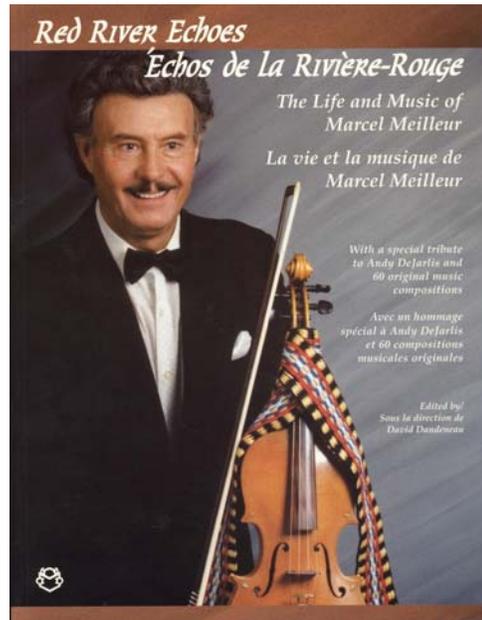


Marcel Louis Meilleur: Métis Fiddler (1930 -2007)

Marcel was born in Fort Francis, Ontario on July 8, 1930, the son of Wilbrod Meilleur and Zélia Dandeneau. His Métis roots come from the Dandeneau family.¹ The family then took a homestead at Fisher Branch, Manitoba when Marcel was one year old. Marcel was born with a skin condition called epidermalytic hyperkeritosis, which causes a hardening of the skin. Due to this he was unable to attend school for long stretches of time. However, he overcame this to become one of Manitoba's best known Métis fiddlers. In 1956, he began touring with the Red River Valley Boys from radio station CKRC. In 1961 he began his association with Andy Dejarlis playing second violin. This was a musical partnership and friendship that was to last until Andy's death in 1975.

In 1961-62 they travelled to Montreal to cut records with London Records; subsequently they became the lead group for a TV show on Channel 10. In 1965 they joined the Don Messer Show out of Halifax. In August of 1974 he was chosen to represent Canada at the International Music Festival held in France. After the death of Andy Dejarlis in 1975, Marcel assumed leadership of his ensemble. From 1976 to 1980 Marcel starred in the televised variety show *Les echoes de la Rivière Rouge*, broadcast on the CBC French network. Altogether he cut six solo LPs and he participated on 35 records with Andy Dejarlis. He authored his first book *Echoes of Red River: The Life and Music of Marcel Meilleur* (edited by David Dandeneau, Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications) in 2003. This book contains a tribute to Andy Dejarlis and has the sheet music for 60 of Marcel's original music compositions. Marcel died on September 29, 2007 he was survived by his wife Noyale and his children; Mona, Guy, Thérèse, Lilliane and Diane.



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¹ Personal communication with David Dandeneau, Manitoba Métis Federation Annual General Assembly, September 28, 2013, Brandon, Manitoba. He serves on the Board of Governors of the Manito Ahbee Festival and is also from Fisher Branch, Manitoba.