While the notion of Irish fiddle playing may at first seem ancient and unchanged by the ages, the truth of the matter is far from so. While many bowed instruments (referred to as fiddles) were present on the island in the middle ages, the modern form of the fiddle wasn't popularized in Ireland until the 18th century and continued to develop from there. Along with these changes in instruments and technology came changes in style and technique. The Irish fiddle is further complicated by the influence of piping traditions and the immigration of the Ulster Scots.

I present a historical survey of performance practice in Irish fiddle utilizing historical accounts, iconography, and transcriptions of music, all primarily from the modern era (c. 1500-present day). Regional styles are discussed, especially in respect to historical development of techniques. Topics include ornamentation (both written & unwritten), phrasing, intonation, accompaniment, and groupings of tunes. Musical and textual examples are given to reinforce findings.