

Metis Music and the Settler Imagination

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In *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, Thomas King astutely writes, “Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous ... once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told” (2003: 9-10).

Since the early 2000s (and possibly somewhat earlier), the stories told by settlers about Metis people and Metis music have shifted dramatically. Although these new stories are positive inasmuch as they no longer construct Metis-ness as a site of shame, they raise new questions about the relationship between Canada and the Metis Nation.

What follows is a series of stories that are not so much about Metis people or Metis music as they are about the ways in which settlers have used – and continue to use – Metis music (and indeed the concept of Metis-ness) for their own purposes. These are stories

that challenge the current desire (among settlers) to re-envision Canada as a metis nation (see, e.g., Reid 2012, and Saul 2008).

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Le Festival du Voyageur was a big part of my childhood. Every February, my family and *la famille Hutlet* would pack up our vans with instruments and other equipment, and head to St. Boniface, Manitoba (Winnipeg’s French quarter). Our group, *Les Gilets*, would entertain the crowds with old-time fiddle tunes and French voyageur songs. Over the course of a few years, we even attracted a few diehard fans. (Although I admit that using the term diehard might be hyperbole, a few years back, I ran into one of these fans, who told me that she still had cassette recordings that she had made during our performances.)



Fig. 1: Giroux Family in Festival du Voyageur garb, circa 1991.

Although *Le Festival* is held in the dead of winter, it never fails to attract large crowds. In fact, since its inception in 1970, it has become Western Canada's largest winter festival; and for Manitobans, it is "the" winter event to attend, featuring events for all ages, from children's performers to late-night dance parties where the caribou (a sweet alcoholic drink) and beer flow easily. While it strives to "embody the spirit of the voyageurs", it also aims to bring voyageur, First Nations, and Metis histories to life, and to promote French language, culture, and "joie de vivre" (Festival du Voyageur 2016).

When I began university in 2001, I left all of this behind, focusing on classical violin instead of fiddle and the family band. However, about ten years later, I returned to the event as a researcher interested in how it represents Indigenous/settler relations. It was becoming clear to me at this point in my research that Manitobans were developing a new relationship with the *concept* of Metis-ness – although perhaps not so much a new relationship with the Metis Nation, or Metis people themselves. So, on a freezing cold evening in February 2012, I stood outside watching *Le Festival's* opening ceremony; as a representative of each of Manitoba's founding nations (First Nations, French, Metis, and Scottish) stepped forward in era-appropriate costuming, a deep-voiced speaker stated that "... at the heart of every Manitoban, lay the spirit of the Metis" (field notes 17/02/12).

I knew that I was on to something.

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One story that my family tells from time to time is a story about our Metis-ness. Having come from a French-Canadian family that first immigrated to Turtle Island in the 17th Century, it is only logical (or so the story goes) to conclude that we are indeed Metis; one of our ancestors must have been Indigenous. How could we live side by side and not, at some point, become intimates?

This story, of course, overlooks the fact that one Indigenous ancestor doesn't make a person Metis, or Indigenous. But let's overlook that for just a moment.

On my paternal side, the ancestors that I have been able to trace arrived in what was then referred to as New France by the late 1600s. New France at the time was struggling: the settler population was small (about 3200 French immigrants), and they were spread out among several settlements; these settlements furthermore faced attacks from the Haudenosaunee, who were trying to protect their trade interests.

In 1664, the French king's Minister of Finance proclaimed that "His Majesty has resolved to send a good regiment of infantry to Canada at the end of this year, or in the month of February next, in order to destroy

these barbarians [i.e., the Haudenosaunee] completely" (quoted in Verney 1991: 3). Perhaps it was out of a hatred for all the so-called "barbarians" that the French king agreed to send help to the colonies, although it is more likely that the King was hoping to better line the royal coffers (Verney 1991: 122). Whatever the case, the first few companies that made up the Carignan-Salières Regiment left La Rochelle for New France a little more than a year later. Eventually, nearly 1300 soldiers and officers were sent to the French colony; about 450 of these men chose to stay in the colony after the troops were withdrawn in 1668 (Marley 2008: 245).

The stories told about this regiment emphasize heroism, bravery, and the protection of the Catholic faith. As Marie de l'Incarnation (an Ursuline nun who had been sent to New France to establish an Ursuline Order) wrote: "... our French soldiers are so fervent they fear nothing, and there is nothing they do not do and undertake ... It seems to all these soldiers that they are going to besiege paradise, and they hope to capture and enter it, because it is for the good of the Faith and religion that they are going to battle" (quoted in Verney 1991: 127). This, of course, is a story told in the service of French-Canadian nationalism. A more accurate story, recounted by historian Jack Verney, is that "they were rough men, who in their off-duty hours caroused, womanized, gambled, grumbled, and dreamed of making their fortunes" (Verney 1991: 127-8). Ordinary men.

Two of the men who stayed in New France were André Mignier and Rene Dumas. All that I know about Dumas is that he arrived in 1665, and married Marie Lelong (Verney 1991: 159). A little more is known about André Mignier.

Mignier was also known by the name Lagassé. This nickname was derived from the term *La Gachette*, which refers to the trigger on a gun. The term was thus used to denote men who were sharpshooters – i.e., men who were particularly good at hitting their targets. I don't know if he got this nickname here on Turtle Island, or before arriving, but it seems likely that his skills would have been used against the Haudenosaunee. Lagassé stayed in New France, where he married *Jacquette Michel* (Verney 1991: 152).

These men, sent to New France to secure the colony and destroy the Haudenosaunee, are my paternal ancestors.

By the mid- to late 1600s, there was a striking imbalance between the number of men and women in New France (Greer 1997: 16). If the colony was to grow, this had to change. Between 1663 and 1673, the French king sought to ensure population growth by subsidizing the immigration of women. Because the King supported these women, they came to be known as *les filles du roi*, or the king's daughters. Marie Lelong, Catherine Ducharme, *Jacquette Michel*, Mar-

guerite Raisin, and Catherine DeBaillon were among the 800 *filles du roi* who emigrated to New France.

These five women, sent to ensure the fruitfulness of the French settlement, are my paternal ancestors.

I know considerably less about my mother's relatives, although I do know that they emigrated from the United Kingdom to Turtle Island, and that they landed in what is now Michigan.

My mother likes to tell stories about her family. But her stories are always little snippets, leaving more unknown than known. One of these snippets is that some of my maternal ancestors were loyalists who moved north into what is now Canada because they supported the British crown. I always felt proud of this story. Loyalist. Such a strong word that suggests trust, virtue, strength.

One day, shortly after I received a much anticipated copy of Leanne Simpson's book *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, I learned another part of my maternal family's story, one that connects my family to Simpson's family. Here's a snippet of Simpson's narrative:

For my ancestors, the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, our self-determination and sovereignty as part of the Nishnaabeg nation was relatively intact between 1700 and 1783. Over the next forty years we were forced to survive an intense, violent assault on our lands and our peoples. By 1763, the British Crown no longer needed us as allies; soon loyalists streamed into our territory and began occupying Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg lands. Over the next fifty years, our people survived pandemics, violence and assault, unjust treaty negotiations, occupation of our lands, and a forced relocation ...” (Simpson 2011: 15)

I don't know if there ever was an actual encounter between my ancestors and Simpson's ancestors, but knowing Simpson's story complicates stories that I told myself about my maternal ancestors.

Although my attempts to trace my ancestry are incomplete, to date – having traced parts of my paternal family line back about twelve generations, right to France – I've not found a single, solitary Indigenous ancestor. Of course, finding one, single Indigenous ancestor is not the point. Instead, these stories and my family tree beg the question: why are we so willing to embrace a supposedly Metis identity even when our blood ties tell a different story? And what does our claim mean for the Metis Nation?

My family story is similar to the fiction told by popular philosopher John Ralston Saul, who argues that Canada is a metis nation. Saul isn't arguing that all settler Canadians have Indigenous ancestors, or at least his argument doesn't require proof of racial “mixing”. Rather, his argument centres on the idea that Canada's social, economic, and political structures were pro-

foundly shaped by Indigenous peoples; this, he argues, makes Canada a metis nation.

My story, then, is not an isolated story; it's part of a broader narrative that settler Canadians – especially those whose ancestors have lived on Turtle Island for many years – tell themselves.

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Although I grew up in Manitoba (and in fact have spent all but six years in the province), I've become familiar with the history of Winnipeg (where about 70 percent of the province's population resides) only over the last few years. It is, by all accounts, a fascinating history of racial and cultural tension that continues to play out to this day.

In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, Winnipeg was a bustling and growing metropolis. Incorporated in 1874, the city's first mayor (Francis Evans Cornish) was elected by 382 eligible voters (i.e., 382 white men), who enthusiastically embraced their democratic rights by casting 562 votes (Rea 2009: 243). (As a side-note, before Manitoba joined Confederation, there were approximately 12,000 Metis people in the area; hence having 382 white men make political decisions for the city constituted an incredible shift in power.) The Canadian government, eager to lay claim to the area, had recently forced Metis people to hide in plain sight (to borrow a term used by Newhouse, Voyageur, and Beavon 2007:8), or get out. As a result, the elite of this new city – those who provided social, economic, and political leadership – were remarkably homogenous: they were primarily British and Protestant, and their vision for Winnipeg was for it to become a haven of British Protestantism (Rea 2009: 246).

Making this vision a reality was not, however, an easy task: beginning in the late 1800s, Canada began encouraging immigration from southern, central, and Eastern Europe, offering free land on the prairies to these new settlers. Despite growing ethnic diversity, few non-Anglo-Saxons were able to secure positions in civic politics. (In fact, until the 1950s, all of Winnipeg's mayors had been Anglo-Saxons [Artibise 1975: 36].)

The Metis population that remained in the area post-dispersal were carefully controlled. In an analysis of the notes made by one constable between 1879 and 1880, historian Megan Kozminski found that areas where so-called “half-breeds” (i.e., Metis people) resided were more closely monitored than other parts of the city. The “half-breeds” who were found to be intoxicated were then arrested by the constable; in contrast, this constable would escort men of privilege home or to hotel rooms if they had too much to drink (Kozminski 2009: 56).

Winnipeg was hardly an idyllic haven of social morality under the leadership of these elites. In fact, there were 53 brothels in Winnipeg's red light district at the start of the 20th Century (Rea 2009: 244), all this to serve a population of about 40,000. But there was a clear attempt to construct a city that reflected European notions of civilization, which were contrasted with notions of savagery that were assumed to have existed prior to Canadian colonization of the area.

Many of Winnipeg's early leaders were members of the same social clubs, and attended the same amateur and professional theatrical performances, concerts, and balls (Artibise 1975: 34). In other words, music, theatre, and other arts played an important role in constructing the elite class, a point illustrated through the work of cultural critic Charles Wesley Handscomb.

Handscomb was born in Dover, England, moving to Winnipeg (via Ontario) in 1879. He worked for various newspapers in Winnipeg, and had a particular interest in music and drama (Bumstead 1999: 103). He was one of Winnipeg's first playwrights. Handscomb's reviews were often printed in the *Manitoba Free Press*. Two of these reviews specifically referenced Metis music, although they aren't actually about Metis music. Handscomb wrote,

Winnipeg was born after Theodore Thomas [conductor of the Chicago Symphony] had become famous in artistic maturity – it is scarcely more than two decades from the Red River Jig of the Metis fiddler to the classic Blue Danube waltz [which had been recently performed in Winnipeg] of the world's greatest orchestra [the Chicago Symphony]. (Handscomb 1903)

In a later review, he focused on what he felt was the tremendous cultural progress seen in Winnipeg:

Wagner opera with eminent soloists, superb orchestra and chorus, elaborate costuming and sumptuous stage mountings! Well, well, how this young town of ours away out here in the wild and woolly west does take on metropolitan airs to be sure. Why there are good people still with us who recall the days when the only music was the weird beating of the Indian's tom-tom and it seems but yesterday that our most classic melodies were those scraped by the Metis fiddler for a Red River Jig. (Handscomb 1906)

This reference to the "Red River Jig" is particularly notable because it's a tune and dance that has come to be seen by many as the Metis Nation's national anthem.

Handscomb was not alone in his representations of Metis fiddling as part of a romantic past, but contrary to progress. Alexander McLeod presents a similar understanding of Metis fiddling in his story titled "A Daughter of the Ranch: A Story of Romance and Adventure of Western Pioneer Days" (McLeod 1924),

which was published in numerous Manitoba newspapers in the mid-1920s.

A substantial part of McLeod's story takes place during a so-called "shindig" held in honour of a young, presumably white, English-speaking woman. (I say "presumably" since her ethnicity is not mentioned, while the ethnicity of the Indigenous and French characters is clearly noted.) The shindig begins as a gathering of (again presumably) the region's white, English-speaking inhabitants, but soon comes to include "Indians", so-called "half-breeds", and French-Canadians, with the latter two presented, for the most part, as interchangeable.

The "Indians" in the story had requested permission from the Indian agent (who "generously granted their request") to leave their reserve so that they could honour Mary, "who was a great favorite among [the 'Indians']" (McLeod 1924: 6). Gathering outside Mary's home, and attracting the attention of Mary and her guests, the "Indians" began what is described as a weird wail, singing "Ya, ya, hu ya, hu yaa [etc.]" with a "tom tom" accompaniment of "[r]up-a-tum-tum, tu rup a tum tum ..." (ibid.). After the hour-long "pow-wow" (as it was referred to in the story) Mary, demonstrating her goodness, generosity, and tolerance, invites the "Indians" into her home to take part in the festivities.

Five men, described as Frenchmen and half-breeds, soon join the shindig, attracting "unusual attention" by demonstrating dances that are described as unknown to the guests (McLeod 1924: 6). Joe, one of the men from the French/half-breed group, "feeling the intoxication of the dance" soon challenges his companion, Napoleon Dore, to a "Red River Jig" competition, to which Napoleon agrees. The narrative continues with the following description:

[Joe and Napoleon] quickly responded to the rhythmic motions indicated by the time and tune. Arms swinging, hands twitching kept time with the rapid motions of the feet. Faster and faster the time increased, faster and faster the feet moved in unison as they cut small circles in the centre of the floor. "Plus fort! Jean, Plus fort!" shouts la Tour. Quickly in response, the time gained speed, and the feet kept time. On, on the furious pace kept on without sign of relaxation ... Though drops of perspiration trickled from the brows of the nimble contestants. (McLeod 1924: 6)

The guests are described as taking all this in, watching with interest as the competition unfolds. Most telling is that, as described in the story, just the "Indians" are pulled down to the French/Metis men's level of "wildness". This is apparent as the story continues, observing that,

Even the sq**s, swaying to the intoxication and held in the grip of the exciting contest, first beat

time and, finally, yielding to the call of their own wild music, gave way to a droning refrain that intensified in pitch as the music and the contest continued. (McLeod 1924: 6)

The competition comes to an abrupt end when the fiddler breaks a string; neither man is declared the champion.

The tone of the narrative changes significantly as the string is fixed and Ronald and Mary (presumably a white, Anglo couple) have their first dance:

This was the first waltz Ronald and Mary had during the evening. All at once they seemed to be the centre of attraction as they gracefully glided in and out among the dozen or more couples now occupying the floor. Both were good dancers. Ronald, tall and athletic, guided his graceful partner through the maze of other dancers with the skill and grace required with much practice. (McLeod 1924: 6)

The stark contrast between Ronald and Mary's athleticism, grace, and skill, the somewhat wild dances of the Frenchmen/half-breeds, and the "weird wails" of the "Indians" is telling. It's clear that the exotic others represented in the story are simply a thrilling diversion before returning to a normal, unmarked way of celebration. Thus, when Ronald and Mary become not the centre of attention but the centre of *attraction*, they become representatives of an ideal "civilized" culture.

This, of course, is fiction. And Handscomb's reviews are just reviews. But they encapsulate the way in which Metis music was represented by settlers until recently; in the extensive research that I've done on representations of Metis music in settler publications, I found that, through much of the 20th Century, Metis fiddling served to exoticize the past, highlight supposed settler generosity towards the Indigenous other, and create a unique history for *settlers*. Metis music was a splash of colour added to settler history (Giroux 2013: 41-101).

Coming back to my own life, these stories are part of a process that made it easy for me – a settler – to grow up in Manitoba, and not so easy for many Indigenous people.

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One of the striking aspects of the "Red River Jig" (the tune reference by Handscomb and McLeod) is that throughout much of the 20th Century it was danced and played in settler spaces. For example, in the late 1920s, an article in the *Manitoba Free Press* described a dance and dinner held at the very posh Royal Alexandra hotel in Winnipeg. The dances the attendees took part in were described as a barn dance, the Highland schottische, the "Rye Waltz", a three step, and the "Red River Jig" ("Pioneers Cavort" 1929).

The "Red River Jig" was common at settler events by the mid-20th Century, as is made clear in numerous articles that describe the "Red River Jig" being played and danced at old-time fiddle competitions (which were generally organized and attended by settlers). For example, Jellicoe LaFrenière danced and played the "Red River Jig" for several years as part of the entertainment during the Manitoba Open (the provincial fiddle championship that, at the time, attracted crowds of 1000-3000 people). His performances were described in the local paper as "crowd-pleasing" (see Giroux 2013: 79-80).

While this is an example of a Metis tune hiding in plain sight, the more important point is that Manitoba's best-known and most respected fiddlers through much of the 20th Century were, in fact, Metis, although this was not always widely acknowledged. In other words, these fiddlers were temporarily integrating into settler culture – e.g., passing as French – as a survival strategy.

For instance, Jellicoe LaFrenière, so widely praised in settler newspapers for his ability to play and dance the "Red River Jig", was Metis. Although he continues to be described as French-Canadian (e.g., see Mlinarevic 2014), his grandfather Isidore Zastre (a fiddle and jigging champion who had an immense influence on Jellicoe) was Metis, and is listed in the 1901 census as a "red" "Cree French Breed" (as was the practice in the 1901 census data to indicate race).

Other important Manitoban fiddlers who were Metis include Andy Dejarlis and Reg Bouvette. Dejarlis (1914-1975) played for radio shows, dances (including a weekly event at the Norman Hall in Winnipeg, which attracted an estimated 1300 dancers (Mackintosh 2010: 53)), and a television show based in Montreal. He also took part in fiddle competitions, and was crowned the Manitoba fiddle champion in 1937, 1938, 1948, and 1952 (ibid.: 13). He quickly became a popular touring artist, taking his music to Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and British Columbia (ibid.). Although Dejarlis wrote many of his own tunes, he also adopted and adapted many of his tunes from local Metis repertoire (Lederman 2012). Both his adaptations and his original compositions have become standards among settler and Metis fiddlers alike in Manitoba.

Reg Bouvette also played many of the old Metis standards, giving them his own, unique signature – most notable in his use of banjo and other elements drawn from bluegrass fiddling.

Although some settlers likely knew that these fiddlers were Metis, it certainly was not broadly discussed or known – not until recently. These fiddlers, then, were hiding in plain sight; in the process their music, and some of the Metis tunes that they adapted, became part of the broader, Manitoban fiddle style. Manitoba's

fiddle scene has, then, been greatly influenced by Metis fiddlers, Metis tunes, and Metis ways of playing. The question then becomes, where do we draw the line between influence and appropriation?

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In 2008, the Manitoba Open (the competition that Jellioce LaFrenière and Andy Dejarlis participated in mid-century) became the second fiddle contest in Manitoba to add a Metis-style category. As the provincial championship, the Manitoba Open's Metis-style category is now considered by many participants to be the competition that determines the province's Metis-style champion. (Although the main organizer does not advertise the category as such, comments made by participants make it clear that they consider it to be the Metis-style championship. Furthermore, none of Manitoba's contests that I am aware of claim to be the official Metis-style championships, leaving the Manitoba Open to fill this gap.) The competition is sponsored by the southwest division of the Manitoba Metis Federation, the official governing body of Metis in Manitoba.

What's particularly interesting about the Metis-style category is that most of the fiddlers who compete and win are not the fiddlers who perform at Metis-run cultural events. The exception is Alex Kusturok, who has won the competition for the past six years, but the style he adopts for the Metis-style category is radically different from the style he adopts at Metis cultural events.

When the category was first added, I was quite interested in the criteria used by the judges – in particular how it might be different from the criteria used in the rest of the competition. Living in Toronto at the time, I phoned up each of the judges, whose responses were essentially, “well, if you want to know about the Metis style, you should ask person X” (naming someone they felt was knowledgeable). Over the years, it became clear to me that, in the context of this category, difference from the old-time style was the most important element of the Metis style: it had to sound obviously different from the fiddling heard in the other categories.

Perhaps most interesting, however, is participants' surprise when I asked why they thought a Metis-style category was added (instead of, for example, a novelty or own choice category, which are sometimes included at old-time contests across Canada). To most participants, the addition seemed to be “natural” to a contest in Manitoba, one that needed no explanation.

The final chapter of my dissertation provided a detailed analysis of the Manitoba Open and the Metis-style category. Over the course of the chapter, I raised a number of concerns. In particular, I noted: that the category was largely settler-created and run; that set-

tlers controlled the inclusion of Metis fiddling; that the judges were most often settlers, which meant that settlers were determining the boundaries of the Metis style; and that a hierarchy was set up between categories. I furthermore questioned why the fiddling heard in the Metis-style category was so different from the fiddling heard at Metis-run and -attended events, and suggested that the category erased the cultural specificity of Red River/old-time fiddling heard during the rest of the competition, reinforcing the normalcy of the old-time style. (I.e., shouldn't the old-time categories be named white, Anglo-style fiddling, or perhaps even white, middle-class, Anglo-style fiddling?)

Although I acknowledged a few positives, I ultimately argued that the addition of a Metis-style category allowed settlers to define and control Metis-style fiddling, and to represent old-time fiddling as “regular” (unmarked) *Canadian-Canadian* fiddling (or unhyphenated Canadian fiddling).

The chapter concluded with a number of suggestions. I wrote that, if we (settlers) want Metis fiddling to be part of old-time fiddle competitions, Metis voices need to be part of the structure of the competitions so that Metis people can take their rightful place as authorities on their own music; judges need to be chosen by the Metis community; more time and money needs to be set aside for Metis fiddling; and the competition needs to be moved (at least some of the time) to an Indigenous space (e.g., Winnipeg's North End), as a way to challenge the expectation that Metis fiddling has to be brought to settlers (rather than settlers brought to Metis music).

After writing all of these big ideas, I sent my dissertation to one of the Manitoba Open's organizers, as I was in the practice of doing for anyone whose name was included. After a few days, she emailed me saying that she was sorry, but she wanted her name to be removed from my dissertation. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised.

We met for coffee a few days later, where she told me that she was afraid that if someone from the Manitoba Metis Federation read my dissertation, they might stop sponsoring the category.

But here's the kicker: she then told me that even if the Manitoba Metis Federation pulled their support, she would make sure to continue including the category, because it has been so successful (i.e., drawing many competitors, and the attention of the audience). I tried to point out that she was, in fact, proving my point, but didn't get anywhere.

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I framed this article as a story in part because I wanted readers to create their own meanings and understandings of the various narratives presented. But I also assumed that readers would be mostly settler Canadians;

and it is for this reason that I wove parts of my own story as a settler into the narrative – to challenge all of you to consider your own stories and family histories and how they relate to Canadian colonization; and to challenge you to set “loose in the world” (King 2003: 10) new stories that tell truths about Canada (to borrow from the title of Saul’s book (2008)).

We may wish to divorce ourselves from the cultural genocide, the hatred of Indigenous peoples, and the misrepresentation and appropriation of Indigenous cultures on which Canada is built; we may wish to tell sanitized versions of our stories, or position egregious wrongs in the past, far from our present realities.

We may wish to tell ourselves that we are metis, that we as Canadians were greatly influenced by Indigenous cultures, and that we therefore have the right to use Indigenous music and art to add flavour or interest to our lives, to our music and arts. (In fact, how often do we hear the phrase “our First Peoples” as if Indigenous peoples belong to Canada?) But if we do this without acknowledging our distinct histories as settlers, if we do this without including the voices of contemporary Indigenous peoples, we repeat history, and become, once again, loyalists pushing Indigenous peoples off their lands; *filles du roi* reproducing settler-Canadian nationalism; soldiers pushing back and killing dissenters.

Knowing and telling my own story provides an important counter-narrative to the increasingly common belief that Canada is a metis nation – a belief that makes it easy for us to consume Indigenous culture without acknowledging the contemporary presence of politically and culturally vibrant Indigenous nations (including a politically and culturally vibrant Metis Nation), and without gaining permission for the use of Indigenous cultural property.

Telling my story reminds me that – while I have been given incredible riches because Metis fiddlers like Dejarlis, Bouvette, LaFrenière and others shared their music with settlers – Metis stories are not my own; and Metis music does not belong to me. For I am not Metis, and Canada is not a metis nation.

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