

Artist

Bill Whipple

Ashville, North Carolina

Bill Whipple designed his fiddle, which he has named *WipLstix*, to be a highly portable and reasonably quiet instrument which could easily accompany him while traveling and allow him to play without disturbing others. Whipple describes the sound as "intimate." He has hiked the Appalachian Trail and the mountains of Nepal with his instruments; they have traveled comfortably to Asia, Europe, Africa, South America and Australia. A violin neck with two small sound holes, his fiddle design has its origins in dance master's fiddles, cane fiddles and stick fiddles.

In the 19th century, dance masters would travel the countryside providing instruction in dance and music to the local population. They often carried violins with much smaller bodies than the full-size versions familiar to most people. The cane fiddle of the same period was, essentially, a fat cane. The handle and a cover on the shaft could be removed to reveal the violin—narrow body, fretboard and bow. Stick fiddles consisted of the chin rest, neck and strings, without sound holes or body.

Whipple has made mandolins, dulcimers and guitars. He continues to make the *WipLstix* as a side-line while his primary work is handmade, contemporary wood furniture. He has exhibited at the *Philadelphia Furniture and Furnishings Show*, Pennsylvania, 2002, 2003, and 2004, and the juried event, *Paradise City Arts Festival: Art Without Borders*, Northampton, Massachusetts, 2004. Whipple has lived in Quebec, Canada, and Union, West Virginia.



FIDDLE, maple, metal, and violin strings,
circa 2000, Bill Whipple, Asheville, North
Carolina, 21" x 2" x 1.5", Private
Collection