and how the accordion came to New Brunswick. I also discuss how the accordion was incorporated into already established musical families once it did arrive in the region. I then discuss how the players came to learn this new instrument and how they both absorbed new music and adapted the existing repertoire to suit the accordion. In doing so, I look at how music was passed on and how entire repertoires were shaped. Furthermore, I look at the venues in which the accordion was played in the past and I compare that to where it is being played today, all the while exploring its general role for each of these venues. Finally, I take a look at how today’s players feel about these changes and what they think will ultimately happen to the accordion in the region.

Since there is very little specific written information on the history of the accordion in New Brunswick, this chapter uses information gathered from personal interviews with various accordion players from south eastern New Brunswick. This interview data deals mainly with players’ memories of how the accordion came to New Brunswick and how they started to play the instrument. I look at the accordion players’ various personal accounts and stories of their experiences growing up playing the accordion. These anecdotal accounts provide a colourful picture of each musician’s experience and help to assemble a much larger picture of the Acadian folk music scene.
In the course of this chapter and throughout this work, I will be mentioning many of my interviewees, several of which have LeBlanc as their family name. Most are not related. For the sake of clarity, I will use both the player’s given and family name when needed. To further complicate things, there are also two Georges LeBlancs. In this case, I will refer to both by where they live: Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) and Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe).

All of my interviewees were adult men. The reason for this is that they constitute the great majority of accordionists currently playing in the region. Ken Perlman notes the same issue in his book, *The Fiddle Music of PEI*, except on Prince Edward Island it was the fiddle instead of the accordion. However, he notes that this was in the “old days” and that women now play the fiddle as much as men. He writes: “Fiddling was considered by and large to be a man’s calling, and those women who were musically inclined were encouraged to take up the pump organ or piano”8. While this is no longer the case with fiddling on Prince Edward Island, it is still mostly the case with south eastern New Brunswick accordion players. I only met one female Acadian accordion player during my four years researching. I met her during an accordion festival in 2010. She had only recently started to play the accordion. For this reason, the pronoun “his” is sometimes used to designate accordion players in this work. For the moment, this fits, however, this might change in the future. It is important to note that, as on Prince Edward Island, many young women are taking up fiddling in New Brunswick. Then again, there are not many younger boys learning the accordion either so it is possible that the accordion simply has not had enough time to interest new players, including young women. This lack of younger players will be addressed further in Chapter 4.

### 2.1 Player Biographies

This chapter will deal with many accordion players. In order to help facilitate clarity, I have included brief biographies of my informants. This will help to enable a better grasp on all of the players as well as their relationship with one another. While there are many more players

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in the region, these players have all participated in multiple interviews and greatly have helped this project. They are the main focus of this part of the work.

Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe)

Georges LeBlanc was born in 1944. Originally from Memramcook, he moved to Dieppe later in his life. He started playing guitar when he was seventeen years old. It was later in his life, when he was twenty-five, that he started playing the accordion, and he was the first accordion player in his family. His father played the violin, and his mother played the piano. LeBlanc was always a great promoter of the accordion and of traditional music. For seventeen years, he hosted the television show Georges’ Country Jamboree where he hosted many talented players from the region. He later also hosted many radio programs on CKUM, CJSE and CHMA. Later in his life, he founded the Georges LeBlanc Accordion Festival in Memramcook and Dieppe, New Brunswick. Sadly, he passed away in 2010 during the writing of this work.

Eugène LeBlanc

Eugène LeBlanc was born in 1951 in Memramcook, where he has lived for his entire life. At the age of twelve he briefly started to play the guitar but it was shortly after that he was exposed to the accordion and he has played ever since. Starting from the age of fourteen, LeBlanc was playing the accordion in larger groups in which the accordion was the primary instrument. He played for amateur nights, jamborees and weddings. During the past ten years, he has been exposed to a larger number of musicians from other parts of the world, and he has greatly expanded his repertoire and style. In addition to playing, LeBlanc now also repairs accordions.

Clément LeBlanc

Clément LeBlanc was born in 1956 in Cap-Pelé, where he still lives today. He learned the accordion at approximately nineteen years old watching his father (Billy LeBlanc) and
grandfather (Willy LeBlanc) play. LeBlanc is the only third generation accordion player that I have interviewed.

Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé)

Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) was born in 1926 in Cap-Pelé, where he still lives. He is Clément LeBlanc’s uncle and Willy LeBlanc’s son. Unlike the other players that I have interviewed, he has only started learning the accordion very recently. While he has always played music, the accordion only came into his life much later in his life. At 84 years old, he still works as a lobster fisherman and he is still going strong.

Valerie LeBlanc (White)

Valerie LeBlanc came from a family of musicians. He had five accordion players in his family and he learned at a young age. His mother was a turluteuse, a vocal imitator of instrumental music. He boasted that he was the first to play in George’s Country Jamboree. He lived in Irish Town for the latter part of his life. He was known in many circles as Valerie White. Sadly, he passed away in 2009 during the writing of this work.

2.2 The Accordion Arrives in New Brunswick

While the accordion has existed in New Brunswick for many years, it is still a relative newcomer to the province. Unfortunately, there are no exact records of when the instrument arrived. Therefore, finding the exact origin of the instruments proves to be very challenging. While finding a specific date of arrival or how it came to this province is nearly impossible, there are certain clues. For example, in Quebec, there are records of the accordion arriving in the region before 1850. The first reference related to the accordion appears in a book of expenditures of the Ursuline Convent of Quebec City in November of 1843. The reference is:
"Paid for 1 Acordia, 3 £." There are also many more mentions of the instrument in Quebec after this time; François Billard and Roussin Didier mention a few in their book: *Histoire de l’accordéon*. For example, the *Prescott Telegraph* on September 11, 1850, notes that "the song *Loves Young Dream*, which was accompanied by the accordion, was sung exquisitely." The fact that the accordion was arriving in Quebec at this time would suggest that New Brunswick would have also gotten the accordion during this period or most probably a few years later.

According to players currently living in New Brunswick, the above time of arrival is approximately accurate. Georges LeBlanc, an 82 year old fisherman from Cap-Pelé, took time away from repairing his buoys to give an interview at his house. He recalled his own father, Willy LeBlanc, being an avid, and famous, accordion player. Georges LeBlanc likes to talk about his father and his accordion. He has many photos of his father on stage with various bands. Georges LeBlanc also played a few cassette tapes on which his father was performing, accompanied by his sons or other musicians on other instruments.

He mentioned that his father was alive at the turn of the century, and that his father started playing the accordion at a very young age, which would demonstrate that the accordion has been in south eastern New Brunswick for more than a hundred years. He also mentioned that Willy Leblanc’s father played violin, which would make Willy LeBlanc the first in his family to play the accordion. This would put the arrival of the accordion in the region at approximately 1900-1910, which is the oldest that I have been able to trace its arrival. Georges LeBlanc could not give too much information on his father’s early accordion years. He elaborated: "I always knew him as an accordion player. I’m not sure how he started." It was very difficult for him to answer these questions because his father would have started playing before he was born, or when Georges LeBlanc was very young. Many of the older players had the same difficulties as Georges in remembering how their parents started playing music.

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10 While Billard and Didier dedicate a segment of their book to the accordion in Canada, they make no mention of the accordion in New Brunswick. They concentrate mostly on Quebec and Newfoundland, and they include brief mentions of Ontario, Manitoba and Inuit accordion players.


Willy LeBlanc spawned more than one generation of Acadian musicians, most of whom played the accordion. While Georges LeBlanc has only started playing the accordion recently, his brother, Billy LeBlanc, has played the accordion for most of his life and he provides a slightly clearer picture of his family’s musical history. At the fourth annual Georges LeBlanc Accordion Festival\textsuperscript{13} in Moncton, he confirmed that his father was the person in his family who started playing the accordion for the first time and he was one of the first in Cap-Pelé to play the instrument. He also confirmed that Willy LeBlanc’s father (Georges and Billy LeBlanc’s grandfather) played the violin exclusively. Therefore, according to Billy, Willy LeBlanc adapted his accordion playing to the existing musical culture. He learned tunes from the existing repertoire, mostly from his father and from players in the area. Willy LeBlanc’s offspring then kept this new tradition alive, starting with his two sons, Billy and later on Georges LeBlanc and continuing with his grandsons. For example Billy LeBlanc’s son, Clément LeBlanc, now also plays the accordion. Clément LeBlanc is now the third generation of accordion players in that family and is at least a fourth generation musician. Much like his father and grandfather, he learns tunes by ear from his surroundings and from his family.

Another player, Eugène LeBlanc from Memramcook, NB, was able to explain in greater detail how the accordion came to New Brunswick. Eugène LeBlanc is much younger than Georges LeBlanc (the two men are not related), and played the accordion for most of his life, which put him in a better position to recall how he came to play the instrument.

My father used to build bridges for the train tracks. One particular person, an Italian who did underwater welding, was also a singer and he was always coming to our house to party on weekends. One day, he came with a two row accordion. He was singing and playing at the same time. I was only 10 years old then, and he wasn’t a great player by any means, but the instrument really fascinated me. That Sunday, he left but he forgot his accordion at our house. Of course, when I saw him leave, I didn’t say anything, took the accordion and went to my room. I didn’t tell my parents, and it took them a few days to notice. Anyways, there was this accordion player in Memramcook named Olivier Gould. Olivier Gould was a great player; no one could beat Olivier when he played quadrilles.\textsuperscript{14} So I asked

\textsuperscript{13} The Georges LeBlanc Festival is named after Georges LeBlanc from Dieppe, NB and not from Georges LeBlanc from Cap-Pelé

\textsuperscript{14} In Acadian New Brunswick, the quadrille is a dance that was usually played at wedding by an accordion player. It has many parts, and can last a very long time.
my brother to drive me to one of his dances. As soon as I heard a few pieces, I would shut both of my ears to not forget anything and I would run to the car to practice the pieces until I had learned them. I learned a tune or two every night like that. When the Italian returned a few months after and he saw me play all those tunes, he was so impressed that the next time that he came, he bought me a new accordion. I was so happy; I used that accordion so much to the point where one day I was using it and it fell apart. My mother then bought me a better three row accordion that I still have today.\(^\text{15}\)

Eugène LeBlanc’s story highlights a few interesting facts about how the accordion came to the region. First, Eugène LeBlanc was a first generation accordion player in his family, but there were still players in the region who already had access to the instrument. Second, an outsider, in this case an Italian, brought the accordion to his family. Comparing his case with Willy LeBlanc’s, we begin to visualize how the accordion came to the area. We can assume that Eugène learned the accordion much in the same way as Willy did more than 60 years prior. Immigrants from Europe coming to Canada brought much of their own culture, music and instruments with them. Of course, the Acadians borrowed many of these immigrants’ ideas. There are many examples of this, and not just in music. Many aspects of Acadian life were affected, from art to cuisine, and many new elements were introduced into their lives.

### 2.3 Learning the Accordion

Having explored how the accordion came to New Brunswick, we must next look at how Acadians learned the instrument. There is very little written on Acadian accordion music but we can draw many parallels with fiddling in the same general region. In her doctoral thesis *Traditional and Non-Traditional Teaching and Learning Practices in Folk Music: an Ethnographic Filed Study of Cape Breton Fiddling*,\(^\text{16}\) Virginia Hope identifies many key characteristics of the traditional transmission process in North American fiddling. For example,
she names four pre-fiddling conditions of a beginning fiddler which are typically met and they are the following:

1) The prospective player must have a rich family and neighbourhood fiddling tradition.
2) The prospective player has the desire to play.
3) The player has listened to and observed fiddling of father or other older fiddler.
4) The player is a male of approximately twelve years of age.17

She also points out many other fiddle transmission characteristics such as: beginning players learn from their families, especially from their fathers, or communities; they learn by imitation, wholly by ear; they put little effort into improving technique and they put value into learning a large quantity of repertoire. There are certainly links to be made between south eastern New Brunswick accordion players and Cape Breton fiddlers. Both possessed a rich folk music background, both were interested and listened to this music and both had a significant desire to play. Both also learned by imitation and learned a large repertoire. However, there are many key differences, mostly because the accordion was a new instrument arriving in an already established folk music community. The following will attempt to highlight some of those differences.

The accordion was certainly not the first instrument to arrive in New Brunswick. Several instrumental traditions were already flourishing, most notably the fiddle and the piano. When the accordion eventually found its way to New Brunswick, it was in the homes of players who were already in these well-established musical families. Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) explains this. While he was the first accordion player, his father played the violin, and his mother played the piano. All his siblings also played music and the accordion was not LeBlanc’s first instrument. It was later in life, when he was approximately 25 years old, that he learned the accordion. He mentions that Acadian families were certainly not rich in those times, and it was difficult for many families to purchase instruments. This of course included his own family, which explains why he could not start playing the accordion at an earlier age.

17 This fourth condition is no longer the case in Cape Breton; many girls currently learn the fiddle.
In the example of Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe), we can see three major differences between the situation with fiddlers in Cape Breton, as stated by Hope, and accordion players in southeastern New Brunswick. First, Georges LeBlanc learned the accordion mostly from other players in the community with little or no influence from his direct family. Hope puts great emphasis on the father as an important influence on any beginning fiddle player. While Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) did learn other instruments from his father and the many tunes that accompanied them, he did not learn anything specific about the accordion. This was typical for many first generation players, especially when the accordion was first introduced to the area. However, even fifty years and more after this instrument had been introduced to the region, there were still first generation players appearing. These players had to go outside their immediate family to learn technique, style, and by that time, repertoire specific to the instrument.

This eventually changed as more Acadians played the accordion and passed the tradition down to their siblings and sons, much in the same way as Virginia Hope found with Cape Breton fiddlers. We can now see many cases of second or third generation accordion players. For example, Clément LeBlanc, as previously mentioned, is a third generation accordion player. He explained how he learned the accordion and his account was much different than George’s LeBlanc’s (Dieppe).

I’ve been playing the accordion for a long time, since I was twenty years old. I played the guitar before that, but I switched when I was twenty because I liked the accordion. I started learning music from my father and grandfather, who both played. [...] When I was ten years old, I heard my grandfather play, but it did not interest me back then. When I hit nineteen, twenty, I was hearing my father play a lot and I decided: I’m going to learn it. My father showed me the basics, my grandfather also, but after that, I learned by myself.18

Next, we can see that the players did not necessarily learn the instrument from a young age. While most fiddlers would have seen their parents fiddle and taken up the art as soon as they could, the same could not be said for the accordion. For reasons of the lack of exposure, or in the case of Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe), the lack of money to purchase an instrument, players

usually started playing the instrument much later in their lives. This is not always the case however, as we have seen with Eugène LeBlanc, who was lucky to have good exposure to the instrument from a very young age. This exposure was from an Italian but the music that he later learned was from his own community.

The final difference concerns the age of the player. Since players learned the instrument later in life, many players had already learned another instrument, or at the very least, had much more exposure to music than they would have had in their childhood. Therefore, they learned the accordion having already adopted basic musical concepts and for the most part, the musical style of the region.

While these differences in how Acadians first learned the accordion are important, the similarities with Hope’s cases are important to note as well. The following highlights aspects of Acadian accordion learning that are similar in all forms of folk music in this region.

Folk music has always been a community affair, which begins within each family. In any given Acadian family, there was rarely only a single musician. Music always spread quickly among family members. Since a family member would play almost every day, his children would quickly become exposed to all of this music and would be able to learn the instrument, or other instruments, very easily. This is what helped create and sustain these musical families, as in the case of both George LeBlancs (Memramcook and Cap-Pelé).

It is very important to note that there also exists a much larger musical family as well, which includes all the musicians of the region. Today, all the accordion players know each other very well, frequently visit each other and are always learning from one another. There is a sense of community between all the players. All share a strong bond with one another. When one player learns a new tune, it spreads very quickly to most of the other players. They all share the same passion for music, and there exists a common knowledge among all the musicians of what it takes to be a musician and especially the hard work that is needed to be a musician. This is certainly not something that is unique to this generation’s musicians. All previous generations also knew most of the other musicians, and spread ideas and techniques among the members of this musical family.
Acadians musicians are self-taught. There have never been any classes or teacher specifically for the accordion. Therefore, each Acadian learned by listening and watching other musicians play. In his book, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island: Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition*, Ken Perlman writes:

Tunes were passed down between the generations for the most part by ear within the family and community. Many fiddlers report that they learned their first tunes by listening to the jigging of family members. Other opportunities to hear tunes included older relatives who played fiddle, community dances, and – by the 1930s – radio. By the time most youngsters were old enough to manipulate a fiddle, they had already committed to memory a large portion of the local repertoire.

While Perlman writes about fiddling on PEI, the same method of learning repertoire and style is certainly present with southeast New Brunswick accordion players. Many new players learned repertoire from other instruments, though, such as the fiddle. Over time, the accordion players developed their own style and repertoire.

Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) had much to say on the matter. Answering both in French and English, as is often the case with many Acadians from the southeast part of New Brunswick, he explained how he taught himself to play and how he learned music. He learned by ear by listening to the music that surrounded him. Being from a musical family, he learned by listening to his parents and to his siblings. “Back then,” LeBlanc recalls, “there were no lessons or people to teach you how to play, you had to teach yourself.” Now, he still learns music the same way, although he specifies that he can learn it much faster. "I only have to listen to it once now, and I can play it." He also notes that it is much easier to learn music now because of the many recordings that are currently available. In many ways, recordings have changed the way music has been transmitted between players. With recordings, musicians can now listen to certain tunes repeatedly, which makes the learning process much faster. When this happens, learning notes and comparing styles of playing becomes much easier as well.

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2.4 Recordings and their Impact

Recently, many Acadian accordion players have been exposed to new ways of learning and listening to the accordion. First, as Georges stated, recordings have had a major impact. While live music is still present and remains very important, recordings, both official releases and simple spur of the moment cassette or digital recordings, have been showing up in every accordion player’s music collection. Many players have recorded themselves and released CDs, which usually take the form of self-released CD-Rs. In addition to CDs, many players have self-recorded themselves on personal recorders. For example, Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) has a small personal recorder that has a total of 84 tunes which he has collected over the years.

Recordings found on the internet also have had a certain impact. While not every player has explored this vast tool, many have, especially in the younger generation. This has opened the gates to an even larger pool of music that previously did not have an impact on the repertoire of this region.

All these recordings have helped players in many aspects. First, recordings have helped these players remember some pieces that they might have otherwise forgotten. Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) notes that it would be very hard for him to remember all the tunes that he has on his disks and therefore they are very valuable for him. Next, these recordings also serve as a learning tool for many players. Many players often borrow the personal recordings from other players, and in return they happily give their own recordings. This helps to spread the tunes at a much faster pace as well as helping to preserve them.

As with any oral art, recordings can hinder the tunes in some ways however. One aspect of oral music is its ability to change from player to player and from generation to generation. Recordings have a tendency to preserve a single version of these tunes, forever keeping it unmodified. Recordings also have a danger of unifying everyone’s style. However, this is certainly not the yet case in this region. Variation remains a large factor in accordion playing, and this has continued to be the case, despite the proliferation of recordings. Certain pieces are rarely played the same way twice, even by the same player. Every recording succeeds in capturing the skeleton of the pieces while preserving some form of variation. Variations are present during the same tune with each repeating section changing. On recordings, every time that a section is repeated, it is played in a different way. This, coupled with the fact that most
players vary the tunes in their own different ways, means there is little danger of taking away the variation aspects of the accordion playing in the region.

Recordings are a relatively new tool for accordion music in New Brunswick, as well as for folk music in general. Easily accessible recordings, not to mention cheap and simple means to record oneself, were certainly not always around. It is live music, the accordion’s primary role, that has been the main outlet for accordion music in the region. The accordion was played in many distinct venues, and its role in each of these venues was different. I will next look at where the accordion players practiced their trade and how this has changed over the years.

2.5 Traditional Live Performance

In Willy LeBlanc’s time, as explained by Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé), accordion players would often have their accordions with them and they were always willing to play when needed. Playing at parties was a common occurrence and players would often play all night until every guest had left. These types of gatherings often featured musicians playing small, portable instruments, such as the guitar, violin, and accordion. Some sort of percussion instrument was usually incorporated as well, such as spoons, or bones. If there was a piano in the house, then of course this instrument would join in as well. No matter the instrumentation, if the accordion was present, it would often act as a leader.

While playing at parties was important, the accordion also played an important role in more official functions. It was especially important for wedding receptions for example. Before DJs came to southeastern New Brunswick, the accordion was the instrument of choice when young couples got married and was present at most wedding receptions.

Weddings were certainly a more challenging show for the accordion player. During the wedding reception, the band’s main purpose was to provide music for the people in attendance. The quadrille, which is a traditional Acadian dance, was the dance of choice. Many players highlight the quadrille as a particularly difficult dance to play.

Again in Willy LeBlanc’s time, a large number of people needed musicians and Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) touched briefly on how difficult it was sometimes to be an accordion player
in New Brunswick. Aside from playing music, Acadian musicians were hard workers. Add music playing to everyday work, and they had a much larger workload than most other people. When they weren’t working, they were playing music. LeBlanc explains: “My father, like myself, was a fisherman, but when he wasn’t fishing, he was playing the accordion,” Georges told me. "He couldn’t put it down." Willy LeBlanc would play at a building by the wharf, where many gatherings occurred, or at various halls. He played for weddings and parties. "He played at our own wedding," Georges mentioned looking at his wife. For many Acadian musicians, this was their way of life; they were either working or playing music. Most of the players did not consider playing music work however, and found it highly enjoyable. This can be seen in many Acadian communities, including many that are not in New Brunswick. In his book, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island: Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition*, Ken Perlman elaborates about hard working Acadian musicians from the northern coast of Prince Edward Island. Often, these players would work all day, and play music all night. They would often be "required" to play for various events, such as weddings, usually free of charge. This would give these musicians a double workload. Perlman jokes that many musicians would give up their work to play music full time. This would lead to a very hungry and discontented family. In Willy LeBlanc’s case however, it was definitely not so drastic. Fishermen in the Maritimes provinces do not fish during the winter obviously, and that leaves them with a large amount of time to play during that season. During the summer, when they would be away long periods of time, they could still find time to play when they were not on their boats.

In more recent years, many of the events and dances that once required the accordion are quickly disappearing as young people from New Brunswick are no longer learning any of the quadrille dances. DJs have replaced the live bands and home entertainment systems have made live home music for parties obsolete. While it has all but disappeared, there is definitely still some local accordion music at certain gatherings. The quadrille dance is also still around as some of the older population have started to teach it to younger people in order to keep it alive. Fortunately for these people, there have also been different events that have been appearing so that this music and these dances can keep surfacing.

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There have been many additional venues, especially in recent years, that have given the accordion a new breath of life and have given these dances another chance to be seen by a wide audience. The accordion and its players have benefited greatly from these new venues since the older ones were fading. Folk music festivals as well as some live television programs are some examples of these new venues that have appeared in recent years.

2.6 New Performance Venues

It was Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) who inaugurated the Moncton Annual Accordion festival, now called the Georges LeBlanc Annual Accordion festival, which has been going since 2007. The first festival was held in Memramcook and had so much success that it was sponsored by the city of Moncton during the following years. During this festival, which has grown steadily each year, many players are invited from all over the country, the majority of them from Quebec, where the accordion is very popular. This festival has allowed many players to be exposed to other musicians. This surge of new players and music has affected the younger generation of players and the effects of this festival on the region’s accordion players will be explored in greater detail later, in Chapter 4.

This festival was not the first new venue for accordion players and other musicians. Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) went a bit further than most players when he started his own television show on local cable television called George LeBlanc’s Country Jamboree. On this program, he invited many local musicians to play music. All instruments were included, and there was usually an accordionist among the players. When he stopped filming this program, LeBlanc started to host radio shows, and eventually became a very big promoter of the accordion and of traditional Acadian music. This television show and radio broadcast was a way to provide a fresh new way to expose this music to the general public, who for the most part didn’t listen to this kind of music on a regular basis.

While traditional house parties where live music is present have mostly vanished, people still gather today to listen to live music. These gatherings are in the form of jam nights, usually in small local community centers, such as community legion halls, bingo halls, or Centres d’âge d’or. These jam nights are usually held once a week and can attract many musicians, as well as
also attracting a good sized audience. Of course, not only the accordion players are in attendance; there are also other instruments present such as the guitar, piano, and the fiddle. Many accordion players regularly play these jam nights and even travel around to multiple regions in order to play each one. In addition to playing in Cap-Pelé, Georges LeBlanc (Cap-Pelé) regularly goes to Memramcook and Haute-Aboujagane where there are jam-nights every week.

Even with these new venues for the accordion, there are certain players who lament the changes that have happened to the accordion music scene. In an interview with Valerie LeBlanc, an accordion player from Irish Town, New Brunswick, he mentions that the dancing aspect of the music is one of its most important characteristics, and seeing it being lost is heartbreaking. He also mentions that since people are no longer dancing to this music, he has noticed that the playing style has changed somewhat. "If you can’t dance to it," he said, "you’re playing it wrong." When Valerie LeBlanc was young, these dances were very common occurrences; anytime there was an accordion playing in the room, people danced and everyone knew these dances. That is certainly not the case today as these dances are greatly diminished in popularity, indeed almost non-existent. To illustrate this, there was only a single moment during the third accordion festival where people got up, mostly seniors, and danced a specific round dance. While a few people got up for some spontaneous solo tap dancing, the much larger, more organized forms of dances were largely not present. There were also no such dances during the fourth festival. As previously mentioned, that is not to say that these dances are completely gone as they appear quite frequently in the aforementioned jam nights, as well as on certain special occasions when the older population invites some younger people to learn these dances.

2.7 Progression in Style

During this same interview, Valerie LeBlanc elaborated on the differences in playing style between the older generation and the younger generation of players (ages 65+ and 30-65 respectively), Valerie LeBlanc being among the older population of players. He mentioned that
the style of the younger players is not the same as the older generation. Changes in style have always existed between generations, and according to a presentation at the Congrès Mondial Acadien 2009 in Shippagan by Georges Arsenault, the older generations have been lamenting changes in musical style since the 1800s. The style in south eastern New Brunswick has always been Acadian however. Valerie LeBlanc disapprovingly mentions that today, new Acadian players are playing more in a Quebec style, or at least attempting to. This was confirmed by many accounts from younger players, who are learning tunes from Quebec at a much faster pace. The younger players, such as Eugène LeBlanc and Clément LeBlanc, embrace these changes and see them as a way for the accordion to ultimately move forward in today’s world. I will explore these different changes and the player reactions to these changes in greater detail later in this work.

While it is certain that the accordion may have seen a certain decline in use over the years, it is certainly far from extinguished. As we have seen, even if the old uses for the instrument with which players like Willy LeBlanc and Eugène LeBlanc were familiar have declined, new venues have emerged and have served as replacements. New younger players, like Clément LeBlanc, have taken up the craft to continue the traditions set by their predecessors. Players such as LeBlanc continue to learn the same tunes and learn them in the same fashion as his ancestors did. They also learn and compose new tunes to add to the existing repertoire. This, more than anything else, helps to keep the music alive.

Even though there are too few younger players to replace every player that will stop playing in the coming years, with the help of the festivals and other means of spreading the art, the possibility exists that the music will be learned by new players.

Chapter 3
Repertoire and Style

The Acadian accordion style and repertoire is the product of years of change and variation. It is unique and different from other accordion styles found throughout the world. In this chapter, the general style of Acadian playing, as well as the many elements specific to the Acadian repertoire, are explored. This includes the analysis of some of the many jigs, reels, and waltzes that are featured in the Acadian repertoire. All these pieces are also categorized further. Attempts to categorize repertoire such as this, while never being completely perfect or accurate, help to generate a greater understanding of the pieces, while bringing some cohesion to the great mass of available repertoire. Finally, the way variation plays a part in the creativity of the players, and the way it greatly affects how the pieces are transmitted, are discussed.

3.1 The Accordion Music Style

In order to describe the accordion music style, it is important for it to be situated in the greater Acadian folk music context. First, there is a general consensus among musicians and non-musicians alike that were interviewed that the Acadian accordion playing is generally modest in style. The melodies are simple and the harmony remains uncomplicated. The general feel and the roots of these melodies have had many influences over the years.

As previously mentioned, the Acadian accordion repertoire finds its roots mostly in fiddle music, and there are many tunes that are now played that originate from the fiddler’s repertoire. In fact, most of the more popular accordion tunes come from the fiddle. For example, Kent County Jig, Reel St. Anne and Jimmy’s Favorite are amongst the most played accordion tunes and these originate from the fiddle.
The fiddle has been in the region for much longer than the violin, as early as 1725 when “musical renditions of ‘Les Brunettes’ or ‘Small Airs’ were being performed with two flutes or violins”\textsuperscript{23}. During these early years, the fiddle was often played to accompany songs. It was later however, in the late 1700s to the mid 1800s, that New Brunswick experienced a large amount of immigration. The Loyalists, Scots, English Yorkshires, Irish and the Danish all immigrated to New Brunswick during this time and they all brought a part of their fiddle tradition with them. Acadians fiddlers were mostly influenced by the Irish and Scottish fiddlers and they blended their own style with these new influences. There has certainly been some influence from all the above immigrants however, but the Irish and scots have had the most impact. This is certainly seen in the Acadian fiddle repertoire where there are many Irish and Scottish tunes.

This influence trickled down to accordion players. All accordion players often play with violin players and it is typical that they learn their repertoire. When the accordion was first introduced, the accordion players mostly learned fiddle repertoire. Valerie LeBlanc’s repertoire, for example, was composed of many reels of Irish origin and Memramcook players as a whole have a sound that is distinctly Scottish. However, the accordion playing style from south eastern New Brunswick has evolved into a distinct sound that is unique to the region. This is especially evident in the new repertoire that originates from the region. While much of the repertoire can be traced back to the fiddle repertoire, there is a growing amount of the repertoire that is composed of original material that players have composed over the years. These composed pieces will be explored further later in this chapter.

In addition to more direct instrumental influences (e.g. the fiddle), the Acadian accordion style, and indeed most Acadian folk music, derives in part from the Acadian “lamentation”, which is more commonly known as the \textit{complainte}. With the 1755 Acadian deportation, as well as the subsequent years of re-establishment in the region, the Acadians have had a difficult past and this often shows in their folk music. Robert Richard, the Acadian ethnological archivist at the \textit{Centre d’études acadiennes} in Moncton, NB, comments that the \textit{complainte} was the most

popular type of folk song for the Acadians and still is today.\textsuperscript{24} If we compare the accordion melodies with these songs, we begin to see a whole new dimension to the music.

Take for example a very popular Acadian folk song: *Partons la mer est belle*.\textsuperscript{25} This song recounts the story of a fisherman dying at sea when his boat capsizes. The song ends with the fisherman’s son hugging his mother, as he is her only comfort after losing her husband. The song however is in a major mode, and to anyone who would not know the words, it seems quite joyful. Even the words of the chorus are quite cheerful. They proclaim: “The sea is beautiful, let’s set sail!” While the chorus seems happy, it is the verses that tell the real story. The melody and harmony for both the verse and the chorus are however quite similar. Anyone who does not know the words would not realize that one is actually sad and the other one joyful.

One could say that this particular folk song is generally joyful because it is about the sea. The story is very sad, but it does not change the fact that the sea was one of the livelihoods of the Acadians and it was an important part of their lives. Even though the sea could be cruel, it was essential to the Acadians’ survival. This is why the song is sung in a major mode, and why the chorus strongly proclaims that the sea is beautiful. While not every *complainte* has a joyful melody or character, or is in a major mode, many are in this same style. This, according to Eugène LeBlanc, is the foundation for most of Acadia’s folk music, including accordion music. The songs have a sad undertone, even though they seem happy on the exterior.

This background, according to Eugène, is also what makes Acadian accordion music different than other styles of music. Even if other similar traditional styles of accordion music seem just as cheerful, Eugène makes a clear distinction between the Acadian music and other styles. He describes Quebec’s music, for example, as being more active, and as having more punch. The music is somewhat prouder, more patriotic. On the other hand, the Acadian version is more simple, and subdued. Like the *complainte*, even though the Acadian version sounds merry and light-hearted, its roots are set in difficult times. While Quebec certainly also had major historical hardships, their position as a primarily French speaking province in an otherwise


English speaking country enabled its people to find more patriotic sentiments, and this is reflected in their traditional music. Historically, this was not the case for Acadians. They were always a demographic minority and therefore, similar feelings of patriotism were almost impossible, until recently, to be achieved. This is also reflected in their music. It is important to note however that the Acadian style would rarely be considered as low-spirited on its own. It is only when compared to the Quebec style do we notice a stark difference.

While certain general aspects of folk songs might have found its way into the accordion players’ playing style, it is important to note that the players do not play any of the Acadian folk song repertoire on the accordion. The two have completely separate repertoire. There are instances where folk songs are played, but strangely, these are rarely from the Acadian folk song repertoire. These would typically be American or English folk songs.

On a more technical level, the style of Acadian accordion repertoire is often described by the musicians as simple and not too complex. The harmony and melodies fit this description well and stay relatively uncomplicated. The harmony mostly stays in the tonic and dominant. Many harmonies also have sub-dominant chords included at times, but that is the extent of harmonic progression. Furthermore, most pieces are in major modes because the diatonic accordions used by the Acadian players are in major modes.

Due to the nature of the instrument, the melody in Acadian accordion pieces is arpeggiated for the most part. These melodies are generally fairly simple, modest and, depending on the player, largely unadorned. Most players leave some space in their melodies, that is to say not many filler notes are added to fill out the melodies. Some ornaments are added from time to time, and some melodies are occasionally filled out to make them denser, but these instances do not occur frequently. In fact, when the musicians do add ornaments, they often become part of the melody and are played almost every time. This is in contrast with most ornaments that are additions to the melody that can change each time they are played. In each of the two sections of every tune, the melody usually has contrasting characters and a different idea or theme is played. This changes the flavour of each section and helps to keep the piece interesting. There are always similar elements found in both sections, however, and this helps to unify both sections. Of course, there are exceptions, and certain pieces have very similar sections, even to the extent of having the exact same theme.
Acadian players always use the full bellows on their accordions and it is not uncommon to see players stretch the bellows to its maximum length. This is due to two things. First, the melodic content previously discussed does not necessitate constant change of bellows. On the button accordion, a change in direction on the bellows – in or out – changes the note of any particular button. The more notes present in a melodic line, the more chances that the player needs to change the bellows. Since the Acadian melodies are generally sparse, the need to change direction on the bellows is minimized, thus permitting the players to go in the same direction for longer periods of time. Second, the harmonies of each piece also facilitate long bellown movements. Usually, a chord change only comes every bar or even every second bar. The fact that the same arpeggio is played for such long periods again negates the need to change direction frequently. A typical bellown sequence for a certain piece (these change from piece to piece) would be: IN for measure 1 and 2, OUT for measure 3, and IN for measure 4. These coincide with chord changes: IN for tonics and sub-dominant, OUT for dominants.

As mentioned, each piece usually has two main sections, each of which is repeated twice. Depending on the player, each section might be repeated even more often. Each section typically has four, eight or sixteen bars, depending on whether the piece is a reel, jig or waltz respectively, but this can vary greatly. Certain pieces, especially those with multiple time signatures (which will be examined shortly), have more than four bars per section. In this case, both sections do not necessarily have the same number of bars each. In fact, some sections can be up to twice as long as the other section in that particular piece. No matter how long each section is, the piece almost always finishes with the first section. While each section is repeated a set number of times, the player generally ends the piece with the cadence of the first section.

3.2 Piece Form Categorization

The Acadian repertoire as a whole is divided into three major categories: jigs, reels and waltzes. I will now take a closer look at all three to see how the Acadians treat each particular dance idiom.

Many of these pieces have no titles or my informants could not remember them. Therefore, a set of codes is used in order to distinguish tunes with no name. The versions of the
pieces used as examples throughout this work, as well as the untitled pieces found in the appendix, are coded as follows. The first letter determines the piece type and is either J (jig), R (reel), or W (waltz). The next letter(s) specifies the performer who played that particular version. Finally a number added at the end distinguishes between pieces that have the same coding otherwise. Many of pieces do have titles and in these cases, the real title is used.

Pieces found in this work, with very few exceptions, are categorized based on the first section of the piece. This is the most logical approach since almost every piece starts and ends with this first section; it is often considered to be the main part of the piece by most players. It is also sometimes repeated more often than the second section and has much more weight. Furthermore, this first section is often what players first remember when they think of any particular tune. It is for these reasons that this first section is used as the indicator for its category.

### 3.2.1 Jig

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrasing (first section)</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>I – V – I</td>
<td>Longer lines</td>
<td><em>Adéodat’s Favorite, Marche du Lac, Back and Forth, Oliver Special</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I</td>
<td>Shorter arpegiated lines</td>
<td><em>Marche de Lourdes, Maritime Jig, Kent County Jig</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I (IV happens on 1st beat, fourth measure)</td>
<td>Longer lines</td>
<td><em>Donegal Jig, La tune à Valerie, Reel du Ptit-Cap, Reel à Juliette, Cap-Pelé Special, Jimmy’s Favorite</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 3.1 Jig Categories |
The Acadians in southeastern New Brunswick have a special liking for the jig. This style is very often played in concerts and get-togethers, especially today. The word jig comes from the French word *guiguier* meaning to leap. It is defined as a tune that contains "the idea of a vigorous up and down movement, of which the dance is expressive."26 This definition fits perfectly with Acadian renditions of the accordion jig. Their versions are quite often joyous, jumpy and leaping in nature.

The Acadian accordion jig is always rhythmically trochaic. The trochaic rhythm is present in almost every bar of every jig, an example of which is presented in Figure 3.1. This trochaic rhythm is especially present on the first beat of the first measure of sections. While not every jig starts this way, it is very common for it to do so. The trochaic nature of the melodies is often varied to some degree. This is especially true since rhythm is the most varied aspect of Acadian music. These variations are explored later in this chapter.

![Figure 3.1 Trochaic Rhythm](image)

Another rhythmic trait found in many jigs (as well as most of the accordion music) is a very strong accent – either a rhythmic or harmonic accent (chord change) – on the first beat of every second measure, most notably on the fourth and eighth measure of every section. The final harmonic cadence also almost always ends on this beat. This emphasis, which is shown in Figure 3.2, is one of the most prominent characteristics of the accordion style from players in southeastern New Brunswick; it is found in many tunes.

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The two main sections inside jigs are generally repeated twice each. This can change however depending on a variety of factors, including the will of the player. The two sections often have many similarities within the same tune. The two sections can still be either vastly different or very similar.

While there are many variations between different jigs, I can clearly define two main categories and I use the harmony of the pieces to distinguish them. First, there are jigs containing a simpler I-V-I harmony. In this category, phrases are usually four bars long and the melody inside these phrases typically covers a wider range on the instrument. In the second category, the jigs have a slightly more complex harmony: I – IV – V – I. This category is divided into two separate subcategories. The first subcategory changes harmony on the first beat of every measure while in the second and most popular subcategory, the rhythm changes to IV on the first beat of the fourth measure, which is the same accent point previously mentioned in Figure 3.2.

### 3.2.1.1 Simple Harmony Jigs (I - V - I)

Jigs from the first category all contain I – V – I harmonies and four measure ideas that are divided into two parts: a statement and an answer. The statement is in the first two measures, and the answer follows in the next two measures. Therefore, in each section, there are two statement/answer ideas. These statement/answer ideas share common characteristics throughout the entire piece. For example, inside each section, the statements are often identical, therefore starting each statement/answer idea the same way. However, the statements of the first section
are different from those of the second section. This is the main difference between both sections. The first answers are also usually different inside of each section, meaning measure three and four are different from measure seven and eight. However, ending answers in each section (measure seven and eight + measure fifteen and sixteen) are either identical or highly similar.

The melodies found in this category generally have a great amount of movement, and cover a wide range of the instrument, especially in the first section. In these first sections, the melody generally has a main direction, either upwards or downwards. They go in either direction for a long period of time before quickly leaping or diving in the opposite direction. When the melody uses a generally descending theme for example, it usually goes down for the first two measures before having a major leap back up in time for the first beat of the third measure to start the descent again. This means that the melody typically features one or two major jumps, and afterwards slowly trickles down or climbs upwards. Sometimes, the melody has a wave figure, instead of a single general direction. In this case, there are no major leaps, but longer flowing lines. Below, Figure 3.3 shows a melody downward melody with leap at the end, while Figure 3.4 shows an example of a wave melody.

![Figure 3.3 Downward Melody with Leap](image1)

![Figure 3.4 Melody with Wave Shape](image2)
The second section generally has a different feel than the first. It often features much shorter melodic lines than the first. Even if this section still follows the same statement/answer motif found in the first section, because of these shorter melodic ideas, it gives the impression of shorter phrases. The melodies within this section can come in different forms. In some cases, these melodies contain a repeated arpeggio, covering either a large or a limited tonal range. In other cases, the melody is slightly more elaborate, but rarely as elaborated as the first section. Since this section is often a series arpeggios rather than a straight melody, it can sound more exciting or even faster than the first section. Themes from the first section return often in the second section, sometimes with the exact same notes and rhythm. This return is typically at the end of the section.

Harmonically, this category of jigs is always very straightforward and contains I – V – I harmonies. Often, the piece stays in the tonic until the final bar of the section, at which time the dominant appears for a few beats. Sometimes, the dominant appears in the third measure as well. This usually applies for both sections of the piece. The second section can also feature a modulation. While in certain pieces both sections are in the same key, there are some pieces in which the second section modulates upwards by a fourth. There are rarely any other kinds of modulations.

An example of this first type of jig is Adéodat’s Favorite (Figure 3.5). First, the harmony is confined to I – V – I throughout the entire piece and both sections follow the exact same harmonic plan. The melody in the first bar is played in the tonic. The third measure changes to V to fall back on the tonic on measure four. The tonic then continues on to measure five and six and finally, measures seven and eight present the final cadence of V - I. In this piece, the third measure contains a V⁹ which is very interesting and not very common. The second section contains the same harmonic plan but it modulates to the sub-dominant (D).
Figure 3. 5 Simple Harmony Jig: Adéodat’s Favorite

The phrase structure follows the plan for this category exactly. The first section contains two statement/answer ideas, as does the second section. In the first section, the statements (measure 1-2 and 5-6) are identical. In the second section, they are almost identical; measure fifteen is a variation of measure eleven. Since measure fifteen is a variation, it shares the same idea and is identical in form with measure eleven. This piece also shows an example of the similarity between the cadences in both sections. While some pieces have identical cadences, the ones in this piece only share certain characteristics. For example, they both share the same rhythm and relative harmony – both are V - I. The melody changes however, which makes each cadence unique.

The melodies contain the most significant differences in each section. While both melodies are generally arpeggiated and contain largely trochaic rhythms, they both have very different characters. The melody in the first section contains a greater number of notes often found in groups of three eight notes. This contributes to a greater flow inside this section. The second section however generally contains the rhythmic figure of a quarter note followed by an eighth note which makes this section sound more animated compared to the first section. This also greatly affects how the players interpret this piece. The first section, following the character of the melody, is played in a legato fashion. The second section, on the other hand, is played in a more staccato manner; the players often cut short the quarter notes. In the second section, the legato playing returns once the three eighth note figures return in measure fifteen.
This category includes many pieces in the Acadian accordion repertoire such as Marche du Lac, Back and Forth, Oliver Special, and many others. While they all share certain similarities, there are also some differences between them. Among the similarities are identical statements in each section. While there is a certain amount of mild variation in certain pieces ([JGC1] for example), these would never be enough to consider the statements different, and can be attributed to players’ interpretation of these pieces. For differences in all of these pieces, the ending answers take various forms, ranging from being completely identical as in [JGC3] to being completely different as in [JGC1]. In addition to different answers, there can be certain changes to the harmonic content. In [JO1] for example, the second section slightly changes the harmonic structure. In this case, the second half of the statement changes to a sub-dominant chord.

3.2.1.2 Complex Harmony Jigs

The second category features jigs with a slightly more complex harmonic progression. The pieces in this category employ the following chord progression: I – IV – V – I. These pieces can be divided into two separate subcategories, each having a slightly different phrasing. The first subcategory features two measure repeated ideas. Measures one and two of this category always have the same material as the third and fourth measures, but on a different chord. The rest of the first section can be different but it is typically very similar. The fifth and sixth bars often contain the same material as the previous measures, and the last two bars contain an answer to the previous material, thus giving an answer to all previous measures. However, it is also possible to find that the fifth and sixth bars present new material so as to give statement a twice in the first half of the section, and statement b in bar five/six and the answer in the last two bars. The second subcategory always features this last form. In this case, the second half of the first section always presents new material.

Melodic ideas in complex harmony jigs can take many different shapes. Since the harmony is going upwards, melodies often have an ascending aspect to complement this, especially in subcategory 1. Figure 3.6 shows an example of these melodies.
The melodies found here are typically very arpeggiated and always settle in the last two measures of the section with the final answer. The second section often closely resembles the first section of the simple jig category since there is a return of four measure statement/answer melodies. They can sometimes be both identical when looking at their harmonic plans as both often contain I - V - I harmony. In this case, when comparing the two sections of the second category, both are vastly contrasting in harmony since one has a I - IV - V - I harmony while the other has a much simpler I - V - I.

3.2.1.2.1 Complex Harmony Jigs – Subcategory 1

Next is an example of a tune from the first subcategory: *Marche de Lourdes* (Figure 3.7). First, the harmony changes on the first beat of every second measure and the phrasing in this example takes the form of statement X3 – answer. The same motif returns three times before the final two bars which answers the previous six bars.

The melody first starts on the tonic and ascends until the end of the second bar. In the third bar, it restarts, this time in the sub-dominant, and follows the same pattern. In the fifth bar, once again, the same pattern is followed starting on the dominant. Finally, the pattern is broken in the seventh and eight bar, settling on a V-I cadence. This tune is one example where the melody complements the harmony, both going in an ascending manner.
The second section is identical to the material found in the first category. There is a simpler harmony, which is I – V – I, as well as a statement/answer phrasing, where the statement and answers each contain two measures. In this case, the melody descends in the first four bars. It then returns to the top for the fifth bar and descends again finally settling in a V - I cadence in the final two bars.

3.2.1.2.2 Complex Harmony Jigs – Subcategory 2

The second subcategory of tunes features a large selection of pieces, an example being Cap-Pelé Special (Figure 3.8). In this tune, and in all others like it, the fourth measure features a change in chord to the sub-dominant. A chord change in this measure is very popular in the Acadian accordion repertoire and it is used very often. In this tune, the phrasing a-a-a-a is used, but a-a-b-c and a-b-a-b can also be found in other tunes from this subcategory.
The phrasing in *Cap-Pelé Special* is fairly similar to the first subcategory. For example, the first four measures are very similar, although the harmony change is in a different measure. The fact that the change occurs in the fourth measure instead of the third slightly changes the phrasing when compared to the first subcategory. The rest of the first section uses the same theme found in these first measures. Looking at the melody in this tune, it stays in a particularly narrow range, and does not go too high or too low. This is not a specific characteristic of this subcategory and melodies can be widely different from piece to piece.

In the second section of *Cap-Pelé Special*, there is a slight shift in how the melody is phrased, although it is still very similar to the first section. It follows the same harmony and has the same change to the sub-dominant at measure sixteen. It is also interesting that only the first three measures of each section are different. The rest of the piece is exactly identical in both sections. It is also important to note that the melody generally goes higher in the second section.
which makes this section a bit more exciting. This helps to change the pace in otherwise two very similar sections.

There are certain pieces which seem to curiously fall in both subcategories. *La Tune à Elmo*, for example, starts with a I – IV - V – I progression with the sub-dominant occurring on measure four in the first section. Therefore one would assume that it belongs in the second subcategory. However, in the second part, a harmonic plan consistent with the first subcategory is played. Pieces such as this one are particularly exceptional and could be classified in two ways. Since, as previously mentioned, I am classifying the pieces based on the first section, this piece is placed in the second subcategory, but it is worth noting that it includes elements from both subcategories. In either case, the piece does not have any characteristics which are completely outside these two subcategories, and is therefore not different than the norm.
3.2.2 Reel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phrasing (first section)</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A^1</td>
<td>a-a-a-a or a-a-a-b</td>
<td>I – V - I</td>
<td>Short ideas</td>
<td>Lea’s Favorite, RJP1, RV2, RV4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A^2</td>
<td>a-a-a-a or a-a-a-b</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I</td>
<td>Short ideas</td>
<td>Sitting in a Tree Stand, Rheal’s Reel, Beldune Two-Step, RJP3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>a-b-a-b</td>
<td>I – V – I or</td>
<td>Two measure</td>
<td>Reel St-Anne, Silver and Gold, RV1, RJP4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I – IV – V – I</td>
<td>phrases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>a-a-b-c or a-b-b-c or</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>RC1, RCL1, RJP1, RV6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-b-c-d</td>
<td></td>
<td>measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>phrases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Reel Categories

Grove Music Online describes the reel as derived from the Anglo-Saxon word hreol meaning to “whirl”. It is a very ancient Scottish dance in its roots but it has since been adopted by many different cultures.\(^\text{27}\)

The Acadian reel, as played by the south eastern New Brunswick accordion players, is lively and full of energy. Unlike the relatively predictable trochaic rhythms found in the Acadian jig, the reel boasts a wide array of rhythmic styles and ideas. Therefore, the Acadian reel is generally more open to rhythmic variations and to syncopations. Whereas the jig can be somewhat predictable, the reel generally holds a surprise. Another rhythmic curiosity found in

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reels is the presence of many different time signatures. It is very typical for players to leave out a beat resulting in a 3/4 bar, or add a beat (or 2) which results in various combinations of 2/4 and 3/4 bars in an otherwise 4/4 piece. The ability to play with time is a very interesting element in these reels. While this does occasionally happen with jigs, it is certainly not at the same frequency as found in reels.

There are certainly some similarities between the Acadian reel and jig as well. Like the jig, the reel is harmonically relatively simple, staying with I – V – I or a I – IV – V – I harmonic phrases. Another element that the reel shares with the jig is that it also has two main sections, which are also generally repeated twice each. These two sections each share common ideas while presenting new material. The Acadian reels are divided into three categories: reels with single bar patterns, reels with two bar phrases and reels with four bar phrases. Once again, as was the case with jigs, the first section of every piece is used to categorize each piece. This is even more important in reels as certain pieces contain vastly contrasting sections.

3.2.2.1 Single-bar Pattern Reels

In the first category, which is comprised of reels with single bar patterns, the same melodic theme is repeated inside of every bar. In this category, there are always three statement ideas followed by an answer. While the harmony might change, the general shape and rhythm of the melody remains the same. Because of the shortness of the phrases, these pieces are much simpler and they have much less material.

This category is also divided into two subcategories. The first consists of pieces with a I – V – I harmony. This subcategory typically has two similar sections (A – A¹) but this is not always the case. The second subcategory consists of pieces where the harmony is I – IV – V – I and the second section is typically completely different than the first; the form is usually A – B and it follows a two measure statement/answer phrase scheme. In this subcategory, each measure inside the first section has a chord change, which is very similar to the jigs seen in 3.2.1.2.1 Complex Harmony Jigs – subcategory 1.
3.2.2.1.1 Single-bar Pattern Reels – I- V- I

[R-JP-1] (Figure 3.9) is an example of a piece from this first subcategory of reels. The main phrase of this piece is in the first bar and it is then repeated in the second bar. Almost every piece in this category follows this formula. Next, the third bar is an example of the aforementioned change in time signature. The player in this case adds a 2/4 measure which only acts as a phrase extension before going into the "real" third bar. This extends the initial idea, without causing it to change radically. The first variation of the initial theme occurs in the fourth bar, but it is not a significant change. The change of the two last eighth notes to four sixteenth notes only acts as a flourish to lead into the final bar. This small flourish makes the fifth bar seem more final, even when this last bar keeps the same idea of the initial theme intact.

![Figure 3.9 Single-bar Pattern Reels – I- V- I: [R-JP-1]](image)

In the second section of this piece, the melody is much more varied but it still keeps the same rhythm that was found in the first section, at least for the first two bars. Starting on measure eight, the flourish motif previously seen in bar four reappears. In this second section, it appears much more frequently, which breaks some of the monotony of the main theme. This motif appears twice in bar eight, once in bar nine and twice again in bar ten. The rhythm changes once again in the final bar to mark the final cadence before returning once again to the top of the piece. It is very typical for the second sections of this category such as this one to be a
bit more free. Different motifs such as this one appear, or sometimes even the whole phrase changes, possibly to two measure phrases.

3.2.2.1.2 Single-bar Pattern Reels: I – IV – V – I

In the second subcategory contains a different harmonic progression and *Fiddler’s Finger* (Figure 3.10) is an example of a piece from this subcategory. The harmony of the first section is I – IV – V – I, with each measure changing chords. Furthermore, this first section uses similar rhythmic figures in every bar. In this tune, there are once again time signature changes. The last bar is in a 2/4 time signature for the first repeat, while the last bar of the second repeat is in 3/4: another good example of how the players may change the time signature inside their reels. There is also a slight break in the main rhythm in the last two beats of the second bar. The rhythmic figure found in these two last beats is a typical figure found in many Acadian reels. This type of rhythm is always in the last two beats of the measures.

![Figure 3.10 Single-bar Pattern Reels: I – IV – V – I: Fiddler's Finger](image)

In the second section many more changes occur. Here, the melodic and rhythmic phrase completely changes. Not only does the musical idea change, but the melodic phrase changes from a one bar phrase to a two bar phrase, and it contains the two bar statement/answer motif
found in many other Acadian tunes. This new phrase contains accents and periods of rest on the first and third beat compared to the first section where there is only an accent on the first beat with no rests. Also, in this section, every measure is in 4/4. In the second bar, there is an accent on the third beat of the second and fourth measure, which is very similar to the accent found in the Complex Harmony Jigs – subcategory 2. This accent is not only common in jigs, but also common in reels with two measure phrases, which will be analyzed next.

3.2.2.2 Two Bar Phrase Reels

The next category contains longer two measure phrases. This category always features two sections with drastically different materials, meaning the melodies found in each section are vastly different. In fact, pieces found in this category have some of the most contrasting sections found in the Acadian repertoire. There are still certain rhythmic ideas are often shared between both sections however. Melodies in this section always have statement/answer ideas where each statement/answer repeats four times to form each section. Harmonically, we find a large variety of patterns. Most use a I – IV – V – I form, where chord changes appear at various times and some use a simple I – V – I category, but there is no larger harmonic pattern that can be found, thus no need to form multiple subcategories for this specific category. There are still however definite accents, either rhythmic or harmonic found on the third beats, again similar to the jigs in Complex Harmony Jigs – subcategory 2.

To demonstrate this category, Reel St. Anne (Figure 3.11), a popular reel played throughout the world and which is equally popular with Acadians, is presented. The main feature of this category is the identical statements found in each section. Measure one and three are always identical, which form two largely similar two measure phrases, each of which is repeated twice to form each section. This piece has similar but different answers to each identical statement.

This particular reel has a harmony of I – IV – V – I. The tonic is played inside each statement in the first section. In the second measure, the harmony is IV followed by a return to I on beat one and three respectively. In the fourth measure, the progression is twice as fast, with the final cadence of IV – V - I happening on the first, second and third beat. In the second
section, the progression is a little different. The section starts on the tonic, but switches to IV on the third beat of measure six with the dominant occurring in measure seven. Measure eight is identical to measure six and finally, measure 9 has the final cadence with V – I happening on bar one and three. Harmonically, this plan is not necessarily followed in other reels in this category. The only definite aspect that groups these reels is the two measure ideas.

Each section is also vastly different. First, the harmony is different. Also, each melody is completely different as well. Another aspect worth noting in this particular piece is that on the third and fourth beat of the first three measures, the same rhythm that was found in the second measure of [RJP3] is used. As mentioned, this particular rhythm is very common and is found in many reels.

![Figure 3.11 Two Bar Phrase Reels: Reel St. Anne](image)

3.2.2.3 Four Bar Phrase Reels

The next category, reels with four measure phrases, is the final category of reels in the Acadian accordion repertoire. In this category, phrases still contain two statement/answers, which are repeated twice, for each section. However, the statements are not identical. While these statements might be similar, they are different enough to continue a larger idea. In this category, there is usually a very strong accent, usually harmonic, on the third beat of measure
two and four. Harmonically, the pieces in this category always contain a I – IV – V – I progression. Between sections, this category is very similar to the previous one. Both sections are quite different, and contain various new ideas. There are always some similarities, usually rhythmic, but both melodies are contrasting.

These traits are present in *La Tune à Edouard* (Figure 3.12). Here, the two statements in each section are not identical. The four bars played are clearly one whole idea, as opposed to two shorter ideas that are linked together, as seen in the previous category. Each section is also very different, even when rhythms are shared. For instance, the rhythm found in the first two beats of the first measure is found throughout the entire tune. Also, the last measures of each section, with the exception of the very last measure, share the same rhythm. Harmonically, this piece stays within the confines of this category, with a I – IV – V – I harmony with the IV happening on the third beat of the second measure. In fact, most harmony changes happen on the third beats in this piece.

This piece shows that the second and third categories are very similar. The major change is found in the statements, which are the same for the second category, and are different for this one.

![Four Bar Phrase Reels: La Tune à Edouard](image)

**Figure 3.12 Four Bar Phrase Reels: La Tune à Edouard**
3.2.3 Waltz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phrasing (first section)</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Pieces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>a-a-a-b</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I or I – V – I (rare)</td>
<td>Shorter repeating ideas</td>
<td>WGC1, WGC2, WD1, WCL1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>a-a-a-a or a-a-a-b</td>
<td>I – IV – V – I</td>
<td>Longer ideas</td>
<td>WO1, WGC3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Waltz Categories

In south eastern New Brunswick, there are significantly fewer Acadian waltzes than in the other two predominant dance idioms. However, a player rarely plays a set without including at least a few waltzes as they provide a change in pace.

The waltz, as played by most Acadians from south eastern New Brunswick, is usually largely unadorned. It contains, like the rest of the Acadian repertoire, two separate sections which can be moderately paced with a tempo of about 120 beats per minute or faster paced at around 160 beats per minute. Furthermore, the predominant rhythms are generally half and quarter notes, with some, but fewer eighth notes. The waltz also contains longer phrases resulting in thirty-two measure tunes. It is also somewhat common for players to add an extra measure at the end of sections, immediately following the final cadence of each section.

The thematic material used in waltzes is very similar for both sections of the piece. A melody or fragment is often played in both sections. Furthermore, the melodies found in these pieces, compared with jigs and reels, always stay within a very limited tonal range. Harmonically, like the jig and reel, there is a simple harmonic structure inside each waltz, always consisting of I – V – I or I – IV – V – I. The result is a generally calm and smooth sounding piece.

Like the other two Acadian styles, the waltzes can be divided into two categories, which are based, like the reels, on their themes. Waltzes usually contain four bar themes. These
waltzes contain short thematic material that is often repeated in each phrase and this is true in both major sections of the piece. Second, there are waltzes with longer eight bar phrases. In these waltzes, the ideas are longer which results in less repetition.

3.2.3.1 Four Bar Phrase Waltz

The first example of a four bar phrase waltz consists of smaller four measure themes, [WCL1] (Figure 3.13). The thematic material for the whole piece consists of a half note followed by a quarter note and the theme occurs in most of the piece. In the first section, the rhythmic theme is first introduced in the first four measures and it is then repeated in each four measure group. This type of phrasing is very consistent with all pieces in this category. There is a slight shift in the pattern for the final cadence of the section, which is normal as it makes the section sound final. In the second section, a new idea is presented in the first bar. This new idea still has some similarities with the theme in the first section, especially when it is played with the following three bars. After these four initial bars, the theme from the first section returns once again. The rest of the section largely keeps the same thematic material. The same ending cadence in this second section as was played in the first section is present.
3.2.4 Eight Bar Phrase Waltzes

The second category of waltzes contains longer phrases, usually in groups of eight measures. *Ginette’s Waltz* (Figure 3.14), for example, has much longer themes. In this category, there are often no repetitions in four measure group, although if there are repetitions, they will often be found in the first four measures.

The phrase in the first eight bars of this waltz is divided into two four measure groups. The first four bars start with an initial idea while the last four bars complement and finish this idea. This is repeated exactly twice to form the first section. The second section keeps the statement/answer phrasing, but introduces new material, while still keeping elements from the first section. In measure twelve for example, the first measure of this second section is new material. The same ending as the first section is played as well. In fact, it is common for most waltzes to have the same ending in both sections.
Variation plays an important part in the Acadian accordion style, as in much Acadian folk music. One type of variation occurs between players. Each player usually plays his version of every piece that he knows. Furthermore, each player varies each piece every time that it is played. Even section repeats are often varied in some way. This makes the pieces organic, and this is how change occurs in the repertoire. Since the music is very simple, it is the variations that make the pieces interesting. Even if you have heard one player’s version of a piece, the next player’s version is always vastly different. Even within the same piece, there is enough variation to keep the audience engaged, even if the same two sections are repeated four or five times.

Four elements are generally varied: melody, rhythm, harmony and tempo. The melody, harmony and rhythm of pieces are varied by the same player playing the same piece with variations between each repeat, as well as varied between different players playing the same piece. The tempo on the other hand is only ever varied when different players play the same piece. The following section looks at variations made to a single tune played by a player.

**Figure 3.14 Eight Bar Phrase Waltzes: Ginette’s Waltz**

![Figure 3.14 Eight Bar Phrase Waltzes: Ginette’s Waltz](image-url)
between each repeat. Then, the way different players interpret the same pieces and how they choose to vary pieces to fit their own way of playing will be discussed.

3.3.1 Variation by a Player Inside a Piece

3.3.1.1 Melodic Variations

When looking at how a player plays each repeat of a single piece, the melodic aspect of Acadian tunes is generally not overly varied. Most melodies played by these players remain the same each time they play it and certainly, even when slightly varied, the general skeleton of the melody always remains intact. The section of the melody that is most often changed is the ending of phrases, although changes can happen anywhere in the phrase. Examples of these slight changes can be lines, always following an arpeggio, going downwards towards the tonic in one repeat, and then going up towards the tonic in another repeat. When the melody is changed in this way, the rhythm often stays the same. Sometimes filler notes are added depending on the change. These variations are always in the same arpeggio as the original scale and therefore the piece remains recognizable.

Figure 3.15 shows a version of Adéodat’s Favorite, as played by Clarence Gould. Figure 3.16 shows a version of the sixth measure, which was played a total of two times in the course of a performance. In the first version of this sixth measure, which is the most prevalent version, the note on the fourth beat is a D, while in the next figure, this fourth beat is an A. While this changes the melody, the overall frame of the section and of the piece remains unchanged. Slight changes such as this one are found in almost every performance, and can be intentional or not.

28 This performance was played during the First Annual Accordion Festival, June 2007
When players rhythmically vary their pieces, they tend to use more interesting and intricate variations. Depending on the player, the rhythm is never played the same way twice, even between measures. The more skilled the player, the more extravagant we see the variations become. The player might add or take out notes or simply change the rhythm. In this case, the skeleton of the melody always remains the same. Another type of rhythmic variation played by Acadian players involves changes in time signatures. These are a bit rarer, but they do sometimes happen. In this case, usually at the end of phrases, players might add or take out a beat from the last measure.
An example of rhythmic variations can be found in Lea’s Favorite as played by Eugène LeBlanc. Below (Figure 3.17 and 3.18), there are two different repeats transcribed from the same performance of this piece, each having many variations. A simple look at the first measure reveals many changes in rhythm. There are many added notes in each beat and the last two beats of this bar even changes its feel. In these two last beats, LeBlanc shifts into groups of three eighth notes, which causes a heavily accented and syncopated phrase. This idea is continued in the second measure. The syncopation continues in the third beat. The rhythmic figure in this beat is not present the first time it is played. This particular beat is even further varied the next time it is played in measure six. In this case, the syncopation is removed, but a different set of added notes is played. In the second section, there are just as many variations but the variations are very different. Many notes are taken out, general rhythm is simplified, and there are comparatively more breaks. The first time the melody is played, the bare skeleton of the melody appears, mildly masked by a few eighth notes that are still present. This skeleton appears almost entirely in measure 13, where almost every extra eighth note is taken out. This section is furthermore devoid of any syncopation and the group of three eighth note motifs is not present. The entire effect that is created is of two very contrasting sections. One is played much more thickly while the other is thinned out. The player, in this case LeBlanc, plays with this throughout his entire performance. Sometimes, he plays the first section with fewer notes, while adding more notes to the second, or even playing both sections with a very busy feel. The idea is to present a different version every time.

There are two important aspects concerning rhythmic variations. First, the amount of variation used is highly dependant on the skill level of the player. Players of high skill tend to vary much more between repeats than players who are less proficient with the instrument, who often employ few or even no rhythmic variations between repeats. This becomes evident when looking at Figure 3.18. Obviously, a complicated variation such as this one is difficult to play, and not every player is capable of playing such intricate passages. Second, it is important to remember that while different amounts of rhythmic variations are employed, the frame of the piece always remains so that the piece is always easily recognizable, as with melodic variations.
Figure 3.17 Lea’s Favorite as Played by Eugène LeBlanc

Figure 3.18 Lea’s Favorite as Played by Eugène LeBlanc (Variation)
3.3.1.3 Harmonic Variations

Another commonly used variation is to change the harmonic voicing of certain chords. Usually, only the melodic line is played in the right hand, with the bass line and pre-defined chords in the left hand. However, some players add additional notes in the right hand to change the voicing of certain chords. This type of variation does not imply that the player completely changes the harmony; he keeps the same harmony, but adds more notes to the chord to make it thicker. There is an example of this in the previous two figures, in the fourth beat of the second measure of both versions. In the original version, only an E is played, while in the varied version, a G is added to form a thicker sound.

3.3.2 Variations of the Same Pieces by Different Players

The previous section explained how pieces are varied when played by the same player. The following section looks at how different players play the same piece. When the same piece is played by two different players, much more drastic changes are often carried out. While slight variations also happen, including the same variations that were previously discussed, two players’ interpretations of the same piece can be completely different. It is much more common that the melody changes quite a bit, though keeping the same basic idea. Two different versions of *La Tune à Elmo*(Figure 1.19 and Figure 1.20) are presented in order to demonstrate this and all previously mentioned forms of variations are highlighted in this example.
Figure 3. 19 La Tune à Elmo Version 1 Played by Olivier Gould

Figure 3. 20 La Tune à Elmo Version 2 Played by Ellie LeBlanc
The preceding versions of *La Tune à Elmo* were played in the first annual accordion festival in Memramcook. The first example was played by Olivier Gould while the second version was played by Elli LeBlanc. The first major variation is that the first bar of Gould’s version is played in 9/8 while the first bar of LeBlanc’s version is in the standard 6/8. It was previously explained that players often add or remove beats from certain bars, but it is very interesting to see that different players do this differently with the same pieces. This in itself is a very important variation. This kind of variation not only adds extra notes inside the measure to fill this extra beat (or remove notes depending on the case), but there is often a shift in the peak of the melody, such as in this example. Because of the addition of three notes in the first bar, the peak, which is the high A, is displaced by a beat between both versions. The peak is at the end of the second beat for Gould and at the end of the first beat for LeBlanc. There are also further variations on the last beat of the second bar, but the idea remains the same for both versions. The third and fourth bars are less varied. Here, only the second beat of the third bar is varied. In the fifth and sixth bar, there are much more profound rhythmic variations. Gould plays in these bars with long descending arpeggios, in complete eighth notes. This descending pattern is played until the second beat of the sixth bar, which gives a rhythmic emphasis on this last beat. On the last beat, there is an octave jump at the very last eighth note that serves as a lead into the next bar. In LeBlanc’s version, there is a rhythmic emphasis on every second beat of these bars. While LeBlanc’s melody still goes down for the first three beats, there is a break in the pattern on the second beat, as well as an octave jump directly on the second beat of measure six, which gives it more weight than Gould’s version. LeBlanc also does not play the lead-in note that Gould uses in measure six. This adds even more weight to this last beat in LeBlanc’s version. LeBlanc adds even more variation to these bars the second time he plays it. While Gould’s version is the same for both repeats, LeBlanc changes his second repeat. During this repeat, his last beat of measure six, like Gould’s, is played on the lower octave, but the beat is completely filled. As for the last two bars of the first section, Gould’s version is more filled. LeBlanc’s once again has a different variation for each repeat. During the first repeat, LeBlanc has breaks on the first beat of measure seven and on both beats of measure eight. In contrast, his second repeat is marked with four completely filled beats.

The second section is equally as varied. Gould follows the same pattern for the first four bars with the next two being fairly similar as well. LeBlanc completely varies all eight bars.
The very first arpeggio of the first bar is not played the same way by the two men: Gould goes up, while LeBlanc goes down. For the third and fourth bar, Gould plays the same broken arpeggio as the first two bars, ending on a high note on the second beat of bar thirteen, while LeBlanc chooses to play a repeating pattern twice. This makes Gould’s musical idea longer and it maintains its flow. On the other hand, LeBlanc’s musical line is more fragmented because of the new idea. LeBlanc then continues with the same theme in bars seventeen and eighteen; Gould also maintains his same motif in this bar. For the last bars of this section there are a few important variations between both sections. First, Gould starts on the dominant note (E) while LeBlanc starts on the sub-dominant note (D). While this is not necessarily a change of chord (both versions have harmony in the dominant for this last bar), it is still a very noticeable difference between both versions. Gould also varies his last notes, the first time it is C sharp, while his last repeat ends on A (the tonic). LeBlanc chooses to end both times on the tonic. There are further variations in these final bars. Rhythmically, Gould puts a short break on the last beat while LeBlanc has no breaks during his final bar. Therefore, Gould’s version has more finality to this section, while LeBlanc’s version obviously continues on to the first section once again. While there are many variations to this piece, it is important to note that there are no harmonic variations. In fact, the harmony is usually the most stable element in most pieces.

3.4 Composed Pieces

There are a great many tunes that are included in the Acadian accordionist’s repertoire. Most of these tunes have been passed down through the generations, and many, as we have seen, have come from other instruments, especially the violin. However, there are many accordion tunes that have been composed by recent accordion players and have become standards in each player’s repertoire. Tunes such as Adéodat’s Favorite and Sitting in the Tree Stand composed by Olivier Gould and Léa’s Favorite composed by Hector Mcgraw are in most players’ sets. These pieces were very important as they represented some of the first efforts of accordion players to establish their own tunes. The accordion now had its own repertoire. This was significant as these would be tunes that would be native to the instrument. Fiddle tunes could easily be adapted, but there are always certain limitations to playing tunes from another instrument. What
is interesting however is that these new tunes eventually crossed over to fiddle players who play these songs as well, especially when they play with accordion players.

It must be noted that even though these pieces are new, they follow the same forms that have been presented above. They are also varied in the same way that all pieces are varied, and they also share the same fate as other pieces that are passed down in the oral tradition. For example, many of these composed pieces, some of which can still be 30-40 years old, have their titles changed by various players. Some are attributed to the wrong composers, or some are varied in ways of which the original composer does not approve. This is inevitable however as most tunes are similar and are played the same way by every player whether these pieces are traditional pieces or recently composed.

In recent years, there has been a new wave of composed pieces that have been very different from the earlier tunes. These new pieces bear less resemblance to the more traditional pieces as they bear traces of new influences. At the annual accordion festival in Memramcook and Dieppe, New Brunswick players have been exposed to a very large array of new players, especially players from Quebec. This influence is evident in original pieces such as Virginia Street Reel composed by Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe).

This has affected some of the New Brunswick players in new ways, and might have drastically changed the direction that the accordion will take in south eastern New Brunswick. The next chapter explores this festival and how it has affected the players from south eastern New Brunswick.
4.1 Declining Folk Music and Revivals

Starting in the mid-1950s, and coinciding with the rise of new technologies, new forms of entertainment, and rock and roll, there was a noticeable decline in the performance and appreciation of folk music in all regions of the eastern provinces of Canada. For instance, there was a significant decline in the number of young people taking up the fiddle in Nova Scotia, particularly in Cape Breton, as well as on Prince Edward Island. Talking about the decline in interest in folk music amongst young people, Glenn Graham, in his book *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, quotes a discussion he had with Mary Graham about this subject. She notices that:

In the early sixties the Beatles were popular with the teenage crowd and a lot of the young people liked that more than the fiddle. You always did have a bunch that were interested in the square dances, but some more wouldn’t want to admit that they like square dancing and fiddle music. With the next generations, the trend continued – into the 70s and 80s, where the interest was in rock and roll – and they [young people] went where the rest of the crowd was going. There were even fewer younger people following the fiddle music at that time than in the time of my youth.

However, an outside force sparked a revival of the fiddle in this region. In 1971, the documentary *Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* premiered on the CBC television network. Graham explains that this documentary “prompted clergy and the cultural community to revitalize the music.”

Ken Perlman remarks that this same phenomenon happened on Prince Edward Island. He writes:

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The mid-1950s through the early 1970s saw great changes come to the Island—rural electrification, mass communications, improved roads, widespread automobile usage, mechanized agriculture, and school consolidation. It was now possible to see work and entertainment outside the community in which you lived. For the first time, the focus moved away from community music and dance to entertainment provided by mass communications. Hundreds of community fiddlers—products of a tradition that had provided dance accompaniment for generations—were still in place, but their talents were no longer in constant demand. As the importance and visibility of fiddling declined, the art no longer drew youngsters to its fold. By the mid-1970s, Island fiddlers were an ageing population with few members even as young as 30.

Once again, it took something outside the traditional sphere to spark a new life in a declining art. In the case of Prince Edward Island, the P.E.I. Fiddlers’ Association was formed, which was mandated to teach fiddling to young people. The Fiddler’s Association was largely successful, and managed to revive a struggling art.

In these two cases, there are many similarities, both in problems and solutions. First, it can be seen that both cases have the same elements:

1) New forms of entertainment arrive in the region.
2) Young players especially are attracted to these new forms of entertainment.
3) These young players do not learn the area’s traditional music, which for them seems uninteresting or for an older generation only.
4) There exists a talented, but ageing player base.

Looking at the solutions to this problem, it can be seen once again that the two areas share very similar paths.

1) A problem is recognized by a member of the community, or someone from outside the community.
2) Members of the community take new actions to remedy the situation.
3) Young people are re-exposed to the music and start to learn its tradition again either through traditional oral means, or in more modern ways, e.g. fiddle classes as seen on P.E.I.
While there were certainly some important differences in each of the two cases, the various solutions sparked a revival in folk music in each region. On this subject, Graham notes certain problems with “revivals”. He maintains that “revivals cannot always be considered positive occurrences. If in the strict sense a revival is the bringing of something back into existence, when an evolving thing like a tradition is revived, origins may be forgotten and there is no guarantee the recovered tradition will be authentic.”

There are examples of this in Prince Edward Island’s revival, especially with formal fiddle classes, which previously did not exist. However, there is always the possibility that traditional methods of learning and playing could organically return, at least for some of the players. Graham further notes that the most important thing in these revivals is the awareness for the tradition that is generated.

I will now link these cases to present day accordion music in south eastern New Brunswick. I will show how accordion players dealt with the same problems as in neighbouring provinces and how they found similar solutions. There is one important difference though: the third step, which is encouraging young people to learn the instrument and re-introducing it to popular culture, has not yet been taken.

A clear break occurred in the accordion folk music tradition at the same time as in the fiddle music tradition of the other two provinces. In an interview, Eugène LeBlanc confirmed this while talking about wedding bands:

I was in a band that played at weddings. At first, we only played quadrilles. Then after a while, we added a song [he uses the word chanson to mean rock tune]. Then we added two songs, then three, until we weren’t playing quadrilles anymore. The whole show was composed of popular songs.

31 Graham, Glenn. *The Cape Breton Fiddle.* Cape Breton University Press. Sydney, NS. 2007. (p.100)
Gradually, the wedding reception repertoire was changed from accordion folk music to rock and country songs. This change also occurred in other venues where the accordion largely disappeared (for live events) to be replaced by stereos, electrical instruments and DJs.

While these players were changing their repertoires, the younger generation never got exposed to this music, at least not in the same fashion as their parents. Traditionally, talented players would not go looking for students. It is the young people who, when they heard the traditional music, would become excited to learn it, therefore beginning the steps of learning the instruments and repertoire. This certainly does not mean that young people were still uninterested in music. But whereas they would have in the past looked at their elders for music instruction, now they turned to other sources. These sources were usually in the form of rock music, with electric instruments or drum set. This is in addition to some of the parents themselves who completely switched styles, as was shown previously in Eugène’s comment. Eventually, many younger musicians were never even exposed to traditional forms of music. When they did hear some forms of this music, they would have typically associated it with music for the older generation.

Taking a look at folk songs, the same thing happens. However, there has been an abundance of work done to reverse this trend, both by Acadian scholars and musicians. Many folk songs have been collected by researchers such as Père Anselme Chiasson, and these songs have been published in a collection of song books. These were then taken up by many musical groups, including even some rock groups who arranged many folk songs. While this has sparked something of a renewed interest in folk songs, instrumental music has remained stagnant. While some instrumental music is played in these concerts, it is usually more in a rock style. Furthermore, the music is always an accompaniment to the vocals which is different with the more traditional dance music played by the accordion players.

If a similar “revival” to the ones that happened on Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton was going to happen in south eastern New Brunswick, there needed to be a person who recognized this problem and who would take steps to reverse it. This process has in fact started and one of the main figures who has helped this process was Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe).
4.2 The Accordion Festival

As mentioned in Chapter 1, LeBlanc always viewed himself as a promoter of Acadian music, and especially of accordion music. Throughout his life, he was the host of many radio and television programs on which he featured local and outside musicians. He was also connected to a large network of other radio hosts throughout North America to whom he sent Acadian music, and in turn received a great quantity of music. In this way, he was connected to many musicians, and especially accordion players, throughout Canada and the United States.

It was in 2007 that LeBlanc decided that something more was needed to fuel traditional music in the region, and re-expose this music to the masses once again. In the summer of 2007 he decided to create the first accordion festival in New Brunswick, which was based in Memramcook where many of New Brunswick’s accordion players reside. The festival lasted four days, from May 31st to June 3rd. Since I started my field work in September 2007, I did not attend this festival. However, a videotape was made of many of the festival’s events which featured many players. With this tape and witness testimony, I was able to get a sense of this first festival.

This first festival was a major success. While the majority of players were from New Brunswick and Quebec, there were also players from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Ontario, as well as a few from the United States. LeBlanc boasted that the festival featured over ninety accordion players who were accompanied by piano, guitar, spoons and even the occasional tap dancer. Looking at the festival schedule, it is easy to see why so many players were needed. Some events occurred all day, from noon to midnight, with players from various regions taking turns playing two to three tunes each. Other events were shorter, starting at 5 or 6 pm and going to midnight. Most events would even go past midnight, or until all players and the crowd were exhausted. All the events were held in Memramcook or in the vicinity of this village.

This first festival attracted a large number of people, even though it was held in a relatively small village. In order to expand even more and connect with a greater number of people, LeBlanc had to move to a bigger venue. With this in mind, he was able to get the City of Moncton to officially sponsor the festival and from 2008 onwards, the festival has been held in Moncton. This change opened up some opportunities for advertising, as well as providing the opportunity to use better, more visible venues.
The second annual accordion festival, which was held from July 17th – July 20th in 2008, was expanded from the first. Approximately the same number of players attended, but the venues were much larger and provided better exposure to the artists. The players came from the same regions as in the first festival. These players were from all age groups, including a twelve year old boy from Quebec. The festival started with an outdoor concert outside the Moncton City Hall. This alone attracted many people who were simply passing by and were unaware of the festival; many stayed at the venue for a few hours. Many people who attended remarked that they had not heard this kind of music for a while, and stated that they were happy to hear this music again since they hadn’t had much exposure to it since their childhood. The festival’s main events, which took place every evening, were held in Downtown Moncton, at the Festival Place Stage, which is where many of the city’s outside events are held. These evening shows were very well attended. The closing show was also very successful, with many people having to stand.

Since the festival only lasted four days, it was very intensive. A large number of players were performing in a relatively short time frame, and most players could only play two to three tunes before the next player was invited on stage. There were positive and negative aspects to this. One could hear a great number of players in very little time. One could also hear a variety of styles in a very short time, even if the majority of players were from Quebec. An audience member who stayed for about an hour could easily hear styles from Quebec, New Brunswick (both Acadian and English), and Ontario along with a variety of other places. However, it did feel as if players were being rushed along. This meant that different styles were hard to grasp, and often it was hard to really appreciate certain players. However, this was a rather minor issue as all of the different playing styles and repertoire made for a very interesting and entertaining night for everyone present.

LeBlanc took the opportunity to incorporate larger dance numbers during this second festival. On the third night of the festival, a group of dancers were invited to accompany the players with many dances, including a few square and round dances. The Moncton audiences were treated to old Acadian dances that many people had never seen before, or had not seen for a very long time. Many people in the audience remembered dancing to this kind of tune when they were younger.
In addition to these larger dance numbers, LeBlanc also invited a few more dancers, such as solo tap dancers. This was in addition to people from the audience who would randomly get up and dance, tap dance or otherwise. Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) also invited a “puppet dancer”, who is a person with a puppet and a flexible board which makes the puppet “dance”.

The third festival, held from July 17th to 19th in 2009, marked a significant change in the organizational aspect of the festival. For medical reasons Georges was unable to fully devote himself to organizing the third festival. This did not mean the end of the festival though, as he was able to find two friends to replace him: Elvis Beaulieu and Roman LeBlanc. Both men took over complete responsibility for the festival, while still accepting Georges LeBlanc’s help with regards to his many contacts.

With the change of leadership came a few other changes in the festival. First, there was another venue change. While the opening day’s event took place in front of city hall for publicity reasons, the main events were moved to the Moncton Coliseum, Agrena C. While they were not in the main arena, the venue was very big nonetheless. This enabled the organizers to get more seats, but it also had the opposite effect of making the room seem empty. The acoustics were also less than ideal. There were a few negatives to this venue, but it did not hinder the enjoyment of the people attending. The festival was shortened, from four days to three days so that the festival would fit better in a weekend. This change better suited everyone’s schedule. Finally, the name of the festival was changed from the Annual New Brunswick Accordion Festival to the Annual Georges LeBlanc Accordion Festival, in honour of its creator.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned changes to the festival, the format for the most part was identical to the second festival. The accordion players remained on stage for two or three tunes and then they moved on to make way for another performer. The festival still had a large number of players and they were from the same regions as before.

The fourth festival was held on July 9th and July 10th in 2010. For this festival, Elvis Beaulieu and Roman LeBlanc took over full control of the event as Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) passed away a few months prior to the start of it.

Once again, there were a few changes. The venue was moved to the Moncton Lions Club. While this was still a large venue, it was not as overwhelming as the Moncton Coliseum,
Agrena C. The venue also facilitated social interaction as there was a nice outdoor area where people could go to talk. Players gathered here to share ideas about their instrument. This was different from the previous year when there was no real area to socialize. The acoustics in this venue were also superior to the Agrena C. The festival was also further shortened, from three to two days.

Otherwise, the event was largely similar to the previous years. There were different players, including more women. A total of three women played during the festival, including one from Bouctouche, a small village in south eastern New Brunswick. By way of contrast, in previous years there was at the most a single female accordion player.

During this festival a tribute was held for Georges LeBlanc, during which approximately fifteen players from various parts of Canada and the United States shared the stage and played a few tunes together. It is very uncommon to see this many accordion players share the same stage and play in unison together, but it was a fitting tribute to the man who gathered all of these players together.

The fifth festival was held on July 7th to July 9th, 2011. Elvis Beaulieu and Roman Leblanc once again organized the festival and once again it was a great success. This last festival, while it was largely similar to the previous year, had the biggest audience yet and on the night of July 8th, every chair in the Lion’s Club was filled. Elly Kelly, an accordion player originally from New Brunswick but now living in Ontario, was especially showcased during this festival. There were also many new players from Quebec that were new to the festival. Quebec players once again were the most numerous.

The audience response to the festivals in general has been greatly positive and every year, the audience grows substantially. To compare, the first festival had approximately seventy-five people attending while the busiest night of the 2011 festival easily had five hundred people. Many in the audience expressed their happiness that this festival was occurring. They mentioned that they now have little exposure to this kind of live music and the festival remedies this problem, at least for a short time. It is important to note however that most of the people in attendance are seniors. There were very few, if any, people under 25 years of age, and this is problematic. This problem will be addressed in greater detail later in this work.
4.3 The Festivals as a Source of Influence

Since its inception, the festival has had a tremendous impact within the accordion community in south eastern New Brunswick. The huge influx of new players and styles has greatly affected a large number of players. Many players, upon seeing this wave of talent, have expressed the need to become more skilled on their instrument, and to a certain extent, even adopt new styles.

In *Travelling Sounds*, editor Wilfried Raussert describes how music travels between cultures. He mentions the term “mobility”, coined by Stephen Greenblatt in his book *Culture*. “Mobility”, as Greenblatt’s uses it, studies “the enterprise of tracking restless and often unpredictable movements in history, politics and the arts.” He adds that these studies trace the roots of music from communities around the world and measure its impact on the formation and change of identity and genre. He continues that this fairly new scholarly enterprise looks at cultures and their products – in this case music – as fundamentally mobile. He further clarifies: “Put differently, and with a nod to (Stephen) Greenblatt, we understand mobility not as a disruption of culture but as the very ‘constitutive condition of culture’.” In essence, Raussert correctly states that culture, especially the oral arts, is in constant movement and change. In fact, these aspects are the most defining characteristics of folk music and can be seen in the accordion music from south eastern New Brunswick. The music and musicians, as is described below, are always adapting to new circumstances and new influences.

Finally, Raussert states: “Critically, we have to be aware that a focus on mobility also always runs the risk of ending up describing an ‘endless horizon of musical expansion’ (Slobin). It is therefore crucial to define contact zones and locations of exchange and to explore the social as well as aesthetic spaces in which encounter and change occur.” In south eastern New Brunswick, the accordion festivals fill this role of Raussert’s “contact zones” and currently serve

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as the main venue for musical exchanges and “movement” in the region. Over the course of the three years since its creation, the region’s population and musicians have been exposed to a great number of new influences that have started to change the way many players view their music.

One particular influence can be noted as being more important than the rest. The players responsible for this influence come from the neighbouring province of Quebec. Quebec has a large number of accordion players, a much larger number than New Brunswick, and for this reason, Quebec easily contributed more than a third of the players for each festival. Not only were they numerous, but each player was very talented. There were a number of younger players as well, even as young as eleven years old. For these reasons, the New Brunswick players were very influenced by these players and their music.

The following is a comparison of characteristics found in both Acadian music and Quebec music. These characteristics are based on my observations of tunes played during the festivals, in addition to tunes contained in various Quebec and Acadian CDs. They are presented in Figure 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Acadia</th>
<th>Quebec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Simple and predictable (I-IV-V-I or I-V-I)</td>
<td>Complex and varied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamentation</td>
<td>Few decorations</td>
<td>Many decorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density of phrases</td>
<td>Melodies are sparse and contain few filler notes</td>
<td>Melodies are dense and contain many filler notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellows</td>
<td>Long, smooth bellow action</td>
<td>Short, vigorous bellow action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>Generally unsyncopated, few accents</td>
<td>Many accents and syncopations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Characteristics of Acadian and Quebec Accordion Music
It is important to note that these characteristics are not absolute and there are certainly exceptions to be found. For instance, there are certainly many Quebec pieces with a I – IV – V – I harmonic plan, as indeed there are certain Acadian pieces with more adventurous modulations. There are certain Acadian players who use a certain amount of decorations in their versions of pieces. There are also some Acadian players that fill their melodies to a certain extent. However, these characteristics serve as general rules that apply to most players of both regions. In general, Quebec melodies are more decorated, denser, and are supported by more complex harmonies. The bellows is the one exception. Every Quebec player that played at the four festivals was using much shorter bellow movements than the Acadian players, who for the most part, were using the entire bellows. However, even this is starting to change, which will be explained further below.

4.4 Influences on the Players Seen Between the First and Second Festival

As previously stated, my fieldwork started after the first accordion festival. However, some of the Quebec attributes illustrated above became very apparent during my very first interviews with each player, even before I knew of the existence of the festivals. In my first interview with Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe), he elaborated on his new found adoration for Quebec accordion music. At a young age, he started playing Acadian repertoire, but he explained that in recent years, these pieces had grown to be too easy for him. As they no longer presented any challenge for him, he started looking for different repertoire. He found it in Quebec’s music, which is why he featured so many players from this province during the festival. While LeBlanc still appreciated Acadian music and still enjoyed hearing others play it, he said that learning these pieces grew boring for him. “I do not learn tunes that I do not like, just to learn them,” he said. “If it’s not challenging to me, I do not bother myself with it. It’s no fun for me; it’s no fun for Eugène [LeBlanc] either.”

The more he talked about the accordion in New Brunswick, the more he mentioned Quebec’s music. Even when talking about Acadian music or the people who play it, he would somehow steer the conversation to how it related to Quebec’s music and its players.

During this same interview, LeBlanc eventually played some repertoire on which he was then working. Again, it was easy to see that Quebec was a major pre-occupation. He started with one of his own compositions, *Virginia Street Reel*, that he claimed was heavily influenced by the Quebec style of accordion playing. He then proceeded with a Quebec tune called *Tizoune*. He was still in the process of learning this tune but the shell was distinguishable even if the rhythm was sometimes off, especially in the first section. He then proceeded to show me a piece from Memramcook, the *Maritime Gig*. This piece was much simpler in terms of rhythm, quantity of notes, and ornamentation. LeBlanc commented that these pieces do not present the same challenge as the Quebec tunes, a comment he made many times during this interview. Finally, he attempted to play a final piece from Quebec, *Shame*, but he could not remember how the piece went. He mentioned that this style is still new for him, and that he hadn’t yet completely adopted the style. Georges LeBlanc also mentioned that pieces such as this could take him weeks to learn and if he does not maintain them, he can forget them quite easily. In contrast, he could learn an Acadian tune in a few hours, even after only listening to it once, and he never forgets them. To demonstrate this, he then played a variety of Acadian tunes.

In those 15 minutes, the three pieces that LeBlanc played demonstrated a brief summary of recent accordion influences in south eastern New Brunswick, at least as seen by LeBlanc. Of these three pieces, one was unaffected by Quebec, one was from Quebec, and one was a mix of both: a recent Acadian composition, but with some influence from Quebec. He demonstrated both styles, then a synthesis of the two. This synthesis could represent a new direction for accordion repertoire in the region. Many players, as they have done for years, have already picked up, by ear, LeBlanc’s new compositions, which include many others, and have added them to their repertoire.

There are two specific elements of Quebec accordion music that LeBlanc has emulated in his composition. These elements are ornaments and added notes to fill the empty spaces in melodies. While there are many different attributes that separate Quebec and Acadian accordion music, such as harmony, melodic structure and tempo, it is the addition of these two attributes
that LeBlanc chooses and is the principal difference between *Virginia Street Reel* and the rest of his repertoire. When he and other Acadians play Acadian tunes, they contain virtually no ornaments or decorations. The melodies are generally played in their bare-bones format. However, when he plays the Quebec tunes, or his new compositions, he attempts, sometimes with certain difficulty, to add more notes or ornaments. Below is a comparison of a bare-bones version of *Virginia Street Reel* (Figure 4.1) played by LeBlanc with a version of *Maritime Jig* (Figure 4.2), which were both played consecutively during this initial interview.

**Figure 4. 1 Virginia Street Reel Without Ornamentation**
Figure 4. 2 Maritime Jig
The two pieces presented above represent versions of each piece which contain no frills. *Maritime Jig* was played exactly as written above. *Virginia Street Reel* however, was completely different. Georges added many frills and added notes. Below are some examples. In both instances, the first bar is the bare-bones version of the melody, while the second bar consists of the ornamented version. Figure 4.3 is seen on the fourth beat of measure two. Figure 4.4 is seen on the first beat of measure four. The trill in this last figure consists of a downward trill.

![Figure 4. 4 Ornamentation Mesure 2, Beat 4](image)

![Figure 4. 3 Ornamentation Mesure 4, Beat 1](image)

These figures show a few distinct ornamental figures used. The sixteenth-note triplets are frequently employed as ornamental figures, something that is rarely seen in Acadian music. The second example is often just heard as a blurry trill, which is sometimes a bit out of rhythm. Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) indicated that he started using these figures in his entire repertoire, although they were not present in the version of *Maritime Jig* that he played. While these changes do not completely alter his style, they do give the music an interesting new twist that wasn’t found before he was subjected to Quebec’s influence.
In addition to the added frill figures, Georges attempts to fill the melody with added notes. Figure 4.5 shows the last beat of measure two. This musical figure would not always be composed of four sixteenth notes, but of two eighth notes (Figure 4.6). This becomes particularly evident in measure six and seven where the same figures appear – with one sixteenth-note less in measure six. In these two measures, the melody would sound more like the Acadian simple style if figure 4.6 was used, but evidently, the melody is played in a denser manner.

![Figure 4. 5 Virginia Street reel. Mesure 7, Beat 3-4](image)

![Figure 4. 6 Virginia Street reel. Mesure 7, Beat 3-4 (Simple Version)](image)

While the above elements were found in George LeBlanc’s tunes, certain aspects of Quebec’s style found in Table 4.1 were absent. The harmonic content stayed in the Acadian style. Furthermore, he used generally long bellow movements. These however, were marked with certain shorter bursts of sound, slightly imitating the Quebec style of quick and vigorous bellow movements.

Georges LeBlanc is not the only person who is looking to Quebec for inspiration. He often mentioned Eugène LeBlanc as a great accordion player during this initial interview, so I felt that it was important to get his input as well. Eugène LeBlanc largely agreed with Georges
LeBlanc’s statements. According to Eugène LeBlanc, Quebec’s music is becoming a major preoccupation for many Acadian accordion players. Eugène even mentioned that his second CD is mainly going to have Quebec repertoire. His first CD contained only Acadian, and self-composed music. When asked if his second CD was going to include self-composed music, Eugène said that he might not have time to compose anything for this current CD, but if he did compose some, the style would certainly be influenced by Quebec.

Eugène adds something else that is very important. He mentioned that many players, especially the older generation, do not play Quebec’s music. This older generation, which would now be approximately 65-80 years old, still plays exclusively Acadian music and in the Acadian style. This was evident during the festivals where all age groups were showcased one after the other. Acadian players who are older, such as Jean-Paul Ouellette from Cocagne, only played music in the Acadian style, without many added notes or ornaments. In addition, they played their repertoire at a generally slower tempo. Players in the younger generation seem to be more liberal with their style, especially in the later years of the festivals. These players usually played slightly faster, and generally had more notes in their pieces.

Valerie LeBlanc fits into the category of older players. In an interview at his home, he largely confirmed what Eugène LeBlanc explained and what I observed during the festivals. He noted that he does not actively learn any of the Quebec material, although, he did concede that many players from the region are learning this music and it is becoming more popular. His views on the matter were quite different from my previous interviewees. While Georges and Eugène LeBlanc seemed very excited about Quebec’s music and style, Valerie LeBlanc seemed a little sad to see the old style gradually disappear. He often said “It’s not like it was before.” It was easy to see that Valerie preferred the old Acadian style to music from Quebec.

Following up with why he didn’t learn music from Quebec, Valerie LeBlanc simply explained that he was too old to learn such hard music. He quickly stated that he plays with the Acadian style so this style wouldn’t fit with Quebec’s music in any case. “I play smooth you see?” he said, as he showed me long smooth motions on the bellow of the accordion. “Players from Quebec, and players who play in that style, use jerky motions like this. It’s not smooth like

me. Playing smooth is what makes it beautiful." These long smooth bellow movements continue to be a big part of the Acadian accordion style for most players of the region, including many of the players who are starting to take advice from the Quebec players.

In a second interview with Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe), we talked a bit more about the accordion festivals. He said that the large proportion of players from Quebec that were invited to the festival was deliberate. It was important for him to get many people from the region, players and audience alike, to listen to Quebec players. He said that it uplifts him, and makes him want to practice more and therefore would do the same to other players. For this reason, the Quebec accordion players, for Georges LeBlanc, were really an important part of the festival. “Without Quebec,” Georges explained, “there would be no festival. If we had only us, there could maybe be one night, but we all play the same tunes. But when Quebec players come, oooh, and they play tunes, it lifts us. But make sure you understand me; a festival with only Quebec players would not work either. You have to mix it up.” This last statement shows that Acadian players and music are still important for Georges. Even though he repeatedly said that the style bored him to learn and to play, the style still had its place for him. He adds: “The music is simpler than what Quebec players play, but it’s still very good.” He also added that he still liked to listen to Acadian music and did so on a regular basis.

These preceding interviews were conducted in 2007. Today, we can see this influence progress even more and the festival continues to be the main “contact point”.

4.5 The Current Effects of the Festival’s Influences

During the 2010 festival especially, as players from both regions were becoming really familiar with each other, it could be seen that there was a more open and collaborative atmosphere. Outside the main venue, players such as Clément and Eugène LeBlanc were meeting privately with the Quebec players, asking questions, checking fingerings, taking advice, taping tunes on personal recorders and generally learning new pieces. When asked, a few of the

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Quebec players, including a player named André Bernier, stated that they have seen a great improvement in many players since the festival was first held. Bernier indicated that he has recently seen many elements found in Quebec music in certain Acadian players.

During the fourth accordion festival, the elements mentioned by Bernier were most evident in the playing of Eugène LeBlanc. At this festival, I was able to notice many elements of Quebec’s music that were present in Eugène LeBlanc’s playing style. While he often explains that Quebec is a major influence on his playing, it was interesting to see it in performance.

Below are two versions of an Acadian piece, as played by Eugène LeBlanc during the fourth accordion festival. Figure 4.7 illustrates a basic version of the piece, while figure 4.8 shows an interpretation by Eugène LeBlanc. These figures highlight some of the Quebec influences.

When the two figures are compared, some striking differences can be seen. First, the rhythms of the main melody in Eugène LeBlanc’s interpretation are syncopated, while the regular version is not. Quebec accordion melodies are generally much more syncopated than Acadian ones, and this influence comes out in the first measure of Eugène LeBlanc’s playing. His interpretation also contains ornamental figures starting in measure two. Figure 4.8 shows the way Eugène LeBlanc plays this ornament. In addition, there are many added notes that fill in the melody, which adds density to the piece.
Figure 4. 8 R-E-4 Simple Version

Figure 4. 7 R-E-4 Ornamented Version
One of the more significant aspects of Eugène LeBlanc’s interpretation, which is not displayed in the above figures, is the way he handles the bellow of his instrument. As was previously mentioned, Acadian players typically use long bellow movements, which cover the whole bellow. For example, one bellow “phrasing” would be: IN for the first two measures, OUT for the third and IN again for the last measure. This bellow “phrasing” coincides with the harmonic content of the piece. Acadian players almost completely open the bellows very often in most of their tunes. Quebec players (as well as players from northern New Brunswick), however, use the bellows to further accent the music. Instead of “phrasing” their bellows to match the longer harmonic phrases of the tunes, they use short and vigorous motions to make the music more lively, especially on syncopated melodies. In contrast with south eastern New Brunswick players, the bellows on the Quebec accordion is generally closed and rarely extends fully. Eugène LeBlanc’s bellows motion during the above piece fits the Quebec players’ description much more than the Acadian players’. The bellows is generally closed, at least much more closed than found in Acadian playing. Furthermore, he liberally adds bursts on the bellows in order to accent added harmonic notes played with his left hand (the left hand on the accordion is used to play the bass line and chords). For instance, while in Figure 4.8 there appears to be an empty half note in measure two, this empty space is in fact filled with chords (played with his left hand) which are accented using the bellows. The bellows are also used to provide different types of accents. Long drawn out accents can be made by pulling the bellows harder for a relatively long time, while shorter staccato style accents can be made by pulling sharply on the bellows. All these subtle elements added together help shape the piece in a much different way than is normally found in the region.

It is very important to mention that while it does seem that Quebec is starting to have some influence in the area, many players, like the aforementioned Valerie LeBlanc, are not actively looking to drastically change their playing style. This was evident during the fourth festival. For example, a piece played by Clarence Gould was largely identical with the version that he played during the first accordion festival, which in turn was largely identical to a version which was recorded in 1975. Archival recording. Centre d’études acadiennes. AF-229, Bobine 6, A-0229-00086

39 There were some minor changes in the piece, like a clearer voicing and ornaments (one ornament is consistently used in the melody). These changes...
however can simply be explained by thirty-five years of added experience on the instrument, and they do not result from any major outside influence. A few other players also seemed to stay firmly in the Acadian style. Figure 4.9, found below, presents the accordion players that participated in the accordion festival along with others, who, while they did not participate in the festival, play frequently in the region. The table illustrates that the style of most players in the region has not yet seen a significant impact from Quebec. These findings are based on interviews with these players, as well as live performances and taped recordings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Players</th>
<th>Large Quebec influence</th>
<th>Small Quebec Influence</th>
<th>No Quebec influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eugène LeBlanc</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Georges LeBlanc</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clément LeBlanc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarence Gould</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellie LeBlanc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olivier Gould</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerie LeBlanc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean-Paul Ouellette</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald LeBlanc</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.2 Quebec Influence on Acadian Players**

On the subject of Quebec influence, another topic must be addressed. The interviewees made many comparisons between the Acadian style and the Quebec style. Generally, the Acadian style was described as “simple” and the Quebec style was described as “complex” or “difficult”. In the most general sense, this has some truth in it, but there are many myths that I
found concerning the Acadian style, even among the players themselves. The main of these is that the style is “simple”. While it is true that the large majority of Acadian players generally play fewer notes in their melodies than their Quebec counterparts, there are some players who play very intricately. For instance, I recorded Valerie LeBlanc playing an Acadian tune on March 23, 2008 and found that his melodies were very much filled, and his playing was very clear and precise. He was playing in a classic Acadian style, in what he described as smooth playing (what I interpret as long bellow movements) while at the same time filling each melody quite thoroughly. The same can be said for Olivier Gould, whose playing I heard on a tape made during the first festival. During a last variation of one of his pieces, he completely filled the melody, making the piece quite complex and somewhat virtuosic. This does not mean that the pieces change character. The better players never play in the bombastic and accent filled manner found in Quebec, but to categorize the style as simple does not do justice to some of the great players found in the region who manage to play the pieces in very complex manners. While the style as a whole is generally simple, there are players who can accomplish much with little material.

Another interesting aspect that was noticeable during the fourth festival was an increasing number of Quebec players who were playing Acadian tunes. A Quebec player named Gonzag l’Italien performed a piece played by Olivier Gould during the first festival (and which was played by many Acadian players during the subsequent festivals). When asked, L’Italien did not remember the name of the piece, but he did mention that it was a piece from Quebec. This however was refuted by a few other Quebec players such as André Bernier, and also by some Acadians. This illustrates a very unique aspect of the oral arts. Origins are often difficult to discern, especially when the artists themselves do not remember them. Another Quebec player played an Acadian tune, the Kent County Jig; however he called it the Miramichi Fire, which is in fact another Acadian tune.

4.6 A Lack of Young Players?

In the first part of this chapter, I highlighted other folk music cultures in the Maritimes which suffered an equal decline in their respective folk arts. I highlighted many problems that each suffered and made connections to south eastern New Brunswick, showing that they had the
same problems. I also pointed to the solutions found in each of these areas, and connected them to the Acadian accordion. The Acadian accordion players – Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) at the very least – found that there was a certain decline, and took action to remedy the situation. These were the two first points in the solution, but there remains a very critical aspect that has not yet been satisfied. Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia fiddlers have managed to attract a new young generation to their instruments. The accordion players of south eastern New Brunswick, even with their festival, have not. While the festival has succeeded in putting a spotlight once again on the accordion players in the region, there is a continued lack of young players seen during this festival and in the region in general. This is a problem both on stage with a lack of young players, and in the audience with a lack of young people getting exposure to this music. This is a major hurdle that the players have to overcome if the accordion tradition is to continue in the region.

This same issue was tackled by the Prince Edward Island Fiddler’s Association. In addition to holding many fiddle festivals and competitions, that could be compared in function to the New Brunswick Accordion Festival, they have sponsored, over the years, a number of free group lessons aimed primarily at a younger generation of fiddlers. This solution is not without its problems. There have been concerns about the authenticity of teaching an essentially oral art form that should be passed down within families in a classroom setting. Perlman writes that the older fiddlers would not always be the best candidates for teachers. He explains: “Most active fiddlers on the Island are past sixty, and most of them grew up on traditional settings where formal music teaching was not a part of life. They are not well equipped to instruct the generation coming up, even when there are members of that generation who are eager to learn.”

In the summary of Traditional and Non-Traditional Teaching and Learning Practices in Folk Music, Virginia Hope presents another major issue concerning modern teaching of
traditional music found in Cape Breton fiddlers. The issues that she identified can be linked to present day south eastern New Brunswick players. She poses the question: “Can the traditional transmission process of a particular folk music be maintained through modern forms of education?” to which she presents the following two sub-questions:

1) “What are the characteristics of traditional teaching and learning practices and contexts of a folk tradition as identified by carriers of that tradition?”

2) “Which of these characteristics will be maintained and which will be lost and/or replaced as this folk music tradition moves into more modern contexts?”

To address the first sub-question, she first presents the “learner” as the person who learns the music. Characteristics found in this person, to make for successful learning in the traditional manner would be:

1) Self-motivation
2) Love of the music
3) A sense of being responsible for one’s own learning; and
4) Awareness of and determination to develop one’s “natural talent”.

She adds “that these characteristics of the learner did not come about automatically; but that the cultural context in which this learner lived provided the rich environment which not only encouraged the development of these characteristics, but, in a sense, demanded them.”

Basically, Hope indicates that, in traditional learning, the learning process was the main responsibility of the “learner” but this process was greatly facilitated and encouraged by a strong musical community. This method of musical transmission also encouraged each player to develop their own “sound”, while always keeping to the greater “sound” of the community. The “learner” in traditional learning is usually very independent, works alone most of the time, and again, is highly self-motivated. Usually, the “learner” puts greater emphasis on learning a large repertoire than on mastering technique.

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To address her second sub-question, based on field research that Hope did in Cape Breton in 1979, she was able to identify classroom practices that were in conflict with those considered traditional. For instance, among other issues, the greater priority in the classroom was on violin technique rather than violin repertoire, “talented” learners were sometimes told to “hold back” to stay with the group, teachers asked students not to play certain tunes until they were taught to the students, discouraging trial and error and experimentation and finally, the classes put a larger emphasis on music-reading rather than on aural skill. She was also able to identify many experiences that the classroom student was denied. Among these she noted the lack of opportunity to: 1) hear or observe fiddle music being played in its usual performance contexts; 2) experiment with or try to play on his own tunes he already knows; 3) develop his “natural talent” which includes his aural skills; 4) “team” up with experienced players in non-threatening informal sessions or performance settings; 5) choose his own music, the music he has a strong desire to learn; and 6) develop a large repertoire of music which he can store in and retrieve from his memory. While these characteristics were lacking in the classes observed in her fieldwork, they can certainly be addressed, if the desire to keep traditional practices is the intent of the modern teacher.

To answer the initial question, Hope first indicates that the major difference between the two practices is a shift in responsibility. In traditional practices, the learner is primarily responsible for his own learning, while in modern teaching, most of the responsibility lies with the teacher. Therefore, if the intent is to keep as much of the traditional aspects of the folk music, the modern teacher is the one who must ensure that they are still present. The problems presented above are completely solvable. For instance, it is possible to invite players from the region to play for students for certain classes, to show them the region’s style. The students could be encouraged to attempt to aurally learn the piece that was just played by the veteran player. Students could also be encouraged to attend real live concerts or weekly “jams” held in the community.

In New Brunswick, there has been some talk about re-introducing the instrument to the local young people. As was found on PEI and Nova Scotia, there has been a significant decline in familial teaching of the instrument and generally, the younger generation does not play the instrument. It is becoming evident that traditional teaching practices will not suffice in keeping the accordion tradition alive in the region. During my last interview with Eugène LeBlanc, he
mentioned that it is for this reason that he has been thinking about starting an accordion school in Memramcook or Dieppe. Since he is retiring soon (in 2012), he would have more time to devote to the instrument and possibly to this new project. An accordion school, or at the very least a willing and well known teacher would be a great complement to the already established festival. The challenge would be to garner enough interest in the local community and especially in the younger generation.

### 4.7 Conclusion

It is clear that the accordion festival has provided the region’s players with a great opportunity to promote themselves and the instrument after some period of decline. During the festival, or shortly after, many players started to play the instrument after having stopped playing for a number of years. In addition, many new influences have been introduced which have sparked new directions in certain players’ playing. While the future for the instrument might still be unclear for the region, the festival has succeeded in sowing the seeds of what could be a large renewed interest in accordion folk music. During my time watching accordionists play on stage, I saw people expressing their nostalgia towards this kind of music countless times. For many of them, it had been years since they had seen this kind of music live and they were grateful for the opportunity to listen to it again.

The same kind of renewal was seen for folk songs in the 1970s when old traditional songs were revived by certain rock bands. This revival might happen for the region’s instrumental music and the festival will help to facilitate this. There is an ample and beautiful repertoire in the region with many players who are still actively playing. There are however many challenges that these players must overcome in order to see a real “revival”. It is ultimately up to them if the music will continue, in its present form or otherwise and while the festival is a great first step, it is doubtful that it alone will
Chapter 5
Summary and Conclusions

It is important to ask whether the acts of Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe) along with the other accordion players of south eastern New Brunswick have achieved the effect of revitalizing the art in the region. While this revitalization has greatly succeeded on Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton, it remains to be seen if this will also be the case for south eastern New Brunswick.

The first part of this work detailed how the accordion came to New Brunswick and how the players first came into contact with the instrument, in addition to examining how the instrument fit with existing musical traditions. First hand interviews and personal stories were quoted to make the argument that the accordion in south eastern New Brunswick has been present for over one hundred years. These stories help to detail the rich beginnings and continuation of the accordion in the province, how it was passed between players and how it proliferated in the region. More importantly, they start to bridge the gap that is present in scholarly work concerning this instrument. However, while my informants were able to provide many details as to how they (and in certain cases their parents) learned the accordion, these details do not necessarily go all the way to the source, to the first accordion players in the region and to their interaction with the fiddlers and other instrumentalists already present. Further research on this topic could be interesting and would help continue to fill the gap in the region’s instrumental music history. Of course, further research on New Brunswick fiddle would be needed as well as this is another area with very little scholarly work, especially concerning the repertoire. Perhaps a comparison of this work’s accordion transcriptions with a collection of New Brunswick fiddle transcriptions (which has yet to be done) would help connect the two repertoires.

The next part of this work took a sidestep from history and focused on the technical aspect of the accordion music repertoire. This, along with the collection of transcriptions in the Appendix, was the bulk of this work. Based on this collection of transcriptions, a number of technical conclusions about the music style were reached. The pieces were analyzed and
categorized; this was important in order to get a clearer understanding of the repertoire as a whole and to get a general sense of the many similarities and differences in the accordion repertoire. It was also important to deal with variations found in the Acadian repertoire. There is always the danger when collecting and transcribing pieces of creating concrete versions of pieces. Great efforts were made to avoid this. The section on variations highlighted different ways that the accordion players change repertoire and these should be taken into consideration for any new (or old) accordion player. Also, the transcriptions on which this chapter was based are usually full unedited versions of live performances (sometimes two of same piece). These at least show an example of a piece, but they are far from concrete versions. It is important to repeat that the repertoire is never static. Its organic and changing nature, even in the face of certain hindrances such as recordings, has always prevailed.

The final part of this work asked the question of whether the region’s accordion culture is sustainable in current times. Comparisons were first made with situations found in the Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton fiddle cultures. First, similar problems were highlighted and insights on how solutions were implemented in these regions were presented. The goal was to determine whether players from south eastern New Brunswick first had those same goals, and second, if these goals were being achieved or are in the process of being achieved.

The main focus of this chapter was on Georges LeBlanc’s annual accordion festival, which represents the most recent efforts of the late Georges LeBlanc (Dieppe), and its effects on the accordion players in south eastern New Brunswick. LeBlanc’s main goal was to promote the accordion in the region. He saw that the art was in a state of great decline and this festival was his greatest effort in restoring interest in the instrument. The festival was his way of starting an accordion revival, much in the same way as his neighbours from Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton had done for the fiddle.

The accordion festival attracted many players from different parts of Canada and the USA, and succeeded in connecting Acadian players with these very talented players. According to many of the region’s players, the festival has successfully accomplished its goal of promoting the instrument. Many have had renewed interest in it, picking it up after many years of rest. Others have assimilated repertoire from other regions, mostly from Quebec. Most have simply enjoyed hearing this music once again. However, there was one issue that was raised.
Following the same course as its neighbouring provinces, in order to successfully repair the tradition, interest in playing the accordion had to be planted inside the minds of the younger generation. Both the population of Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton have successfully accomplished the difficult task of interesting this new, younger generation in the older tradition. In addition to traditional teaching methods (traditional oral learning) new methods have been implemented such as fiddle classes and one-on-one classes. These have somewhat helped to bridge the gap between a younger and older generation. While the festival has given a larger exposure to the accordion in the region, there is still a definite lack of younger players that are necessary to keep the tradition alive for years to come. This needs to be addressed if current players’ desire to see the accordion be played in the future is to be realized. It is important to note that at least one player has expressed the desire to open a small accordion school and hold classes for younger players or anyone else wanting to learn the instrument. While this idea is not even in a planning stage of any kind, something like it would be an important step in keeping accordion playing alive in the region.

One important note to keep in mind is that the desire to revive accordion playing is relatively new compared with, for example, the revival movement found on Prince Edward Island. This revival movement can be traced back more than thirty years ago, to 1977, which is when the PEI Fiddler’s Society, was first created. Compare this with only 5 years since the introduction of the first accordion festival in Dieppe and it is easy to see why the efforts of the New Brunswick players are still very young. It would be an interesting project to look at the first few years of Prince Edward Island’s and Cape Breton’s revivals and see how they match (or do not match) with New Brunswick players’ current first efforts. Such a comparison might also bring further solutions and ideas to help New Brunswick’s accordion players reintegrate their music further into society and into the public mind.

The accordion festival was a fantastic start to Georges LeBlanc’s plan to reintegrate the accordion into the public sphere. However, alone, it is very unlikely that it will fulfill LeBlanc’s goal of a full revival. While it is a great tool, it cannot fulfil every requirement needed to restore the instrument in the region. It is only a yearly event, and it does not provide enough constant exposure that would be needed. It would need to be combined with many other elements, such as the previously mentioned accordion classes. The accordion would need to be more visible in everyday life. While it is very unlikely to return for events such as wedding receptions, it will be
important for players to find new venues in order to expose the instrument and to re-establish it as a source of entertainment for the general population.

The main problem of course is certainly that LeBlanc has recently passed away and there is currently no one to take his place. The festival has found new organizers but they don’t necessarily share his same goals. While they are doing great work in maintaining the festival every year, a revival is not in their frame of mind, at least not in the same way as LeBlanc. In almost every situation where there is a revival, there is someone, or more often a group of people, behind it. This group of people needs clear goals and ways to achieve these goals, not to mention the time and money to implement these ideas. This was certainly the case for Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Fiddlers. If accordion playing is to survive past the next generation, such a person or group will need to arise. It is unfortunate that the community lost one of its most vocal spokesmen but it is always possible that someone else will take this role.

5.1 Evolving Culture

Accordion playing is certainly not the only traditional aspect of Acadian culture that is at risk of disappearing. For instance, some customs, many of which are highlighted in Anselme Chiasson’s article simply titled *Folklore Acadien*, have grown out of style. Also, as described by Marielle Cormier in her talk on traditional Acadian cuisine at the *Congrès Mondial Acadian*, there are many aspect of traditional cooking that are rapidly declining or simply no longer exist. However, in this conference, Cormier insisted that the most important elements of any culture rarely simply disappear, but evolve. Her talk was concerned with recipes and meal ingredients, but her comments are valid for many different aspects of Acadian culture.

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When discussing certain declining aspects of Cape Breton fiddle music, Glenn Graham is optimistic. He writes:

Although there are a number of observers who see a danger in the fiddle style being lost because of the rapid decline of the Gaelic language, their fears could be premature. It is not the ability to speak the language, but the ability to interpret rhythm, intonation, bowing, accents and ornamentations – most often heard from earlier fiddlers – that give a style its sound; much of that sound is found in nuances of the language and its authentic purveyors. The Gaelic/older style remains and continues to be present in Cape Breton, and chronological age does not determine a Gaelic/older sound. A player does not have to be a Gaelic speaker to have a Gaelic/older sound and rhythm, accent, bowing and finger-hand embellishments, project the older sound (combined with *living* the culture), *not* necessarily an aged Gaelic speaking player.

While Graham presents a problem native to Cape Breton fiddlers, specifically how the older Gaelic language currently affects Cape Breton fiddlers, there are numerous links that can be made with current Acadian accordion players. While language specifically does not have such an important role for the accordion players compared to the Cape Breton fiddlers, there are still many omnipresent traits that affect the music. Even if traditions change and evolve, these traits continue to be present, even when these traits change over time as well. Earlier, it was mentioned that current Acadian repertoire is influenced by older *complaintes*. Even if newer influences come into play, and they certainly will, influences such as this one will never completely disappear. The reason this is important, and why Graham highlights it, is because even if younger players, who for whatever reason have been broken off from the linear tradition, learn music at a later date, they can still have the cultural capacity to learn the instrument with the same knowledge as if no break had happened. They will bring other influences and ideas, but the knowledge passed on will still be "authentic" when learned by this new generation. This was seen on Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton, and it is what can be expected from future New Brunswick players. For example, new Acadian accordion students, assuming there will be some, will certainly learn the instrument in the Acadian style, with its long bellow movements and "smooth" sound. Stylistic parts of the music always remain in its "DNA" so to speak.
5.2 On Cultural Identity

The main problem the players from south eastern New Brunswick might have in the future is one of marketing, especially to younger audiences. If their situation is compared once again with Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island, it can be said that the accordion is much less a part of Acadian everyday life than the fiddle is for these two regions. While these two regions have suffered a decline, the fiddle is still a part of their cultural identity. While there might have been a break when players did not learn the instrument, it is still present somewhat in the minds of the population, and therefore easy to reintegrate when desired. This might not be the case for south eastern New Brunswick. Here, as previously noted, there is a substantial folk song culture, and this is present in the minds of the general population. Traditional and newer songs have surrounded everyone for years and this is still the case today, although now usually in more modern forms. The fiddle is also popular, although probably less so than folk songs. The fiddle would usually be the first instrument in the mind of anyone when asked about instrumental folk music as it appears in many traditional/rock bands. The problem with the accordion in the region is that it may not have enough cultural backing in order to get a firm hold once again. It certainly does not have a large place in popular groups today and is not seen much outside the accordion festival and small shows, at least not by young people. In order for a struggling tradition to have any hope of surviving, it needs a population of people wanting to relearn something that they feel they have "lost". So far, this sentiment is mainly only shared by the players that I have interviewed, but it is not something that I have witnessed outside of their circle. The challenge for these players, if they truly want to continue promoting the instrument to a new audience, is to associate the art with the identity of past generations of Acadians, and more importantly, connect it with current day younger Acadians and make it relevant. Without the feeling of something "lost", there is no need to go out and "find" it. The good news is that there are many very talented players still around who are well aware of this problem and (as noted in the neighbouring provinces), this one of the most important steps.


Laforte, Conrad. *Poétiques de la chanson traditionnelle française.* Quebec, Presses de l’Université Laval, 1976. (Archives de Folklore; 17)


---, *To Dance or Not to Dance: The Case of Church and Group Social Control in Chéticamp, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.* Quebec, Université de Laval. Thèse (M.A), 1986.


Appendix

Transcriptions

The following transcriptions were taken from personal live recordings, various CDs (all self-recorded and published) and archival recordings found at the Centre d’études Acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson. They are divided into the categories described in Chapter 2.

When transcribing these pieces, I was faced with two options. I could either transcribe the pieces as they had been played by a certain player, therefore giving a certain player’s version, or I could transcribe a simplified bare-bones version of the piece that would represent all versions. The first option would present a more authentic transcription as they would be exact versions as played by a current player. These would not only show the piece but would also highlight certain technical and stylistic aspects of Acadian accordion playing. However, these sorts of transcriptions are generally more complex. The second option would give a stripped down version of the piece. The reader would be responsible for filling it out as they saw fit. While these would certainly make the pieces easier to discern, the stylistic aspects of the first option would not be present. In the end, I chose the first option and transcribed exact versions as played by the accordion players with very few edits. It is important to note that these are just one version of each piece and not a definitive version. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are multiple variations that can be added. To illustrate this, in the case of certain pieces where there exist vastly different interpretations of a certain piece, both have been added.

It is also important to note that in every transcription, there is some information missing. The tunes transcribed present only the melody of each piece and the bass and chords (played with the left hand) are missing. These are vastly different with every player and it would be very difficult to accurately write them down. Writing down the left hand might be too detrimental to the style however, as this hand is always used in a much more improvisational fashion than the right (melody) hand.
Jig

a. Simple Harmony Jigs

1. La Marche du Lac

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

2. Back and Forth

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc
3. Oliver Special

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

4. J-GC-1

Performed by Georges Leblanc (Cap-Pele)
5. J-GC-2
Performed by Georges Leblanc (Cap-Pelé)

6. J-GC-3
Performed by Georges Leblanc (Cap-Pelé)
7. J-O-1

Performed by Olivier Gould

8. J-H-1

Composed by Hector Mcgraw

Performed by Valerie LeBlanc

10. Adéodat's Favorite

Performed by Clarence Gould
b. Complex Harmony Jigs – subcategory 1

11. Marche de Lourdes

Performed by Clarence Gould
12. Maritime Jig

Performed by Olivier Gould

13. Kent County Jig

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

Performed by Hector Megraw

\( \text{\#} = 128 \)

Fine

D.C. at Fine
c. Complex Harmony Jigs – subcategory 2

17. Donagal Jig

Performed by Clarence Gould

18. La Tune à Valerie

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc
19a. Cap-Pelé Special

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

19b. Cap-Pelé Special

Performed by Valerie Leblanc
20. Reel à Juliette

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

21. La P'tite Claire

Performed by Olivier Gould
22. Jimmy's Favorite

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

\[ \text{Music notation image} \]
23a. Farmer's Reel

Performed by Clarence Gould

23b. Farmer's Reel

Performed by George Leblanc (Cap-Pelé)
24a. La Tune à Elmo

Performed by Olivier Gould

24b. La Tune à Elmo

Performed by Ellie Leblanc
25. Reel du P'Tit Cap

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

\[ \text{D.C. al Fine} \]
26. Camp Fire Jig

Composed by Olivier Gould
Below version by Clarence Gould
a. *Single-bar Pattern Reels – I – V - I*

**27. R-JP-1**

Performed by Jean-Paul Ouellette

**28. La Disputeuse**

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc
29. Liberty Two Step

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

30. Lea's Favorite

Composed by Hector Mcgraw
31. R-V-4

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

32. Sitting in a Tree Stand

Performed by Clarence Gould
33. Columbo / Rhéal's Reel

Performed by Clarence Gould

**Possible Variation Below

34. Alexander Reel

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

D.C. al Fine
35. Princess Reel

Performed by Clarence Gould

36. Virginia Street Reel

Composed by Georges Donald Leblanc
37. Beldune Two-Step

Performed by Eugène Leblanc

38. Reel du Cultivateur

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc
39. R-V-2

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

40. R-V-5

Performed by Valerie Leblanc
41. Miramichi Fire

Performed by Valerie LeBlanc

\[ \text{Music notation image} \]
42. R-V-8

Performed by Valerie Leblanc
43. Georges Reel

Composed by Eugene LeBlanc

[Musical notation image]
c. Two Bar Phrase Reels

44. R-C-2

Performed by Clarence Gould
45. Denise Reel

Composed by Georges Donald Leblanc


Performed by Jean-Paul Ouellette
47. Maple Sugar
Performed by J-P Ouellette

48. R-V-1
Performed by Valerie Leblanc
49. Silver and Gold

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

50. R-H-2

Performed by Hector Mcgraw
51. R-E-4

Performed by Eugène Leblanc

52. Reel St-Anne

Performed by Jean-Paul Ouellette
d. Four Bar Phrase Reels

53. La Tune à Edouard

Performed by Clarence Gould

54. R-CL-1

Performed by Clément Leblanc
55. Anderson Mill Reel

Composed by Olivier Gould
Below version by Clarence Gould
56. R-V-6

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

57. Memramcook Reel

Composed by Eugene Leblanc
Waltz

a. Four Bar Phrase Waltz

58. Melissa, Gramp's Little Angel Waltz

Composed by Clarence Gould

\[ \text{Music notation} \]
59. W-GC-1

Performed by Georges Leblanc (Cap-Pelé)

60. W-CL-1

Performed by Clément Leblanc
61. Valse à Margueritte

Performed by Georges Donald Leblanc

62. Old Country Waltz

Performed by Donald Leblanc
64. W-H-1

Performed by Hector Mcgraw
65. W-V-1

Performed by Valerie Leblanc

\[\text{D.C. al Fine}\]
b. Eight Bar Phrase Waltz

66. Ginette's Waltz

Composed by Olivier Gould
Below version by Clarence Gould
67. W-GC-3

Performed by Georges Leblanc (Cap-Pelé)
68. La Valse à Hilda

Composed by Eugène LeBlanc