

10th Annual John Arcand Fiddle Fest Final Report August 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We ended last year's season with a great deal of forward movement made on a number of goals, including the completing of policy and planning activities under our capacity building project funded by Canada Council for the Arts, expansion of the festival to four days to offer more programming in response to demand, and attendance records at the festival overall and for the workshop component. It left us with the happy problem of running out of space on the current site for the growing number of attendees and on a very high note for the planning of the 2007 10th Anniversary event.

This space issue set the tone for our operational year as we set about the task of finding short and long-term solutions to the challenge. The short term solution was fairly simple. We rented a very large and stable tent from a Regina firm. The tent easily housed our audience and provides room for future growth until we realize the dream of our long-term solution -- a permanent structure. The permanent structure will be built on Arcand land leased by the festival. In order to raise the \$300,000 required to build the structure, we launched a capital campaign last fall. Once constructed, the building also presents opportunities for additional revenue to the festival through rentals to community and family events such as concerts, festivals, weddings, and reunions.

This capital campaign has required a fairly substantial amount of our human resources, which has resulted in some readjustments to the timing of certain objectives in our long-term plan. We do not expect this to be detrimental in the long run though and are still confident in our ability to grow and develop as the capacity building initiative intended.

The festival itself this year was quite a success on the basis on artistic presentations, increased participation by young people, and increased participation in the Red River Jigging workshops – one of the mainstays of Metis culture. Reaching and celebrating the festival's 10th Anniversary made for an emotion weekend for the Arcands and those who have been along for the ride for most of the festival's existence. The anniversary celebration concert was an especially poignant and suitable tribute to how this festival is setting out to accomplish its mandate to promote and preserve fiddle music and dance with the presentation of six novice fiddlers whose musical journeys have been significantly and positively affected by their participation in this festival over a period of years.

We made great strides in volunteer management this year with the addition of a volunteer and site coordinator. The set up and operation of the festival went very smoothly and gave the Arcand's room to experience and enjoy the festival in new ways.

We enhanced our audience survey and created an artist survey this year. This additional information will go a long way in our reports to stakeholders, attracting new sponsors, and programming future festivals.

Weather was an issue for us this year and affected overall results at the gate. Thursday and Friday were both rainy. Weekend pass sales were down as a result. In spite of this, we have great success to celebrate in the meeting of our mandate as we saw the number of seniors in attendance shrink slightly and the number of youth – especially those participating in workshops – increase significantly. We also experienced a surge in participation in Red River Jigging workshops – one of the mainstays of Metis Culture.

And while the weather affected attendance, it did not affect workshop participation. We added two fiddle, one jigging, and one guitar workshop to meet demand. Participation was up slightly in workshops so the additional sessions proved worthwhile.

Executive Summary Continued

Good response from the media was received with a number of editorial features and stories in a variety of print publications, our first ever visit from a StarPhoenix photographer with publication of a photo in the paper resulting, and a number of production companies onsite.

Our artistic presentations were of excellent quality this year. A Thursday evening concert by the fiddle workshop instructors and Ed Peekeekoot, interesting variety in our Friday Night Concert Showcase that included the presentation of Theresa Bourke from Ireland among others; a poignant 10th Anniversary Concert featuring John and six young protégés, his daughter and granddaughter; the Saskatoon Fiddle Orchestra over breakfast, the Chute Family's Gospel Hour and both Old Time Dances were all a great success.

Several very touching moments occurred this year including the anniversary concert. Long and McQuade, a first time sponsor, gave a talented and needy youngster a brand new fiddle, some contest winners and Eagle Feather News turned their earnings back to the festival in support of the R.O.O.F. fund, Theresa Bourke awarded two young fiddlers full tuition to her fiddle camp in Ireland, and a long-time fan donated a fiddle to the R.O.O.F. campaign.

So in spite of some bad weather and a small drop in participation for a variety of reasons, the festival was another huge success and a significant stepping stone on our journey to promote and preserve the traditions of fiddle music, dance, and culture.

Attendance

We had visitors from as far away as Australia, Ireland and Arizona outside of Canada and from Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and BC within Canada. Our participation by aboriginals also appeared to be up, based on visual observations by festival staff and volunteers, though this was not tracked formally.

The number of unique visitors (refer to attendance section of this report) and, therefore, overall participation, declined by 21% compared to last year. This appears to be a result of rainy weather on the first two days of the festival and competition for audience with other events happening in the area. A few people with weekend passes who were camping onsite left on Friday and very few weekend passes were sold after Thursday. Friday is generally a good day for weekend pass sales.

Participation by fiddlers from Saskatchewan in the competitions was down significantly, in keeping with the trend noticed at other fiddle events across the province all year. These numbers would have translated to the overall gate. No one is exactly sure what is causing this drop, but with the high percentage of seniors involved in the fiddle world, it might be explained, at least in part, by the loss of an ageing audience due to mobility and mortality. Interest in fiddling is growing among young people and the fiddle world is expanding as a result with many new camps and festivals. This is creating competition for audience - many of whom are families and seniors with limited income who they can only participate as their budgets allow.

In Saskatoon the festival also coincides with The Fringe and The Ex. The Dakota Dunes Casino opened the weekend of the festival this year as well. We know that several of our repeat attendees were at the grand opening celebrations and did not join us, so it seems logical that it also took others who would otherwise have spent their weekend with us. With that said, however, this very event brought many more aboriginal people into the area for the weekend and may also have contributed to our gains in that regard.

Attendance Estimate

2007

(Based on actual sales and estimated participation by weekend passholders, and VIP pass holders)
VIPS includes 12 and under and all instructors, performers and artists.

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Estimate of Participation	Actual # of Unique Visitors
Day Pass Sales (Actual)	54	72	297	116	539	539
Weekend Pass Sales (Actual)	389	50	50		489	489
Weekend Passholders Estimate		389	439	489	1317	
VIP Passes Estimate	150	275	350	350	1125	383
Total Estimated Attendance	593	786	1136	955	3470	1411
2006 Comparison	502	826	1387	1015	3730	1783
Change (#)	91	-40	-251	-60	-260	-372
Change (%)	18%	-5%	-18%	-6%	-7%	-21%

We have made many improvements to how we track actual participation at the festival over the years and have a few more planned for next year that will enable us to track participation by children under 12 and participating artists more accurately.

Awareness

We applied an almost identical strategy to last year for marketing and publicity based on the significant growth of the 2006 festival over the 2005 event. With a new tent for the main stage venue presenting some unknowns with respect to capacity and our workshop growth almost uncontrollable in 2006, we felt that we needed to play it safe with communications in case the rapidly growing snowball of participation had enough momentum to put us in another crunch on finding space for participants. We do not want to grow audience at a greater pace than our capacity to house and tend to them and create unsatisfactory experiences. Financial capacity was also a factor in the decision not to add activities as funding agencies continue to decrease the amount of their awards to us based on the revenue showing from the Canada Council's capacity building funding.

We issued three media releases this year, two prior to the event and one after. We received more coverage by news departments of area media this year both before and during the festival. One production company spent the weekend with us gathering footage and conducting interviews for an APTN documentary series. CTV was also there filming for later broadcast on the Indigenous Circle and the evening news. We are very proud of how we are able to continually attract the interest of television and documentary producers. Few events enjoy this kind of attention.

We received editorial coverage in several newspapers including the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Saskatchewan Sage, Eagle Feather News, The Outlook, the RM Review, and the Country Press. New Breed Magazine and Metis Matters also published a story.

A list of advertising purchases is attached to this report.

Staff & Volunteers

Position	Name or Qty	Estimate of Time	Type	Comment
Festival Director	Vicki Arcand	Full time, 12 months	Paid	Vicki is responsible for overseeing all operations of the festival and performs many functions with respect to artistic direction, administration, and fund development.
Artistic Director	John Arcand	160 hours (approx)	Volunteer	John leads artist selection for performances and workshop delivery. He also performs audience development functions while touring and teaching.
Marketing, Publicity, Sponsorship, Admin support	Verve2 events	400 hours (approx)	Sub-contract	
Gate/Parking	Pike Lake First Responders and Delisle Travel Club		Sub-contract	
Volunteer & Site Coordination	Pat Saunders & Karen Matiachuk	120 hours approx	Paid, honorarium	Recruit, schedule, and oversee volunteers. Manage site operations and maintenance during festival.
Contest Coordinator	Fay McKenzie	40 hours approx	Paid, honorarium	Coordinate all aspects of contest on site.
Office Assistant	Diane Franks	80 hours approx	Paid, honorarium	Assist Festival Director with coordination/completion of finances and admin during festival
Festival operations & patron liaison	25 Volunteers		Volunteer	All tasks on the site related to site maintenance, patron liaison, security, etc.
Security	Corey Greyeyes	36 hours	Paid	Patrol site overnight

The number of volunteers used to operate the festival went down this year. This is in response to the continuing challenge of finding volunteers who are able to make the commitment required to manage our parking lot and campground, a job that requires long hours, solid knowledge of procedures and the ability to enforce the important rules that keep us within fire regulations. As an alternative we opted to hire help. It was a good move and smoothed operations in this area significantly over previous years.

The addition of the volunteer coordinator and site coordinator positions were also a major improvement. The new positions helped to stabilize the volunteer portion of our workforce and eliminated a large number of challenges on site.

Artistic Presentation

Thursday Night Concert Showcase

Traditionally we present John Arcand and Friends – the fiddle workshop instructors with our house accompanists Freddie Pelletier and Trent Bruner -- on Saturday night and the concert is always one of the most highly attended of the festival. With a special anniversary concert planned for Saturday night, we moved the traditional version to Thursday night and launched the concert with Ed Peekeekoot of BC. This move resulted in a much larger attendance than our Thursday Night concert last year. The concert was very well received by the audience and ended with several encores.

Artistic Presentation continued on next page

Friday Night Concert Showcase

We use the Friday Night Concert Showcase as our venue to present music and dance from other cultures, disciplines, and genres as well as two young novice fiddlers hand-picked by John for their promise on the fiddle. This year's cultural presentation was Theresa Bourke from Tipperary County in Ireland. Kim Fontaine, a Saskatoon singer/songwriter in the folk rock category, Clinton Pelletier of Edmonton with a contemporary and gypsy guitar performance, Vic's Livingroom Bluegrass of Saskatoon, and Grey Owl, a contra dance band from Seattle Washington complemented the presentation of the two selected novice fiddlers Aimee Fauteaux of BC and Celine Hounjet of Grandora, SK.

John Arcand & Very Special Friends – 10th Anniversary Concert

The pinnacle of anniversary celebrations was the presentation of John Arcand and Very Special Friends on Saturday night. John invited the nine young fiddlers he has featured in the Friday Night showcase over the years. Six of them were able to come. Their concert was a poignant testament to the work of this festival in promoting and preserving the traditions of fiddle music and the respect these young people have for John.

Daniel Gervais, one of the six performers, was one of the first youth ever showcased. He is now majoring in music at university, has released several recordings, and was hired to instruct a workshop at the festival this year. When it comes to achieving our mandate, it simply doesn't get any better than this.

To close the concert John's daughter Michelle joined him with her own fiddle and his granddaughter Dionna sang. Anniversary cake shared with the 900 audience members capped the concert and the anniversary celebrations.

Fiddles & Flapjacks Pancake Breakfast

Sunday's Fiddles and Flapjacks was very well attended this year, with 200 pancake breakfasts served to the music of the Saskatoon Fiddle Orchestra.

Gospel Hour

The Gospel Hour featured the Chute Family. The audience was the largest ever gathered for this annual Sunday morning event.

Old Time Dances

Fiddle Express from Saskatoon provided music for the Friday Old Time Dance. And, our crowd favorite dance band "Bannock Country" from Debden provided the music for Saturday's dance.

Music Breaks

With the competition numbers down slightly we were able to call on Sheila Pelletier to offer some of her much loved vocals as a music break mid morning on Saturday. At the completion of the preliminaries in the contests, we organized a youth jam session on the main stage to fill the time until supper was ready. Then, after supper and before the anniversary concert – Calvin Vollrath, Patti Kusturok and Desmond Lagace performed for about a half hour – all were extremely well received

Children's Activity Teepee

For the second year we partnered with the Sask Native Theatre to offer a Teepee where children could Participate in arts and crafts activities, enjoy story telling by a First Nations elder, puppet shows and get their faces painted. After some initial hiccups with set up this ran much smoother than last year and was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Workshops

Workshop	Age Group			Total	2006 Total	Comparison 07 to 06	2005 Total	2004 Total
	Youth	Adults	Seniors					
Fiddle	255	187	91	533	600	-67/11%	105	54
Piano	21	30	8	59	77	-18/23%	24	13
Guitar	20	33	10	63	71	-8/-11%	18	11
Jigging	104	124	44	272	135	+137/101%	105	30
Total	400	374	153	927	883	+44/4.9%	252	108
2006 Total	307	400	176	883				
Comparison 07 to 06	+93/30%	- 26/6.5%	-23/13%	+44/4.9%				

This year, for the first time, an advanced jigging workshop by Métis elder Kathleen Steinhauer was added to pass down the traditions behind the steps and dress and the told history of the Traditional Red River Jig. With health faltering, Kathleen even taught advanced steps from her chair.

While it's a little disappointing to see the participation in fiddle workshops drop slightly, given the overall attendance at the festival and the trend at fiddle events to fewer participants from Saskatchewan, the numbers are still very good. What's most encouraging about the fiddle registration numbers is the growth in youth participants – up by 31 (14%) over last year.

Piano and guitar dropped slightly but are, again, still strong given the lower numbers through the gate. Both of these categories stuck to their trend of being most heavily attended by those in the adult category.

The truly heartening results in workshop participation come under the category of jigging. Participation was up by 101% over last year and 104 of the 272 participants were youth. With the Red River Jig one of the mainstays of Metis culture, this is a significant advancement on the festival's results to objectives.

The final good news about workshops is that youth participation grew to 43% of the overall total compared to 35% last year. Fiddle workshops contributed a youth participation result of 47% and jigging, while not as impressive at 38%, still saw a growth in youth participation from 45 last year to 104 this year – more than double.

Contests

The downward trend in competitor numbers this year at Saskatchewan Fiddle contests was evident in our fiddle contest numbers as well, but happily mitigated by our strength in attracting fiddle competitors from across Canada and even the US. We had only 37 competitors in the fiddle competition this year compared to 54 in 2006. Jigging contest numbers were also slightly down to 28 from 30 last year. Competitors came from as far as North Dakota, Montana, and South Carolina in the US and BC, Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta in Canada.

Attachments:

Fiddle and Canadian Traditional Red River Jigging Championship Results
Record of Advertising Purchases, Media Releases

Sanctioned Fiddle Contest Results 2007

Novice 1

1	Celine	Hounjet	Grandora	SK	CAN
2	Raymond	Knorr	Regina	SK	CAN
3	Shelby	Nicolson	Meadow Lake	SK	CAN
4	Colin	Lajoie	Glencon	AB	CAN

Novice 2

1	Stefan	Bichlmaier	Smithers	BC	CAN
2	Gabe	Mann	Warfield	BC	CAN
3	Tayler	Fleming	Minitonas	MB	CAN

Junior 1

1	Aimee	Fauteux	Abbotsford	BC	CAN
2	Taressa	Bergen	Colonsay	SK	CAN
3	Kevin	McKay	Carlyle	SK	CAN
4	Alicia	Blore	Toronto	ON	CAN

Junior 2

1	Darla	Daniels	Caslan	AB	CAN
2	Brendon	Chief	Saskatoon	SK	CAN
3	Gillian	Maher	Carlyle	SK	CAN
4	Gabe	Brien	Rolla	ND	USA

Open 1

1	Nathan	Baker	Prince Albert	SK	CAN
2	Denise	Ray	Billings	MT	USA
3	Sarah	Quick	Columbia	SC	USA
4	Bruce	Isbister	Big River	SK	CAN
5	Fay	MacKenzie	Orillia	ON	CAN

Open 2

1	Joe	Jackson	LaRonge	SK	CAN
2	Michelle	Amy	Carlyle	SK	CAN
3	Jim	LaRocque	Belcourt	ND	USA

John Arcand Fiddle Fest

Senior

1	Gilbert	Anderson	Edmonton	AB	CAN
2	Bill	Bryant	Pelly	SK	CAN
3	Mike	Page	Belcourt	ND	USA
4	Henry	Hince	Winnipeg	MB	CAN

Andy Dejarlis/12 and Under

1	Celine	Hounjet	Grandora	SK	CAN
2	Shelby	Nicolson	Meadow Lake	SK	CAN
3	Colin	Lajoie	Glendon	AB	CAN

Andy DeJarlis/13 to 17

1	Emily	Yarascavitch	Oshawa	ON	CAN
2	Cris	Tootoosis	Cutknife	SK	CAN
3	Alex	Lamoureux	Comox	BC	CAN

Andy DeJarlis/18 and over

1	Mike	Page	Belcourt	ND	USA
2	Henry	Hince	Winnipeg	MB	CAN
3	Real	Croteau	Bonnyville	AB	CAN

Traditional Métis

1	Victor	Rose	Frenchman's Butte	SK	CAN
2	Cris	Tootoosis	Cutknife	SK	CAN
3	Gilbert	Anderson	Edmonton	AB	CAN
4	Aimee	Fauteux	Abbotsford	BC	CAN
5	Alicia	Blore	Toronto	ON	CAN

Championship

1	James	Steele	Saskatoon	SK	CAN
2	Rebecca	Smith	Surrey	BC	CAN
3	Cris	Tootoosis	Cutknife	SK	CAN
4	Alex	Lamoureux	Comox	BC	CAN
5	Emily	Yarascavitch	Oshawa	ON	CAN

Canadian Traditional Red River Jigging Championship Results 2007

Youth/12 & Under

1	Neanna	Sasakamoose	Canwood	SK	CAN
2	Rayleen	Shumi	Tisdale	SK	CAN
3	Aimee	Fauteux	Abbotsford	BC	CAN

Junior/13 to 16

1	Gabe	Brien	Rolla	ND	USA
2	Darla	Daniels	Caslan	AB	CAN
3	Kevn	McKay	Carlyle	SK	CAN

Senior Men's

1	Henry	Hince	Winnipeg	MB	CAN
2	Bruce	Dumont	Parksville	BC	CAN

Overall Grand Champion

Yvonne	Chartrand	Vancouver	BC	CAN
--------	-----------	-----------	----	-----

Senior Women's

1	Shirley	Nanapay	Punnichy	SK	CAN
2	Doreen	Bergum	Sundre	AB	CAN
3	Marie	Schoenthal	Medicine Hat	AB	CAN
4	Lil	Vinish	Saskatoon	SK	CAN

Men's

1	Hugo	Martell	Edmonton	AB	CAN
2	Jason	Cyr	Saskatoon	SK	CAN
3	Lester	Wyatt	Canwood	SK	CAN

Women's

1	Yvonne	Chartrand	Vancouver	BC	CAN
2	Felice	Gladue	Sherwood Park	AB	CAN
3	Trina	Gordon	Edmonton	AB	CAN
4	Dorothy	Desjarlais	Medicine Hat	AB	CAN