Song Literature in Ireland
The Influence of the Irish Cultural Revival (1891–1922)

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Declaration

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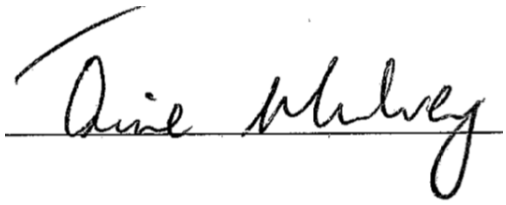
Signed: 

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father,
Brendan Mulvey, and my aunt Éilis (Lally) King, who
first taught me these songs.

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I would like to acknowledge the generosity of many people who have assisted in this research and in the preparation of this thesis. Firstly, thank you to my supervisor Dr John O'Flynn, for his patience, mentoring, and constant encouragement. This would not have been possible without his help. I would also like to acknowledge the support of all the faculty in the School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music at Dublin City University, with special thanks to Dr Patricia Flynn for all her help and positivity with many aspects of the PhD journey. Thanks also are due to Professor Derek Hand from the School of English for pointing me in the right direction at an early stage of my research. The library staff at DCU, and also at UCD, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, the National Library of Ireland, Queen's University Belfast, the British Library, and my local library in Tallaght have been incredibly helpful in sourcing reference material. Thanks also to the staff at the Contemporary Music Centre and the Irish Traditional Music Archive for their assistance with queries. Particular thanks are due to the University of Auckland, New Zealand, for being one of the few libraries in the world with 'feet on the ground' during the darkest days of the pandemic when I was still seeking elusive musical scores.

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Abbreviations

CITM – Companion to Irish Traditional Music

DIB – Dictionary of Irish Biography

EMIR – Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland

HMV – His Master's Voice

IFSS – Irish Folk Song Society

ILS – Irish Literary Society

IRA – Irish Republican Army

IRB – Irish Republican Brotherhood

ITMA – Irish Traditional Music Archive

JIFSS – Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society

NLI – National Library of Ireland

NLS– National Literary Society

NUI – National University of Ireland

OUP – Oxford University Press

QUB – Queen's University Belfast

RCM – Royal College of Music

RIAM – Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin

RTÉ – Raidió Teilifís Éireann

TCD – Trinity College Dublin

UCC – University College Cork

UCD – University College Dublin

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the development of Irish song literature in the context of the Irish Cultural Revival of 1891–1922. This was a period of intense cultural and political activity in Ireland, during which musical and other artistic productions were consciously deployed to assert a culturally distinct Irish nation. The remarkable and popular successes of the Irish Literary and Gaelic Revivals—parallel movements within a larger Cultural Revival—led to an exceptional abundance of texts available for musical setting. However, the response of song composers to these texts and to the revival movement as a whole has, to date, been an unexamined area within Irish musicological research.

The definition of song literature for this study is intentionally broad, and includes published song collections, translations, and arrangements of folk songs, as well as original art song compositions. The research examines how aspects of the Revival cultivated the development of a distinct Irish song literature and considers how Irish identity was expressed through the medium of song. The response of songwriters to the revival movement is contextualised through an investigation of the milieu in which writers, poets, composers, and performers collaborated.

The findings of this research challenge narratives that suggest that music was a missing element during the Revival, and instead show that the production of song literature constituted a vibrant thread throughout the period. The research positions Irish composers at the heart of revival activities and shows how songs were used as potent articulators of a unique Irish identity and culture. Through an assessment of Irish song literature, this thesis traces the contribution of a neglected element of Irish expression during an exceptionally creative period prior to political partition and the formation of the Irish state.

1. Introduction

This study is concerned with the development of song literature in Ireland during the period of cultural revival at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Known by various appellations including the 'Gaelic Revival', 'Celtic Dawn', 'Irish Literary Revival', and perhaps most inclusively, the 'Irish Cultural Revival', the era was notable for the number of artistic, intellectual, and political movements that existed contemporaneously, the interaction of which stimulated an extraordinary efflorescence of cultural expression. Generally taken to encompass the years between the death of the nationalist politician Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891 and the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Revival expressed the preoccupation of the Irish people with issues of identity, heritage, language and nationality.

Even in the reserved terms of academic discourse, the period stands out as one of exceptional initiative and enterprise, particularly in reference to the Irish Literary Revival, which attracted world attention for the quality of its poetic and theatrical output. The historian R. F. Foster claimed that the period 'witnessed a great upward curve in Ireland's remarkable literary history', selecting for particular attention William Butler Yeats's 'great flood of plays, literary criticism, stories, essays and polemic' and John Millington Synge's 'small but dazzling oeuvre'.[1] Declan Kiberd and P. J. Mathews refer to the Revival as 'an extraordinary era of literary achievement and political ferment' in their commemorative anthology published in 2015, the *Handbook of the Irish Revival*.[2]

In June 2002, the Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland held an international conference at All Hallows College, Dublin, calling for a widening of the lens on the Revival, and an examination of the complex cultural environments in which the revival movements flourished. The proceedings of the conference,

[1] R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890–1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), p. 145.
[2] *Handbook of the Irish Revival: An Anthology of Irish Cultural and Political Writings 1891–1922*, ed. by Declan Kiberd and P. J. Mathews (Dublin: Abbey Theatre Press, 2015), p. 24.

published in 2004, include areas as diverse as revivalist archaeology, embroidery, the agricultural co-operative movement, the cultural politics of theosophy, street signs and music education.[3] Subsequent publications reflect this diversification, throwing light on the astonishing variety of activities which contributed to an exceptionally creative period in Ireland's history. The term 'Irish Cultural Revival' is now best understood as embracing a number of concurrent revivals and movements, each a distinct thread but rooted in a common desire to express a unique (albeit hotly-disputed) national identity.

While the extraordinary achievements of the writers and poets of the revival period has been well explored in international academic discourse, the role that music played in the cultural ferment of the time has as yet received little academic investigation.[4] Scholars including Joseph Ryan, Harry White, Marie McCarthy and Jeremy Dibble have written extensively on the lack of infrastructure to support musical arts in Ireland during the nineteenth century. Joseph Ryan's 1998 essay on 'Music and the Institutions' highlights the very late development of a third-level infrastructure, which was not put in place until well into the twentieth century.[5] Jeremy Dibble notes how even the capital city, Dublin, had no symphony orchestra, opera house or ballet company, offered only restricted concert activity, and had few educational opportunity for advanced students.[6] Without such infrastructure, those seeking to advance to a professional level had limited options: either to travel abroad for their musical training, or (in the spirit of self-reliance which would permeate the revival movement) to find their own solutions, using the resources and networks at hand while advocating for better support for the musical arts generally.

This thesis begins with the premise that the search for musical activity during the revival period is best focused on smaller genres of musical works, which could survive and even thrive without the institutions and resources required for larger instrumental and vocal productions. The examination of revival song literature suggested itself as a potentially fruitful avenue of research, as song is a natural partner

[3] *The Irish Revival Reappraised*, ed. by Betsey Taylor FitzSimon and James H. Murphy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004).
[4] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996). *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. by Seamus Deane and Angela Bourke, 5 vols (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991). P. J. Mathews, *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, The Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003).
[5] Joseph J. Ryan, 'Music and the Institutions', in *Music in Ireland 1848–1998*, ed. by Richard Pine (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), p. 102.
[6] Jeremy Dibble, *Michele Esposito* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2010), introduction.

to poetry and other literary forms that flourished during this period. By definition, songs are a fusion of word and melody, inextricably linked to meaning through the incorporation of text. This research therefore considered both the poetry and the music which combine in the realisation of a song, and the aspects of this textual and musical relationship which are unique to Irish songs of this period. The genre of song literature under consideration focussed on those songs written for performance in the 'classical' or Western art tradition, as exemplified in Germany by the works of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and others, and later by Poulenc, Debussy and Fauré in France. While such an art form could not be considered native to Ireland, in the early part of the century, the poet and songwriter Thomas Moore had established a platform and a receptive audience for folk melodies re-presented as art songs with English lyrics. This marked a critical point in the development of song literature in a recognisably Irish idiom.

As scholars such as Matthew Gelbart and Natasha Loges have shown, the lines of demarcation between such categorisations are often blurred. Gelbart, in his 2007 publication *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner*, claims that the categorisation of music according to authorship or origin is a relatively modern phenomenon.[7] He points out that, prior to the Enlightenment, music was categorised largely according to its social function, rather than its origin. Loges also notes that the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, who coined the term *volkslied* or 'folksong', encouraged a blurring of boundaries between original work and that taken from shared folk culture and later manipulated and transformed into 'art'.[8]

Many Irish songs fall into this ambiguous space, necessitating a somewhat arbitrary decision on what level of manipulation and transformation is required before a traditional melody has been transmuted into an 'art song'. When considered from the point of view of social function, original art songs and drawing-room arrangements of traditional melodies perform identical social functions, and in some cases differ very little in character. However, admixtures of native and foreign traditions have often been the subject of popular and academic criticism. The

[7] Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 5.
[8] Natasha Loges, 'How to make a Volkslied: Early Models in the Songs of Johannes Brahms', *Music & Letters*, 93 (2012), 316–49.

collector and academic Tom Munnelly in his essay 'Oh, what a falling off was there' (published posthumously in 2014) claimed:

> In the case of most folk songs [of the revival period], they had been well scrubbed and washed behind the ears, squeezed into formal dress and provided with piano accompaniment by the time they were presented to the genteel enthusiast dabbling in the folk-song revival of the period.[9]

Seán O'Boyle similarly dismissed such arrangements as 'the production of an artificial form of Irish "folksong", based on inaccurate transcriptions and provided with verse of varying degrees of sentimentality from poets writing in English.'[10] These, he claimed, were 'songs for an elite coterie and never assimilated into the repertory of the folk-songs.'[11] The collector and composer Herbert Hughes (1882–1937) who published folk song arrangements as well as original works, was very aware of what he called the 'severe metamorphosis' such a song underwent in the process. In 1934 he argued that the process of harmonisation and the imposition of 'an imported ecclesiastical mode' transmuted the folksong into an art song, and claimed:

> The tune itself may be of the kind that survives fashion, its origin may be of the remotest antiquity, but under [the composer's] hand it is definitely transmuted into an art-song, an art-song of his own generation. If his setting be good he will give new life to the old song, sending it out into the world among people who had never known it in its native environment.[12]

These arguments demonstrate the extent to which ideas of proprietorship and authenticity impact on the reception of art and raise questions as to the legitimacy or otherwise of music resulting from cultural fusion. There is a parallel metamorphosis with song lyrics as antiquarians, poets and songwriters grappled with issues relating to the translation of existing Gaelic lyrics, and the substitution of new English lyrics where the originals had been lost or displaced. This theme of metamorphosis forms a major thread of this study. The creative outputs of this process have been investigated from the perspective of musical treatments, development of lyrics, and the social history surrounding the collection and arrangement of these songs.

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[9] Tom Munnelly, *The Singing will Never be Done: Collected Essays and Lectures, 1990–2007*, ed. by Anne Clune (Miltown Malbay: The Old Kilfarboy Society, 2014), p. 359.
[10] Seán O'Boyle, *The Irish Song Tradition* (Dublin: Gilbert Dalton, 1976), p.13.
[11] Ibid., p. 14.
[12] Herbert Hughes, *Irish Country Songs*, 4 vols (London: Boosey, 1909–1936), III (1934), preface.

The extent to which folk song, folk lore and other traditional artefacts were treated as compositional materials in the development of original art songs has also been investigated in this study. A cursory perusal of the works of song composers of the period immediately highlights the extent to which Irish music and Irish subject matter impacted upon their original compositional output. This is unsurprising given the focus on cultural nationalism that pervaded the era. This research therefore considered original song compositions of the period that can be readily identified as Irish, either through the choice of poet, text, subject matter or the use of musical idioms associated with Irish music.

The definition of what constitutes an Irish composer has been interpreted broadly. The study's focus on the connection with the revival movement has resulted in the inclusion of certain composers who were not born in Ireland but whose songs evidence a strong attachment to the country, or whose lives revealed active involvement with the revival movement. Other composers have been excluded on the same basis, for example the Franco-Irish composer Augusta Holmès, who rarely referenced Ireland in her otherwise substantial compositional output.[13] Similarly, the work of Irish composer Ina Boyle (1889–1967) extends beyond the parameters of this research. Boyle has attracted attention in recent years, particularly since her music was featured in the *Composing the Island* project marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising (see Literature Review). However, due to her isolation (she lived all her life in the family home in Wicklow), she played no direct role in the Revival, although she did set a number of texts by revival writers, most of which were written after the period considered for this study. Her work is currently undergoing a major re-evaluation, and interested readers are directed to the recent monograph on her life and work by Ita Beausang and Séamas de Barra.[14]

I have generally preferred to use the term 'song literature' when referring to the body of songs published during this period, using 'art song' only where the term is clearly intended to refer to original works in the Western classical musical canon. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'art song' as 'a song composed with a view to aesthetic or artistic effect, typically a setting of a poem for solo voice with piano

[13] Works by Augusta Holmès that do reference Ireland include her symphonic poem *Irlande* (1882), and the songs 'La Chanson de gas d'Irlande' (1891) and 'Noël d'Irlande' (1896).
[14] Ita Beausang and Séamus de Barra, *Ina Boyle 1889–1967: A Composer's Life* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018), p. 126.

accompaniment'.[15] While the second clause clarifies the specific nature of what is generally termed an art song within the Western art music tradition, it can be argued that other traditions are no less concerned with aesthetic or artistic effects. The dictionary also defines 'literature' as 'written work valued for superior or lasting artistic merit', and while this poses similar difficulties such as by what aesthetic standards 'superior artistic merit' may be defined and calculated, we can use the term least insofar as it refers to songs which have been written down, and which belong to a tradition where authorship has been clearly established.[16] Thus, 'song literature' in the context of this study will refer to the published body of songs of the period, including collections, translations and arrangements, and original song composition.

With its focus on the development of song literature during the Irish Cultural Revival, this research aims to address in some way the subordinate role that music has played in the critical discourse on the period. Using the research questions indicated below as a framework for investigation, the research also marks the first comprehensive survey of song literature in Ireland, as a vibrant but previously neglected element of the Irish Cultural Revival.

1.1 Research Questions and Approach

This research sets out to address the following questions:

1. In what ways did the movements within the Cultural Revival of 1891–1922 cultivate and support Irish song literature?
2. What was the response of Irish composers and songwriters to this stimulus?
3. How did Irish song literature of the period articulate issues of cultural and national identity?
4. Where does this repertoire sit in the canon of Irish song?

[15] 'art song' in *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www-oed-com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/11125?redirectedFrom=art+song#eid128364556> [accessed 6 September 2021]
[16] 'literature' in *Oxford English Dictionary* <https://www-oed-com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/109080?redirectedFrom=literature#eid> [accessed 6 September 2021]

This research began with a review of relevant literature on Irish art music, in order to first identify which composers responded to issues of Irish identity as raised and promoted by the Cultural Revival. Biographies of the major composers and lyricists were consulted, and where these did not exist, archives and secondary literature were researched to assist with understanding the contribution of these individuals to the Revival. Publications of song collections and song sheets were reviewed, and many primary sources now out of print were also consulted. This survey yielded many hundreds of songs, including over one hundred songbooks published during the revival period, and songs published in journals and as individual songsheets, representing the work of collectors, arrangers, amateur songwriters and professional composers.

In order to limit and organise the songs, the following research parameters were applied: they must have been published or performed during the revival period; they were recognisably Irish in musical content, subject matter, or use of traditional idioms; and to eliminate minor composers, only those who were most influential in their field, and who demonstrated active engagement with the revival movement were included. These considerations were privileged over the actual birthplace of the composer, as the latter could lead to a rather purist exclusion of songs which clearly formed part of an 'Irish' repertory of the period. The relationships between the creative outputs and the Irish identities of the songwriters were examined, with a particular focus on collaborations between composers and writers active during this period.

The study surveyed the incursion by practitioners of a specifically Western art form into the rural folk song tradition, and examined of the song literature that emerged from this encounter. This situated later original compositions within a continuum that began with the work of antiquarians and collectors in the early part of the nineteenth century. Issues relating to poetry and language were also considered, including the dramatic decline of the Irish (or Gaelic) language and the late nineteenth-century attempts at its preservation and revival. The impact of the language switch on song literature has been examined, following the history of song texts from their original Gaelic settings through a century of reworking in the English language. This set the stage for the composition of original Irish art songs in English, and also contextualised the revival task of recovering Gaelic lyrics.

The analysis of the original songs and song cycles for this research focused on three main areas: song settings of traditional melodies within the context of a European aesthetic; settings of poetry written by the leading poets in both English and Irish languages; and the work of composers who strove to attain a distinctive Irish voice in their original songs. The analysis also considered the various milieux and contexts in which this repertoire was produced and received.

The research includes an assessment on song literature in the afterlife of the revival period, as the fertile and creative period of the Revival descended into the chaos of rebellion, war, the partition of the island and the challenges of nation-building. The research concludes with a consideration of the place of this song literature in Irish cultural heritage today.

1.2 Literature Review

The historical period examined in this thesis is delimited by the years 1891–1922, although the political and cultural developments over the course of the nineteenth century which provided the foundation of the revival movement have also been considered in Chapters 2 and 3. The historical framework for this study has been informed by a number of texts. Jonathan Bardon's *A History of Ireland in 250 episodes* provided a useful overview of the main political, social, and cultural developments during the revival period, contextualised in a broad survey of Ireland's more extended history.[17] A number of revisionist and post-revisionist texts were consulted to give more detailed perspectives on this period of rapid change. A guiding principle of the nine-volume series *A New History of Ireland* published by Oxford University Press was to introduce modern historical standards to Irish history; thus addressing nationalist narratives of struggle against oppressive British rule and unionist perspectives of British and imperialist traditions which omit the Irish dimension. Volume VI of this series, *Ireland Under the Union: 1870–1921*, has been most relevant to this study.[18] F. S. L. Lyons's *Ireland Since the Famine*, which surveys Irish history since 1850, contributed important economic and social perspectives to this revisionist work.[19] *Modern Ireland: 1600–1972* by R. F. Foster published in 1988 continued this revisionism, and the book remains an important text on Irish history, although his zeal for deconstructing nationalist myths occasionally strays into partisan territory.[20] More recent texts consulted include *Nineteenth-Century Ireland: The Search for Stability* by D. George Boyce, which gives a detailed consideration of history of Ireland over the 'long nineteenth century' extending from the 1798 rebellion to partition of the island in 1921.[21] Diarmaid Ferriter's *The Transformation of Ireland 1900–2000* surveys the twentieth century, beginning with a consideration of economic, social, gender and cultural themes, synthesising many perspectives not previously considered in Irish history.[22]

[17] Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ireland in 250 episodes* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2009).
[18] *A New History of Ireland*, 9 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1976–2011), VI: *Ireland under the Union II 1870–1921*, ed. by W. E. Vaughan (2010).
[19] F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London: Fontana Press, 1971).
[20] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988).
[21] D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005).
[22] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London: Profile Books, 2005).

Ireland's musical life in the century after the 1801 Acts of Union (which united the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland) has been historically regarded as stagnant and neglected, with the relocation of political power to London and the subsequent decline in cultural activity. Classical music was in a particularly vulnerable position as its traditional supporters, the educated and elite Ascendancy classes, drifted to the new seat of power. Writing in 1991, the Irish academic Joseph Ryan asserted that 'the history of music in nineteenth-century Ireland through all its aspects—creation, performance, and appreciation—makes for a dismal account'.[23] Ryan proposed that the interaction between music and nationalism was in large measure responsible for the 'jejune chronicle of the art in Ireland.'[24] This view was supported by the musicologist Harry White in his 1998 publication *The Keeper's Recital,* provoking a lively debate between musicologists who accepted or rejected the 'Ryan/White' theories.[25] The most extended challenge to these theories is Barra Ó Séaghdha's doctoral thesis 'Reframing the History of Classical Music in Ireland: 1820–1920', which deconstructs the Ryan/White theories and suggests an alternative explanation for the slow progress of classical music based on other conditions, including the relatively small numbers of a musically educated cohort, the mismatch between the culture of rural Ireland and music sponsored by the state, the weakness of classical music in the Catholic church, and the diminishing influence of the Protestant middle class.[26] Although the Ryan/White theories remain contested, their provocative claims and the challenges mounted against them have contributed to an appreciable growth in academic interest in the recovery, re-assessment, and performance of Irish art music—a movement that aligns well with the more general concerns of historical revisionism to widen the lens on orthodox (and frequently limiting) views of history.

The growth and maturation of musicological research in Ireland over the last three decades has done much to rehabilitate the reputation of Irish art music, although White noted as recently as 2019 that 'no history of Irish music has appeared since

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[23] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland* (unpublished doctoral thesis, NUI, Maynooth, 1991), p. 175.
[24] Ibid., v.
[25] Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland 1770–1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998). Patrick Zuk, 'Music and Nationalism: Part 1', *Journal of Music* (2002) <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/music-and-nationalism-part-1> [accessed 17 November 2016]; 'Music and Nationalism: Part 2', *Journal of Music* (2002) <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/music-and-nationalism-part-2> [accessed 17 November 2016]. Barra Boydell, *Music & Letters*, 80 (1999), 294–97. Axel Klein, 'Letters: Musical Constructions of Nationalism', *Journal of Music* (2002) <http://direct.journalofmusic.com/letters/letters-musical-constructions-nationalism> [accessed 17 November 2016]
[26] Barra Ó Seaghdha, 'Reframing the History of Classical Music in Ireland: 1820–1920' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Dublin City University, 2016).

1905'.[27] This is a reference to William H. Grattan Flood's *A History of Irish Music*, which can itself be regarded as a product of the revival imperative to recover and re-interpret the past for a modern Ireland.[28] However, musicologist Barra Boydell has noted that Flood's patriotic desire to place Ireland at the centre of European music history has relegated him to a problematic position in Irish musicology, citing his lack of source references, misquotations and misinterpretations.[29]

The publication of *Anglo-Irish Music, 1780–1830* by Ita Margaret Hogan in 1966 marks an early milestone in addressing this lacuna of musical historiography.[30] Covering the fifty year period before and after the 1800 Acts of Union, Hogan details the activities of musical societies, theatres, concerts, visiting musicians, music sellers and publishers, biographies of Anglo-Irish composers and a survey of the music of the time, thus capturing a musical era at its zenith and its subsequent decline. Other notable histories have focused on this era: Thomas J. Walsh, the founder and artistic director of the Wexford Festival Opera published several histories of opera in Dublin covering the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while composer and scholar Brian Boydell's *A Dublin Musical Calendar 1700–1760* and *Rotunda Music in Eighteenth-Century Dublin* recover details of musical life in the capital as derived from contemporary newspapers and other sources.[31] Boydell also contributed chapters on music in Ireland before 1700 and from 1700–1850 to *A New History of Ireland*, which specifically address the lacunae in Irish musicology to that point.[32] In Volume VI of the same series Aloys Fleischmann covers the increasing musical activity in Ireland along with rising prosperity during the period from 1850 to 1921.[33] Fleischmann's contribution to the series includes a brief but informative survey of the condition of music in Ireland during the period covered by this thesis, referencing

[27] Harry White, '"After long silence": Examining Paradigms for an Unwritten History', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 50 (2019), 47–70 (p. 49).
[28] Wm H. Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1905).
[29] Barra Boydell, 'Flood, W[illiam] H[enry] Grattan', in *EMIR*, ed. by Harry White and Barra Boydell, 2 vols (Dublin, University College Dublin Press, 2013), I, pp. 394–98 (p. 395).
[30] Ita Margaret Hogan, *Anglo-Irish Music, 1780–1830* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1966).
[31] Thomas Joseph Walsh, *Opera in Old Dublin, 1819–1838* (Wexford: 'Free Press', 1952); *Opera in Dublin, 1705–1797: The Social Scene* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1973); *Opera in Dublin, 1798–1820: Frederick Jones and the Crow St. Theatre* (Oxford: OUP , 1993). Brian Boydell, *A Dublin Musical Calendar 1700–1760* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, [1988(?)]); *Rotunda Music in Eighteenth-Century Dublin* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992).
[32] Brian Boydell, 'Music Before 1700' and 'Music, 1700–1850', in *A New History of Ireland,* 9 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1976–2011), IV: *Eighteenth Century Ireland 1691–1800,* ed. by T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (1986), pp. 542–623.
[33] Aloys Fleischmann, 'Music and society, 1850–1921', in *A New History of Ireland*, VI, pp. 500–22.

some of the song collections, festivals, and composers that are considered in more detail here.

Recent publications include studies of musical life in Belfast and Cork. Susan O'Regan's monograph *Music and Society in Cork, 1700–1900* examines concert life, church music, opera and theatre music in Cork city, stopping just at the point of the Gaelic Revival.[34] Roy Johnston's posthumous *The Musical Life of Nineteenth-Century Belfast* (completed by Declan Plummer after Johnston's death) also focuses on concert life, musical societies and opera performances in Belfast.[35] Where vocal music is addressed in these various histories, it is primarily in the context of choral works and choral societies, or on the concert programmes of visiting (frequently Italian) singers bringing popular arias and other established art song repertoire to the concert platform.

Perhaps the most outstanding contribution to Irish musicology in recent times has been the production of *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (*EMIR*), a two volume encyclopaedia edited by Harry White and Barra Boydell, presented as the first comprehensive attempt to chart Irish musical experience across recorded history.[36] The encyclopaedia provides surveys of essential works, institutions and lives of individuals germane to this study, and constitutes a starting point for further research. An article on 'Art Song in Ireland' by Lorraine Byrne Bodley traces the development of the genre from the fledgling art form of the eighteenth century through the functioning of song as a signifier of nationalist identity in the nineteenth century with the songs of Thomas Moore.[37] Byrne Bodley discusses the songs performed in Irish drawing rooms of the nineteenth century, including favourites from operas by William Wallace and Michael William Balfe. She describes Charles Villiers Stanford as one of the first Irish composers to elevate Irish song 'above mere melody with accompaniment' and refers to the tensions between traditional and classical in the songs of Herbert Hughes.[38] She also explores the contribution of women composers including Alicia Needham and Joan Trimble, and notes the difficulties inherent in attempting to approach Irish art song in a separatist way, citing

[34] Susan O'Regan, *Music and Society in Cork 1700–1900* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018).
[35] Roy Johnston with Declan Plummer, *The Musical Life of Nineteenth-Century Belfast* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing: 2015).
[36] *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, ed. by Harry White and Barra Boydell, 2 vols (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013).
[37] Lorraine Byrne Bodley, 'Art song in Ireland', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 34–36.
[38] Ibid., p. 35.

the composer E. J. Moeran, born in England of Irish parentage, as an example of the complexities of Irish identity. These issues of identity and the relationship between traditional and classical music will be further explored in this study.

Byrne Bodley's article is one of the few essays to directly address the subject of Irish art song. Stephen Banfield, in his monograph *Sensibility and English Song* considers the songs of the Irish-born composers Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood along with Edward Elgar and Hubert Parry in a chapter entitled 'Reticent Victorians', while the reaction of British composers to the literature of the Celtic Twilight is considered in another chapter.[39] Banfield examines the place of these songs within the repertoire of English song; from his perspective, Stanford and Wood are British composers rather than Irish. His analysis of Stanford's Irish songs stops just short of an accusation of insincerity, commenting that 'his songs about the Irish countryside were written in comfortable Kensington'.[40] He quotes Arnold Bax's comment that Stanford, Wood and Harty 'never penetrated to within a thousand miles of the Hidden Ireland'.[41] Banfield himself finds little to recommend Stanford's songs, claiming that 'his Irish cycles failed, primarily perhaps through the shallowness of the poetry, most of which is now so dead that its public exposure causes embarrassment or even offence.'[42] This is a harsh criticism, and lacks contextualisation, which will be further explored in Chapter 4. Other than an occasional mention, Banfield has not examined Hamilton Harty's song output or that of other Irish composers addressed here. Trevor Hold's monograph *Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song-Composers* surveys a similar field: the songs of Stanford, Bax and E. J. Moeran are considered along with seventeen other composers.[43] Of these three, only Stanford was born in Ireland, although both Bax and Moeran, through their interactions with Irish culture, have a valid claim to having contributed to the canon of Irish song. Hold's assessment of Stanford's songs is rather more generous than that of Banfield, noting his enormous range, from large-scale narrative ballad to exquisite miniatures.[44] He too finds issue with Stanford's choice of poet but comments that 'though many have deplored and belittled his Irish songs, they do

[39] Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[40] Ibid., p. 32.
[41] Ibid., p. 33.
[42] Ibid., p. 36.
[43] Trevor Hold, *Parry to Finzi: Twenty English Song-Composers* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002).
[44] Ibid., p. 41.

represent the composer at his most attractive and characteristic.'[45] Hold discusses Arnold Bax's interaction with the revival movement in Dublin and contends that despite being born in Streatham (London), Bax adopted Ireland as his spiritual home and in his music 'expressed the soul and spirit of Celtic nationalism as no other composer, certainly no Irish-born composer of the time, was able.'[46] He also examines Moeran's settings of poetry by James Joyce and Seumus O'Sullivan.

In their treatment of Stanford in particular, both Banfield and Hold reflect the rather dismissive reception of his work as a composer that endured for some time after his death, an attitude set in train by his most persistent critic and fellow Irishman, George Bernard Shaw. More recent appraisals have aimed to rehabilitate Stanford and re-appraise his contribution as a composer as well as a teacher.[47] Jeremy Dibble and Paul Rodmell each published a biography of Stanford in 2002, the 150th anniversary of his birth.[48] These, and the biography written in 1935 by Stanford's contemporary, the singer Harry Plunket Greene, add context to Stanford's compositions and his relationship with Ireland.[49]

A number of other biographies of Irish composers have informed this study: Jeremy Dibble's studies of Hamilton Harty and Michele Esposito have been invaluable sources of information about the composers, their works and their times, as has David Greer's earlier study on Harty.[50] Harty's abandoned memoir, along with other writings and manuscripts held in the Harty Collection in Queen's University Belfast, give insights to his early education and life in London, as well as his personal views on musical life in his time.[51] Lewis Foreman's authoritative study of Arnold Bax assesses the composer's relationship with Ireland and where his 'Irish' works sit in his substantial oeuvre.[52] Ian Copley's critical study of Charles Wood includes an assessment of his songs and the influence of Irish folk music on his musical compositions.[53] Biographical information on many of the other composers covered

[45] Ibid., p. 57.
[46] Ibid., p. 215.
[47] Adèle Commins,'From Child Prodigy to Conservative Professor?: Reception Issues of Charles Villiers Stanford', *Maynooth Musicology: Postgraduate Journal*, 1 (2008), 28–58.
[48] Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: OUP, 2002). Paul Rodmell, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2002).
[49] Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London: Edward Arnold, 1935).
[50] Jeremy Dibble, *Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013). Jeremy Dibble, *Michele Esposito* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2010). *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music*, ed. by David Greer (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, [1978(?)]).
[51] Belfast, QUB, Harty Collection, MS14.
[52] Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* rev. edn (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).
[53] Ian Copley, *The music of Charles Wood – a critical study*, 2nd edn (London: Thames Publishing, 1994).

in this research is currently limited to entries in *EMIR* and *The Dictionary of Irish Biography* (*DIB*), as well as some partial biographies, published and unpublished, by the composers themselves.[54] Bax's autobiography *Farewell, My Youth* gives the composer's own account of his life in Ireland and details his encounters with influential Irish writers and personalities of the revival period.[55] The Needham Archive in Cambridge University includes a manuscript copy of *A Daughter of Music*, Alicia Needham's own recollections of her earlier career, as well as her personal diaries and newspaper articles referencing her work.[56] Information on Herbert Hughes has been even more elusive, but memoirs written by his daughter Angela Hughes and son Patrick Cairns ('Spike') Hughes provide some glimpses into his career and family life.[57] Very little has been documented on the life and works of Carl Hardebeck, and the details given in this study have primarily relied on accounts of the composer written by his peers and published on various dates in the *Capuchin Annual*.[58] Similarly, biographical information on Charlotte Milligan Fox has been constructed from contemporary accounts in the *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society* (*JIFSS*) and from information in more recent studies of her sister, the poet and activist Alice Milligan.[59] The Irish Newspaper Archive and the British Newspaper Archive have been important sources in providing the immediacy of a contemporary perspective on a period of rapid change, as well as later reviews and reminiscences on some of the personalities represented here.[60]

Archives of sheet music held at the Contemporary Music Centre, the Irish Traditional Music Archive, and the RIAM, all in Dublin, have been essential for locating and perusing songs discussed here which are now out of print, as have the archives of the British Library, London; Queen's University, Belfast; and the digital archives of Villanova University, Pennsylvania. Introductory essays and footnotes in contemporary publications of song collections have provided insights into a

[54] *The Dictionary of Irish Biography* <https://dib.cambridge.org> [accessed 15 September 2020]
[55] Arnold Bax, *Farewell My Youth and other writings*, ed. by Lewis Foreman (London: Longmans, Green, 1943).
[56] Alicia Adelaide Needham, *A Daughter of Music* (unpublished autobiography), Cambridge University Library, MS Needham A.97.
[57] Angela Hughes, *Chelsea Footprints: A Thirties Chronicle* (London: Quartet Books, 2008). Spike Hughes, *Opening Bars* (London: Pilot Press, 1946).
[58] The Capuchin Annuals digital archive <http://www.capuchinfranciscans.ie/capuchin-annual-1930-1977/> [accessed 16 September 2020]
[59] Sheila Turner Johnston, *Alice: A Life of Alice Milligan*, 2nd edn (Newtownards: Colourpoint Books, 2009). Catherine Morris, *Alice Milligan and the Irish Cultural Revival* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012).
[60] Irish Newspaper Archives < https://www.irishnewsarchive.com>. The British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> [accessed 16 September 2020]

composer's methodology and approach, giving perspectives rarely documented elsewhere. A complete list of these sources is provided in the bibliography.

Modern editions of some classic works written during the revival period add up-to-date insights and scholarly comment, for example, Sara C. Lanier's 2013 edition of *Annals of the Irish Harpers* by Charlotte Milligan Fox, and *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* edited by David Cooper.[61] Una Hunt's *Sources and Style in Moore's Irish Melodies* and Colette Moloney's *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting* have informed the research covered in Chapter 2.[62] Tom Munnelly's *The Singing will Never be Done: Collected Essays and Lectures, 1990–2007*, edited by Anne Clune, provided a perspective on Irish song from a more recent collector and folklorist—his strongly-worded criticism of Anglo-Irish incursions into the traditional repertoire is a representative voice from the traditional music community.[63] The works of other twentieth century academics including Seán O'Boyle, Breandán Breathnach, Tomás Ó Canainn, and Donal O'Sullivan have provided a useful survey of traditional songs and methods.[64] *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (*CITM*), edited by Fintan Vallely, has also been a regular reference source.[65]

Modern musicology has rarely addressed the genre of art song by Irish composers directly, but a number of works liminal to the subject merit mention here. *Music in Ireland 1848–1998* is a collection of lectures originally broadcast on RTÉ Radio 1 to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM).[66] The compilation includes essays on the Irish music of Charles Villiers Stanford, a review of the institutions and infrastructures serving music in Ireland, and a consideration of the impact of politics on music and the Irish imagination. *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998*, edited by Richard Pine and Charles Acton was also published to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Academy, and has provided valuable information on the

[61] Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, ed. by Sara C. Lanier (Larne: Ardrigh Books, 2013). *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*, ed. by David Cooper (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002).
[62] Una Hunt, *Sources and Style in Moore's Irish Melodies* (London: Routledge, 2017). Colette Moloney, *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting (1773–1843): An Introduction and Catalogue* (Dublin: Irish Traditional Music Archive, 2000).
[63] Munnelly, *Collected Essays.*
[64] O'Boyle, *The Irish Song Tradition*. Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1977). Tomás Ó Canainn, *Traditional Music in Ireland* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978). Donal O'Sullivan, *Irish Folk Music and Song* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1961).
[65] *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, ed. by Fintan Vallely (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011).
[66] *Music in Ireland 1848–1998*, ed. by Richard Pine (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1998).

activities of a musical institution that was at the forefront of conservatory teaching during the revival period.[67] The fifth chapter of the book, which covers the period 1890–1921, gives insights into how the Academy responded to external events such as the founding of the Feis Ceoil and the National Literary Society (NLS). The writers make the observation that a sense of nationalism in musical affairs was not the exclusive right of an 'Irish Ireland' cohort, but that the Academy and its associates also demonstrated a love of and responsibility for the welfare of 'Irishness' in music.[68]

The concept of 'Irishness' in music is explored by John O'Flynn in *The Irishness of Irish Music* in a framework that considers grand narratives of national identity and music alongside popular identifications and rejections of what constitutes Irishness in music.[69] O'Flynn notes the tendency to classify nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Irish classical music as 'Anglo-Irish', in that Irish-born composers of classical works of this time had strong cultural ties with English music and for the most part lived and worked outside of Ireland.[70] This holds true for the majority of the composers studied here, and the extent to which they expressed their 'Irishness' in their music and particularly in their songs forms a major theme of this study.

Musical Identity in Ireland and Beyond, edited by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn, further explores the relationship between music and musical styles to national and cultural identity in Ireland.[71] Organised in three parts, Part I, 'Historical Perspectives' contains a number of contributions by academics which are pertinent to this study, including Barra Boydell on Irish music and Anglo-Irish identity in the eighteenth century, Martin Dowling on traditional music in the Irish Revival, Edmund Hunt's chapter on the search for a much-desired but elusive 'national school of music', and an examination of the 'Irish Music' of Arnold Bax and E. J. Moeran by Fabian Gregor.

Marie McCarthy's book *Passing it on: the transmission of music in Irish culture* examines the role of education in shaping musical culture in Ireland in the

[67] *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848–1998,* ed. by Richard Pine and Charles Acton (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1998).
[68] Ibid., p. 213.
[69] John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).
[70] Ibid., p. 41.
[71] *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond*, ed. by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[72] McCarthy looks beyond a simple perspective of dualism in Irish culture, and examines the impact of subcultures within communities. In particular, chapter four ('Music, Education and Cultural Nationalism in *Fin-de-Siècle* Ireland') examines the period of the Cultural Revival and considers the rise in status of native music making and the redefinition of Irish music by Gaelic League intellectuals, resulting in traditional music entering new cultural spaces and mainstream musical discourse. McCarthy's text provides a compelling discussion on the extent to which communities influenced and impacted on each other, and demonstrates the blurring of boundaries resulting from the incursion of musically literate practices into the sphere of an oral tradition. Benjamin Dwyer also cautions against reducing discussions of Irish music to binary, sectarian narratives in his 2014 monograph *Different Voices: Irish Music and Music in Ireland.*[73] While the primary focus of his book is on contemporary composition in Ireland, his opening chapters set out the background of musical culture in Ireland from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Of the nineteenth century, Dwyer notes that musical culture functioned dynamically in conjunction with a troubled context of political, cultural and revolutionary agitation.[74] He interrogates theses that suggest that ethnic music essentially resisted integration into Western art modes, and argues for a more nuanced view. His discussions of 'innocuous nationalism' (apolitical expressions of cultural distinction, such as that engaged in by the antiquarian collectors) and 'cultural multinarrativity' (the co-existence of apparently contradictory principles, such as Stanford's staunch unionism and his appreciation of his Irish cultural heritage) highlight complexities of identity which challenge simplistic narratives of binary polarities.[75]

Harry White's *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* examines the relationship between literature and music from the perspective of music as a formative agent in the Irish literary imagination, inverting the paradigm investigated in this thesis.[76] White argues that the elevation of literary forms eclipsed and replaced musical development in Ireland, and that musical forms instead found expression in

[72] Marie McCarthy, *Passing It On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), pp. 10–11.
[73] Benjamin Dwyer, *Different Voices: Irish Music and Music in Ireland* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2014).
[74] Ibid., p. 32.
[75] Ibid, pp. 32–47.
[76] Harry White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

the literary achievements of Ireland's writers. Exploring the implicit (and occasionally explicit) presence of music within the literary works of Moore, Yeats, Synge, Shaw and Joyce, among others, White suggests an alternative understanding of these literary works. He considers the 'verbal music' of Irish verse in English and the function of music as a symbol of creative imagination during the Literary Revival, positing that language became a substitute for music itself, and that literature filled the void left by art music. This is a controversial assertion, founded on the assumption that art music during this period was essentially absent, suppressed, or rejected as an expression of the colonial presence. The academic and musician Gerry Smyth makes a similar claim in his monograph *Music in Irish Cultural History* when he suggests that the price of an 'unrivalled pantheon of writers may have been the lack of a more balanced artistic tradition'.[77] Conversely, Smyth also points out the extent to which music lies at the heart of the Irish cultural condition, and advocates for a re-orientation of contemporary Irish Studies in the light of music's vital role in Irish cultural history. While noting White's illuminating insights on the presence of music within literary masterworks, and Smyth's comments on the extent to which literary achievements eclipsed musical activities, the assumption that music had no vital presence of its own will be further interrogated in this study.

Musicologist Axel Klein has been an advocate for Irish classical music since completing his Ph.D. thesis on the history of Irish art music in the twentieth century. Published in 1996 as *Die Musik Irlands im 20. Jarhundert*, the study considers discreet periods during the 20th century, including a chapter 'Zwischen Kolonialismus und Bürgerkrieg (1897–1923)' ('Between Colonialism and Civil War').[78] Part II of Klein's book discusses representative works by composers including Carl Hardebeck, Michele Esposito, Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer, O'Brien Butler, Herbert Hughes, John F. Larchet and Charles Villiers Stanford, as well as composers from later in the century. Biographical notes for seventy-five composers are also included, making the book the first significant study of the history of Irish art music of the twentieth century. In 2001, Klein followed this with *Irish Classical Recordings – A Discography of Irish Art Music*, with biographical and discographical information on both recordings of music by both well- and lesser-known Irish

[77] Gerry Smyth, *Music in Irish Cultural History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), p. 9.
[78] Axel Klein, *Die Musik Irlands im 20. Jarhundert* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1996).

composers and their works, as well as international composers influenced by Irish music.[79] Although nearly two decades have passed since its publication, the work remains a useful survey of Irish art music and musicians.

The *Irish Musical Studies* series published in association with the Society for Musicology in Ireland, while not focused exclusively on Irish music, has produced a number of important texts by scholars working in Ireland. Under the general editorship of Gerard Gillen and Harry White, several volumes have a specifically Irish focus and have informed this research.[80] The most recently-published volume, *Documents of Irish Music History in the Long Nineteenth Century* includes chapters on Esposito, Harty, and the Irish music manuscripts of Henry Hudson.[81] Earlier volumes of interest to this research include *Music and Irish Cultural History*, which includes discussions of music and nationalism, religion and Irish education, as well as some of White's early work on music and the Irish literary imagination, which he later expanded into the monograph mentioned above.[82] Joseph Ryan's chapter on 'Nationalism and Irish Music' examines what Ryan terms Ireland's 'failure to realize a consistent response to the phenomenon of nationalism'.[83] The ninth volume in this series, *Music in Nineteenth Century Ireland,* includes some of the most salient essays for this study, addressing issues of folk tradition, musical institutions, education and Church music during the nineteenth century.[84] Volume VII of the series, *Irish Music in the Twentieth Century* primarily focuses on music in Ireland after 1945.[85] While this series has provided contexts in which this current research is situated, and some detail on specific topics (e.g., Ryan's essay 'Assertions of Distinction: The Modal Debate in Irish Music' from Volume II, *Music and the Church*, which has relevance to Hardebeck's work), they are peripheral to the central issue of song literature during the revival period.[86]

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[79] Axel Klein, *Irish Classical Recordings: A Discography of Irish Art Music* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).
[80] In 2021, the general editorship changed to Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Harry White for a new series (from Volume XIII) to be published by Boydell and Brewer.
[81] *Irish Musical Studies 12: Documents of Irish Music History in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Kerry Houston, Maria McHale and Michael Murphy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2019).
[82] *Irish Musical Studies 3: Music and Irish Cultural History* , ed. by Gerard Gillen and Harry White (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1995).
[83] Ibid., p. 114.
[84] *Irish Musical Studies 9: Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* ed. by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).
[85] *Irish Musical Studies 7: Irish Music in the Twentieth Century* ed. by Gareth Cox and Axel Klein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).
[86] *Irish Musical Studies 2: Music and the Church* ed. by Gerard Gillen and Harry White (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993).

A number of more recent academic theses have addressed elements of Irish music of the period. Jennifer O'Connor's doctoral thesis 'The Role of Women in Music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin' considers the neglected contribution of women composers, teachers, writers and promoters in the capital city, including the work of Annie Patterson, Charlotte Milligan Fox and Alicia Adelaide Needham.[87] Richard Parfitt's doctoral thesis 'Musical Culture and the Spirit of Irish Nationalism, c. 1848–1972' and similarly-titled monograph primarily focuses on rebel song and its relationship to Irish nationalism.[88] Judith Carpenter considers the song compositions of Hamilton Harty in a master's dissertation 'Muse and Method in the songs of Hamilton Harty: Three Early Works 1895–1913', including an assessment of his approach to Irish traditional music, nationalism and the text-music relationship. A master's thesis by David Scott is the most extended work on the subject of Irish art song to date and covers the period 1900–1930.[89] With an emphasis on the original songs of Charles Villiers Stanford and Hamilton Harty, the thesis examines whether these songs inspired a distinctive tradition of Irish art song, comparing them with the songs of later composers John F. Larchet, Frederick May, and Ina Boyle. Scott considers the songs from a performer's perspective and examines which songs merit revival on concert platforms today.

There is already considerable evidence that a revival of interest in the music and songs of the period is underway. At the time of writing, Ireland is celebrating a number of centenaries of events which had a profound impact on the history and development of the Irish nation. In 2012, the Irish Government's Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht announced a 'Decade of Centenaries', marking an eventful period in Ireland's history, from 1912 to 1922.[90] Aiming to commemorate events including the campaign for Home Rule, World War I, the 1916 Easter Rising and the foundation of the Free State in 1922, the programme has served to focus attention on a period of major social, political and cultural change. With the stated intention to 'focus on the everyday experience of ordinary people living in

[87] Jennifer O'Connor, 'The Role of Women in Music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin' (unpublished doctoral thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2010).
[88] Richard Parfitt, 'Musical Culture and the Spirit of Irish Nationalism, c. 1848–1972' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, Linacre College, 2017); *Musical Culture and the Spirit of Irish Nationalism, 1848–1972* (New York: Routledge, 2020).
[89] David Scott, 'Examining the Irish Art Song: Original Song Settings of Irish Texts by Irish Composers, 1900–1930' (unpublished master's thesis, Technological University Dublin, 2018).
[90] 'Decade of Centenaries', Government of Ireland: Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (2012) <http://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/about/> [accessed 23 February 2018]

extraordinary times, as well as on the leaders and key actors in these events', the programme, in tandem with other local and national initiatives marking the events of the decade, has generated significant public and academic interest.[91] The music of the period has not been neglected, and something of a reappraisal of the history of art music in Ireland may be evidenced by the number of recent projects and studies of musical artefacts of the last two centuries.

In 2016, as part of the centenary of the Easter Rising, the National Concert Hall in Dublin presented an ambitious programme of twenty-nine concerts featuring the work of Irish composers from 1916 to 2016. Including world premieres of new works by contemporary composers and bringing to public attention works by little known and neglected composers, the series was accompanied by radio programmes broadcasting live concerts as well as discussions and interviews with some of Ireland's leading music academics and performers. Named *Composing the Island: A Century of Music in Ireland 1916–2016*, the project was launched by Heather Humphries (then Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht) and took place in the National Concert Hall in Dublin between the 7th and 25th of September 2016. In conjunction with the concert performances, RTÉ lyric fm broadcast interviews, concerts, and documentaries from their archives. The project featured an impressive survey of the work of composers and musicians such as Aloys Fleischmann, Frederick May, Arnold Bax, Augusta Holmès, Ina Boyle, Seóirse Bodley, Joan Trimble, Annie Patterson, Elizabeth Maconchy, and John Buckley as well as giving a platform to young contemporary composers. A companion publication, *The Invisible Art: A Century of Music in Ireland 1916–2016,* featured contributions from several of Ireland's leading music academics and journalists.[92] Other projects celebrating Irish art music have proliferated: Una Hunt's contributions include recital series, lectures, recordings and publications featuring the works of Irish composers including George Alexander Osborne, Thomas Cooke, Samuel Lover, E. J. Moeran and Augusta Holmès, as well as major studies on the songs of Thomas Moore.[93] Recent recordings include a CD of the songs of John F. Larchet curated by pianist Niall Kinsella; a compilation of art songs from the North of Ireland recorded by mezzo-soprano Carolyn Dobbin and pianist Iain Burnside; and further

[91] Ibid.
[92] *The Invisible Art: A Century of Music in Ireland*, ed. by Michael Dervan (Dublin: New Island, 2016).
[93] A complete list of these and other recordings is given in the bibliography.

collaborations between soprano Ailish Tynan and Iain Burnside on the Signum Classics record label on CDs featuring the Irish songs of Herbert Hughes and a separate compilation of songs inspired by Irish texts. The ubiquity of these projects and the renewed interest in Irish art music generally suggest that a reappraisal of this heritage is due.

In the UK, the Ludlow 'English' Song Weekend 2018 exclusively focused on Irish song, featuring works by Herbert Hughes, Ina Boyle, Michele Esposito, Charles Wood, Charles Villiers Stanford, as well as later Irish composers including Joan Trimble, Seoirse Bodley and Gerald Barry. In his introduction to the festival, the collaborative pianist and broadcaster Iain Burnside claimed that 'cross fertilisation between British and Irish music and poetry has been gloriously fruitful, across successive generations.'[94]

This thesis considers how this cross-fertilisation affected the development of Irish song and how these songs were presented to a primarily English-speaking audience. Its subject matter comprises those songs that represent a fusion between a largely (but not exclusively) Anglo-Irish literate tradition informed by European art music, and the native and orally transmitted songs of the rural Irish. The research aims to contribute to the recent re-evaluation of Irish art music through a study of the diverse activities and collaborations of song collectors, poets, composers, and others who collectively contributed to the development of Irish song literature during the revival period. In particular, the study focuses on the response of song composers to revival texts, including both new poetry by Irish writers, and texts inspired by Irish mythology and folklore, thus addressing a lacuna which, as yet, has received little academic attention.

[94] Iain Burnside, 'Towards the Unknown Region', welcome address, *The Ludlow English Song Weekend 2018 Programme*.

2. Irish Song during the Nineteenth Century

This chapter examines the development of song literature in Ireland during the nineteenth century and considers how this differed from art song developments in Britain and Europe. The antiquarian practices of folk song collection are surveyed along with an examination of the changes imposed on the airs as they were consciously transformed from oral tradition to drawing room ballad, deployed as nationalistic propaganda, or re-presented as art song.

2.1 The European Art Song Tradition

In continental Europe, song literature reached new levels of artistry in the nineteenth century, as successive developments in poetical forms inspired poets and demanded new musical treatments. Technical developments in the production of the piano allowed for more expressive possibilities, particularly with respect to dynamic contrasts and variety of articulation. Such developments were showcased by virtuosi including Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt, resulting in new styles of piano playing as the instrument rose to dominance on the concert platform.[1]

As a preferred accompanying instrument, the technical and expressive possibilities of the piano played a large part in the development of song literature throughout the century. Earlier forms of art song such as the *ballade* in Germany and the *romance* and *pastourelle* in France generally had simple accompaniment figures; as the technical action of the piano improved, composers used specific techniques to achieve mood and illustrate text. 'Gretchen am Spinnrade', composed by Franz Schubert in 1814 to a text from Goethe's *Faust*, is often taken as a starting point for the development of German *Lieder.* A repetitive motif in the piano part suggests the spinning wheel; dramatic dynamics including controlled *crescendi* and *sforzandi*

[1] Leon Plantinga, 'The Piano and the Nineteenth Century', in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* ed. by R. Larry Todd (Abingdon: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1–15.

demonstrate the new dramatic capabilities of the instrument; and Gretchen's inner turmoil, illustrated through masterful touches in the vocal line and increasing tension in the accompaniment, show Schubert's early mastery of the pathos of Romantic literature.

Beethoven extended song form in 1816 with the first song cycle, *An die Ferne Geliebte*, in which six songs are linked by transitional material in the piano, requiring the cycle to be performed in its entirety. Schubert and Schumann both continued this innovation with song cycles of their own, of which Schubert's *Winterreise* and Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben* are among the best known. According to American recitalist and academic Carol Kimball, Schubert's songs 'form the great cornerstone of nineteenth-century German *Lieder*.'[2] Taking advantage of the proliferation of German verse by poets like Schiller, Heine, Goethe, Müller and Rückert, Schubert composed over 600 songs in a wide variety of forms from simple strophic setting to extended dramatic scene. His settings display his ingenuity with illustrative piano motifs—water figures, patterns evoking nature or imitating inanimate objects. Schubert established a partnership between voice and piano which would be further developed by Robert Schumann, whose output of over 200 songs set the piano on an equal footing with the voice. In Schumann's songs the piano and voice contribute equally to a duet, with preludes, interludes and postludes that place significant performance demands on the pianist.

Just as piano technique was extended in the nineteenth century, so too was vocal technique, with the emergence in the 1830s of the *tenore di forza,* the more powerful tenor voice exploited on the operatic stage by Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi. Other voice types emerged as greater demands were placed on singers' voices to fill large opera theatres and concert halls and to carry over the expanded orchestras of the High Romantic period.[3] This, in turn, had an impact on song composition. Song cycles were expanded with orchestral accompaniments and found a home in the large concert halls that sometimes seated audiences of several thousand. The song cycles of Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Richard Wagner represent the best-known of this genre.

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[2] Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1996), p. 52.

[3] John Rosselli, 'Grand opera: nineteenth-century revolution and twentieth century tradition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. by John Potter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 96–108.

In France, the *mélodie* emerged as a new song genre, partly in response to the introduction of Schubert's *Lieder* which were widely popular, and also as a response to the new Romantic poetry of Théophile Gautier, Victor Hugo, Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine. *Mélodie* can be seen as descended from the earlier French *romance* (a song form characterised by its simplicity). Una Hunt claims that the term was coined after Berlioz set French translations of nine of Thomas Moore's poems under the title: *Irlande: Neuf Mélodies*.[4] Their success was such that French art songs subsequently assumed the title. *Mélodie* are notable for the high literary content of their texts, their lyric beauty, clarity of expression, flowing lines, and increased expressiveness in the accompaniment.

The twentieth-century pedagogue Pierre Bernac, who wrote the definitive text on interpreting French song, claimed that 'the *Lied* is essentially a Romantic phenomenon, whereas the French *Mélodie* is post-Romantic and often reacts against sentimental effusion.'[5] Bernac also noted that the *Lied* as an art form emerged directly from folksong (a relationship which also characterises Irish art songs), but that French *mélodie* has no close relationship to popular song forms, instead being more intellectual and concerned with sensitive perceptions and impressions.

2.2 Nineteenth Century Art Song in England and Ireland

The grandiosity and complexity of later *Lieder* and the sophistication of French *mélodie* find only the faintest echoes in English and Irish song compositions of the nineteenth century. Stephen Banfield, commenting on English song prior to 1900, asserts that:

> the overall impression is one of worthlessness. Whole volumes of mid- and late-Victorian songs and ballads by various composers are indistinguishable, showing a uniform lack of musical imagination.[6]

Banfield directs particularly withering criticism at the 'ballad style', which he claimed was

> immediately recognisable by its very lack of distinction, in which personality was submerged, the influence of the text upon the music was

[4] Hunt, *Sources and Style,* p. 4.
[5] Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song* (Amersham: Kahn & Averill, 1977), p. 34.
[6] Banfield, p. 3.

> at best pedestrian and at worst non-existent, the texture of the flowing accompaniment was uniformly 'pianistic', and the general idiom was such that procedures of Schubert, harmonies of Schumann, histrionics of Liszt, echoes of Grieg and foretastes of Fauré were alike reduced to a level of mediocre unmemorability.[7]

While popular music of the Victorian era is now being given more serious academic consideration than Banfield's assessment suggests, it is difficult to disagree with his point that English song of the period failed to reach the high artistic ideals of their European counterparts.[8] Kimball notes that these typically sentimental drawing room or parlour ballads, turned out in great numbers and with seeming ease, were wildly popular and commercially profitable.[9] Ballad concerts were held by the main publishing houses such as Boosey and Chappell to promote the songs, employing professional singers whose names were added as an endorsement on the printed sheet music. Dedications to royalty or other notable personalities were also used to assist in promoting the songs. These ballad concerts gave experience and exposure to aspiring musicians. Hamilton Harty's London career was launched when his skills as an accompanist were noted and he began to receive regular work at the concerts. He wrote in his unfinished autobiography:

> At the time I speak of there were regular weekly Ballad Concerts, as they were called, which attracted large audiences, and whose programmes consisted of large numbers of songs, nearly always about gardens and roses with weakly sentimental 'trimmings'. [...] I even wrote a number of very bad songs myself for these concerts. Fortunately they are nearly all out of print by now, for I am thoroughly ashamed of them.[10]

A search for original art song in Ireland in the nineteenth century proves similarly elusive. Joseph Ryan suggests this was due to the cultural displacement as a result of the Acts of Union, which began a period of decline when musicians had little alternative but to go abroad to pursue their studies and subsequent careers.[11] Some notable Irish musicians achieved celebrity for their large-scale operas and cantatas, written in the genre of European operas of the day, or in the popular English ballad opera style. Dublin-born William Rooke, whose career as a violinist and composer spanned the first half of the nineteenth century, wrote four operas (two of

[7] Ibid.
[8] Derek B. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19th-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).
[9] Kimball, p. 351.
[10] Hamilton Harty, *Early Memories* ed. by David Greer (Belfast: Queen's University, 1979), p. 34.
[11] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland,* p. 174.

which were produced at Covent Garden) and a number of songs, including 'Fair One, Take This Rose', and 'Hark the Echo'.[12] Michael Balfe, who became a pupil of Rooke's, was born in Dublin and spent his early life in Wexford before leaving to study in London and Rome.[13] He later achieved fame as a composer of English opera (of which he wrote twenty-nine), showing the influence of Rossini and a flair for tuneful melody. His operatic works have tended to overshadow his song compositions. Although he wrote over 250 songs to texts by Tennyson, Longfellow, Moore, and Thackeray, today he is best known as the composer of *The Bohemian Girl*.[14] William Wallace was a similarly prolific songwriter who is also remembered for his operas and piano music, writing nine operas and 180 songs during an international career which spanned four continents. Few of his songs have survived in the repertory today, although the musicologist Nicholas Temperley, writing in 2013, notes a recent revival of interest in his music and that of early Victorian music in general.[15]

While the development of art song in Ireland and England lagged considerably behind mainland Europe, other distinct strands of song literature began to emerge at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Irish antiquarians, musicians and poets began to collect and publish the songs and poetry from the oral tradition, starting a process of re-interpretation as songs were adjusted to meet the expectations of primarily Anglophone audiences. The following sections examine the history of this process and the resulting song literature.

2.3 Edward Bunting and Thomas Moore

In 1792, an 'Assembly of Harpers' (subsequently referred to as the 'Belfast Harp Festival') was organised by prominent Belfast businessmen including Dr James MacDonnell, an esteemed medical professional, and Henry Joy, the proprietor of the *Belfast News Letter*. The organisers were leading members of Belfast society and had

[12] Paul Collins, 'Rooke [O'Rourke, Rourke], William Michael, in *EMIR*, II, pp. 891–92.
[13] Sinéad Sturgeon, 'Balfe, Michael William', in *DIB* < https://dib-cambridge-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/quicksearch.do#> [accessed 25 June 2021]
[14] Nigel Burton and Ian D. Halligan, 'Michael William Balfe' in *Oxford Music Online* <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.01865>
[15] Nicolas Temperley, 'William Vincent Wallace', in *Oxford Music Online* <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.29838>

links to the newly formed United Irishmen—a nonsectarian political organisation which denounced British interference in Irish affairs and sought to unify Irishmen of all faiths. The event was planned to coincide with the third anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789, which had brought Theobald Wolfe Tone, the revolutionary and founding member of the United Irishmen, to the city. The stated intention of the festival was to preserve the music, poetry and oral traditions of Ireland from extinction before the last of the old harpers had passed away. It was hoped that nationalists would take an interest in their native harp music and would support the endeavour:

> when it is considered how intimately the spirit and character of a people are connected with their national Poetry and Music, it is presumed that the Irish patriot and politician will not deem it an object unworthy of his patronage and protection.[16]

It was planned to have both the music and song texts of the harpers notated so that the oral tradition might be preserved for posterity. Towards this end, a number of organists and musicians were approached, including John Sharpe and William Ware, and Ware's young assistant, Edward Bunting, who was nineteen at the time. The Revd. Andrew Bryson of Dundalk, a member of a scholarly family, was asked to attend, 'as a person skilled in the Irish language and antiquities'.[17] Of these, only Bunting seems to have been available to attend, and consequently the words of the songs were not notated, an omission which had a significant impact on the development and direction of Anglo-Irish song, as will be shown. For Bunting, the festival was to prove a seminal point in his career and in the direction that Irish music would take in the succeeding century.

Bunting lodged in Belfast with the family of Captain John McCracken, a prosperous merchant and shipowner, and remained there for thirty-five years, treated very much as a member of the family. The family was involved in radical politics—John McCracken's son, Henry Joy McCracken, was hanged for his part in the 1798 rebellion. Colette Moloney, in her comprehensive catalogue of Bunting's manuscripts, speculates that Bunting's initial interest in folk music was fostered by the McCrackens.[18] Moloney draws attention to the family's interest in folk music,

[16] From a circular issued in Belfast in 1791 and reprinted in Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland arranged for the Piano Forte* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), pp. 62–63.
[17] Fox, *Annals*, p. 127.
[18] Moloney, *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting*, pp. 4–5.

attested to by a number of airs in the Bunting manuscripts with titles such as 'Mr John McCracken's tune' or 'William McCracken's tune'. Henry Joy and James MacDonnell were frequent visitors to the McCracken household and Bunting's appointment to the Harp Festival was most likely made through this connection.

Harry White notes that the Harp Festival was to be the source of Bunting's lifelong preoccupation with Irish music and that conversely it was through Bunting's work that the festival achieved its potential.[19] Encouraged by McDonnell, Bunting set out with Richard Kirwan, a founder member of the Royal Irish Academy, on a number of tours to collect further airs and material. He travelled into Tyrone and Derry, and visited Denis Hempson, the oldest of the harpers who had attended the Belfast festival, and later travelled through Connaught. Following these field trips, he produced his first collection in 1796, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music.* The Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge*,* a precursor to the Linen Hall Library, subsidised the collection, but Moloney notes that the volume was not commercially successful and failed to even repay the expenses of its publication.[20]

Musicologists agree on the seminal importance of Bunting's work: Moloney claims that the volume, containing sixty-six airs, was 'a milestone in the dissemination of Irish music'.[21] While some Irish airs had appeared in print in English collections in the seventeenth century, and a collection of 'celebrated Irish tunes' had been published by the Neales of Dublin in 1726, Bunting claimed that his collection was the first significant collection of music to have been taken down directly from performers 'in the field'.[22] White credits the work as inaugurating a long tradition of systematic music collection in Ireland, but also notes Bunting's struggle to rationalise his duties as an antiquarian with his inclination as a musician.[23] Bunting himself claims that he had been cautioned against 'adding a single note to the old melodies', and would later state that his chief aim was 'to guard the primitive air with religious veneration.'[24] In this, he was not entirely successful. The harpist and composer Janet Harbison notes that Bunting had difficulty in transcribing the irregular, highly-ornamented, melismatic and non-metrical music into the confined and definite

[19] White, *The Keeper's Recital,* p. 38.
[20] Moloney, *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting,* p. 11.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Colette Moloney, 'Bunting, Edward', in *CITM*, pp. 91–92 (p. 91).
[23] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 39.
[24] Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840), p. 6.

rhythmic measures of classical music notation.[25] Bunting was the first in a long line of collectors, arrangers and publishers who for varying reasons amended melodies, altering details such as phrase lengths, time signatures, and modality to better align with their classical training.[26]

Also of significance was Bunting's introduction of piano accompaniments, which formed no part of the native tradition, but indicated the intended market for the airs. Roy Johnston and Declan Plummer give a compelling account for this decision in their 2015 publication *The Musical Life of Nineteenth-Century Belfast*.[27] Having committed not only to transcribing the ancient harp music but to arranging for its publication, the organisers of the Belfast meeting decided that the instrument of transmission could not be the harp. The few surviving professional harpists could only spread themselves thinly as performers or teachers, and, even if they were successful in creating a middle class vogue for the instrument, there was no market structure for turning out new instruments. Hence, the instrument of choice would be the piano—the instrument favoured for domestic music-making by the rising middle class. Even so, the collection was criticised for transcriptions that were too close to the original, as in the anonymous review in 1816 below, which scholars agree was most likely the work of the young George Petrie:

> We also greatly dislike the thin harp bases [sic] which he has given to others… However bearable the lengthened vibrations of our national instrument may have made such accompaniments, they will certainly never be tolerated on a piano-forte.[28]

Finally, the volume of sixty-six airs contained no words in either Irish or English—it was presented as a standalone volume of music. While some of the music originated as dance tunes, in other cases the sung Gaelic words simply had not been collected or were not seen as necessary for the intended, primarily Anglophone markets. This presented a unique opportunity to the Irish poet and musician, Thomas Moore, whose *Irish Melodies* would bring the airs to an international audience. From this point on, Irish song literature would develop along parallel lines: the native song repertory would continue to evolve within its oral tradition (albeit under conditions of rapid

[25] Janet Harbison, 'Bunting and the Belfast Harpers' Festival of 1792', *The Linen Hall Review*, 3 (1986), 23–25 (p. 25).
[26] *Bunting's Ancient Music of Ireland,* ed. by Donal O'Sullivan with Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (Cork: Cork University Press, 1983). O'Sullivan annotates Bunting's published melodies where these differ from the manuscripts where he first wrote down the tunes.
[27] Johnston, *The Musical Life of Nineteenth-Century Belfast*, pp. 51–52.
[28] *Dublin Examiner,* August 1816, p. 251. Quoted in White, *The Keeper's Recital,* p. 40.

cultural decline) while published collections would develop in a direction that tended towards an art song tradition.

2.3.1 Moore's Irish Melodies

In 1807, the poet and musician Thomas Moore was commissioned by the Dublin publishers James and William Power to set a selection of Irish airs in emulation of George Thomson's collections of Scottish airs set to the poetry of Robert Burns, which were popular at the time. Sir John Stevenson, organist and choirmaster at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, was hired to arrange the melodies. The first of ten volumes of what came to be known as 'Moore's Irish Melodies' was published in 1808, drawing heavily from Bunting's collection—of the twelve airs in the first volume, eight are from the Bunting collection.[29] In a letter to Stevenson that was prefixed to the first volume, Moore wrote:

> We have too long neglected the only talent for which our English neighbours ever deigned to allow us any credit. Our National Music has never been properly collected; and, while the composers of the Continent have enriched their Operas and Sonatas with Melodies borrowed from Ireland, very often without even the honesty of acknowledgment, we have left these treasures in a great degree unclaimed and fugitive.[30]

Such a public discounting of Bunting's collection, of which Moore was certainly aware, drew criticism from Bunting's supporters and was very much resented by Bunting. Moore's publishers, the Power brothers, attempted to soften the impact of the oversight by the addition of a footnote acknowledging the public's indebtedness to Bunting.[31] Moore would belatedly acknowledge his source in later editions, as well as offering to contribute texts to Bunting's second collection—Bunting declined the offer.

Already modified by Bunting, Moore imposed further alterations to the airs, and the addition of accompaniments, preludes and postludes by Sir John Stevenson (1761–1833) resulted in further changes. Una Hunt has comprehensively analysed and documented these changes, which included: changes to musical form;

[29] Una Hunt, 'My Gentle Harp', in *Thomas Moore: Texts, Contexts, Hypertext* ed. by Francesca Benatti, Sean Ryder and Justin Tonra (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 27–44 (p. 37).
[30] Thomas Moore, *A Selection of Irish Melodies*, 10 vols (London and Dublin: W. and J. Power, 1808–34), I (1808), preface.
[31] Una Hunt, 'My Gentle Harp', p. 38.

adjustments necessary in the re-arranging of instrumental pieces for voice; the addition of musical indications relating to the character of the poetry; and changes to key, ornamentation, modes, rhythm and melody.[32] Stevenson was particularly prone to the introduction of modulations and chromatic notes in the introductions and interludes, which at times bore little relationship to the air they accompanied. Such modifications did not always meet the approval of more purist collectors and he was replaced for the last three volumes by Henry Rowley Bishop.

Figure 2.1 shows an example from Bunting's first collection—'The Brown Maid'—with no words and a very simple harmonic accompaniment, while Figure 2.2 shows the same song as it appeared in the first volume of Moore's *Irish Melodies,* with Stevenson's piano preludes and postludes (called 'Symphonies'), and the new English lyrics Moore had set to it.

Fig. 2.1 Facsimile of 'The Brown Maid' from Bunting's *Ancient Irish Music*

[32] Una Hunt, *Sources and Style,* pp. 108–35.

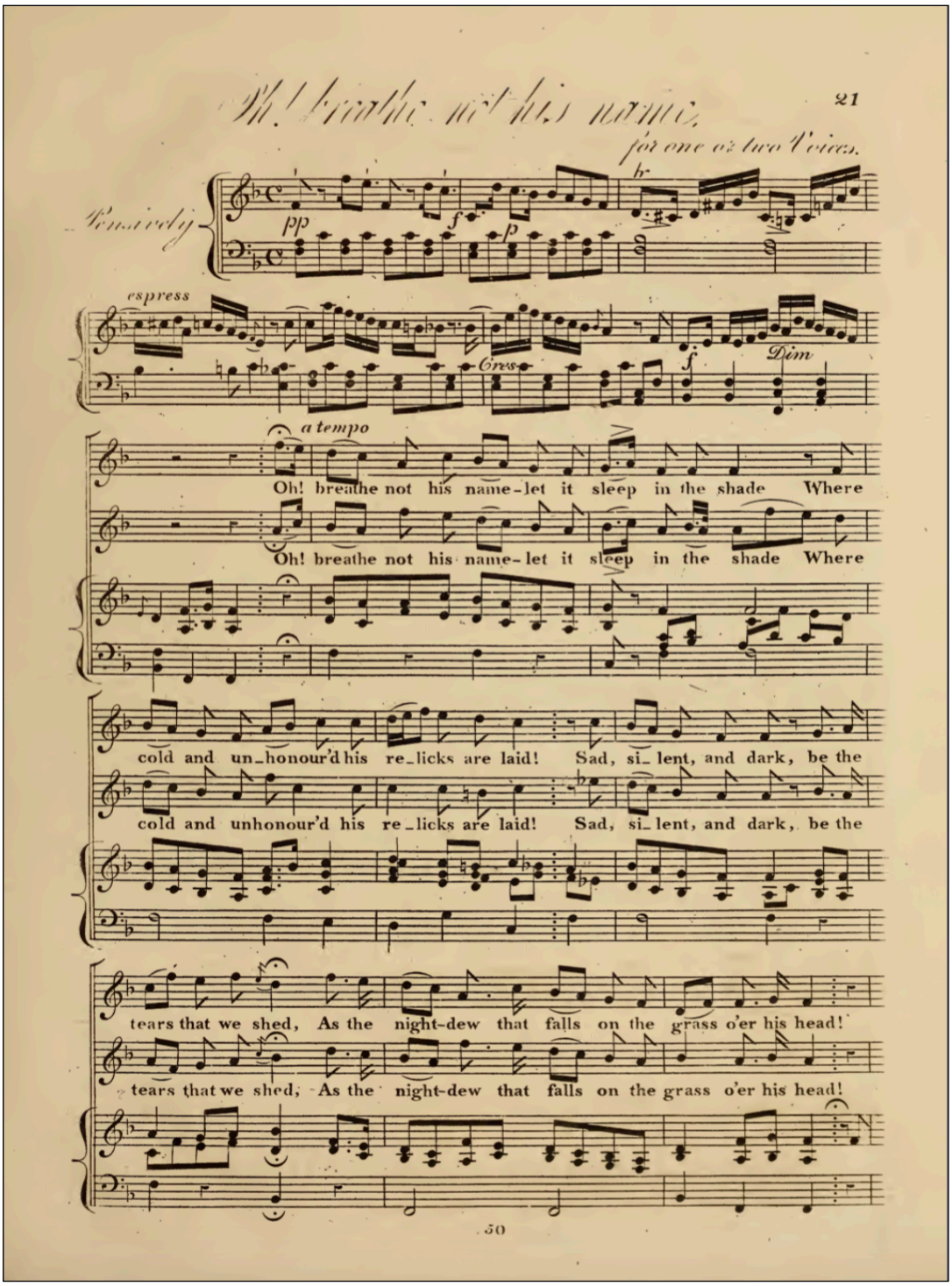

Fig. 2.2 Facsimile of 'Oh, Breathe not his Name' from Moore's *A Selection of Irish Melodies*

Aside from the obvious politicisation of the song (Moore's lyrics are generally accepted as referring to Robert Emmet, a close friend of Moore's, who was executed for his part in the 1803 rebellion), Figure 2.2 shows the extent to which Stevenson strayed into more complex chromaticism and a richer dynamic palette in the piano introduction, although this is simplified once the voices enter. Controversy

surrounded the piano arrangements as soon as the *Irish Melodies* began to appear, as they were considered to be too elaborate and out-of-step with the simple beauty of the airs.[33] Changes can also be seen to the melody itself, through the insertion of the fermata on the opening note; the introduction of a dotted rhythm on the anacrusis and the smoothing out of the dotted rhythm in the first bar; an upbeat accommodates the extra syllable in the text before the third bar; in the fifth bar a quaver is removed and a dotted rhythm replaces the final two quavers; while the sixth bar again changes the rhythm and adds an embellishment and fermata. The final two bars are melodically consistent, with rhythmical changes only. These changes are relatively minor and can be justified in the light of the demands of the poetry, which Moore defended, saying,

> the whole task of selecting the airs and in some respects shaping them thus, in particular passages, to the general sentiment, which the melody appeared to me to express was undertaken solely by myself. Had I not ventured on these very allowable liberties, many of the songs now most popular would have been still sleeping, with all their authentic dross about them, in Mr Bunting's first volume.[34]

A more significant change is the addition of a second vocal part, which again seems out of sympathy with the simplicity of the original air, and highlights the intended, musically educated audience for the songs. A dedication at the beginning of the volume makes this even more explicit: 'To the Nobility and Gentry of Ireland, the following Work is respectfully Inscribed by the Publisher'.

Despite the controversies and criticisms of the work, the *Melodies* were immediately celebrated. Hunt speculates that 'the mixture of evocative traditional airs and Moore's atmospheric lyrics proved absolutely irresistible to audiences; and so, his fame was sealed as they soon began to make their way around the world.'[35] The most severe criticism was reserved for Stevenson, whose arrangements Bunting particularly deplored. Bunting was certainly chagrined by the appropriation of his work, although he admired Moore's poetry, paying a grudging compliment in the preface to his final collection of songs in 1840, when he noted that the tunes had

> assumed a new dress—one, indeed, in point of poetic diction and classical ornament infinitely more elegant than they had ever worn before—under the hands of Mr. Moore; but the Editor saw with pain, and still deplores

[33] Una Hunt, 'The Little Ponies that Beat the Mare: Thomas Moore and his Irish Melodies', *Journal of Music* (2008) <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/little-ponies-beat-mare-thomas-moore-and-his-irish-melodies> [accessed 3 November 2018]
[34] *The Journal of Thomas Moore,* 6 vols, ed. by Wilfred S. Dowden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 2141. Quoted in Fox, *Annals,* p. 26.
[35] Una Hunt, 'Little ponies' (para. 4 of 11).

> the fact, that in these new Irish melodies, the work of the poet was accounted of so paramount an interest, that the proper order of song writing was in many instances inverted, and, instead of the words being adapted to the tune, the tune was too often adapted to the words.[36]

Hunt also points out this parallel inversion of the typical development of an art song: 'in art song, the poetry is chosen and set to an original tune, with accompaniments, solely by the composer', that is, usually the poetry comes first, and inspires the musical composition.[37] Composers such as Schumann, Schubert and Mahler in Germany were inspired by the romantic poetry of Goethe, Müller and Heine, while French composers Berlioz, Duparc and Poulenc were in turn inspired by the Parnassian and Symbolist poets of their own time. Bernac noted that:

> In vocal music, the sonority and the rhythm of the words are an integral part of the music itself. […] the music *of* the poem is as important as the music set *to* the poem. The music of the words and the music itself are one and the same; they should not be dissociated.[38]

In the Irish song literature collected in the nineteenth century, this dissociation was an inevitable consequence of the language shift, and the resulting failure to collect Gaelic lyrics with their associated airs. The attempt to graft lyrics from another language and culture onto the Irish airs reversed the usual order of song composition and was not always as successfully negotiated as those presented by Moore, although he did inspire many imitators.

First among these was Bunting himself, who seems to have realised that he had missed an opportunity in publishing the melodies without lyrics in his 1796 collection. George Petrie, who worked as a close collaborator with Bunting in his later years, made the shrewd observation that Bunting's second collection, published in 1809, may have been hastened by the extraordinary success of Moore's melodies, and suggested that 'a natural spirit of emulation excited him to attempt a vain rivalry with it by the adaptation of English words to most of the vocal airs', and noted ironically that 'it is easier to command good paper, engraving and printing, than good poetry.'[39]

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[36] Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840), preface.
[37] Una Hunt, *Sources and Style*, p. 4.
[38] Bernac, pp. 3–4.
[39] George Petrie, 'Edward Bunting', *Dublin University Magazine,* 29 (1847), 64–73 (p. 70).

2.3.2 The Irish Songs of the Bunting Manuscripts

Tomás Ó Canainn has noted that Bunting was one of the first collectors to realise the vital importance of the Irish words to the songs collected.[40] In 1802, Bunting had made an extended tour of Connacht and parts of Munster, making the crucial decision that the Irish words should also be collected. Moloney gives extensive details of the Irish-language song texts contained in the Bunting manuscripts and the story behind their collection.[41] Numbering some 500, Moloney claims that most were collected in the year 1802, when Bunting was preceded on a tour of Connacht by Patrick Lynch (Pádraig Ó Loingsigh), an Irish scholar from Loughinisland, near Downpatrick, Co. Down, at that time an Irish-speaking area. Lynch was employed from c. 1802 to c. 1803 for the purpose of finding singers, noting down their song words, and translating them into English prose. Unwelcome in the homes of the gentry, who regarded him as a spy for the United Irishmen, he turned instead to collecting from the 'lower classes': weavers, shoemakers, and masons, retrospectively gathering lyrics for songs already published in Bunting's earlier edition. He also kept a diary (now in the library of Queen's University, Belfast) noting down the songs, as well as the names, ages and locations of the people he collected them from.[42]

Although Lynch provided hundreds of well written texts in good Irish and accurate translations of them, Bunting chose not to include them in either in his 1809 volume, nor his final volume in 1840. Several writers have speculated that Lynch's betrayal of Thomas Russell for his part in Robert Emmet's rebellion of 1803 must have been a crucial factor in the deliberate omission of his work from Bunting's publications.[43] Russell was a close friend of Bunting and the McCrackens, and had been a confidante of their son, Henry Joy McCracken. Lynch, himself under arrest on a charge of treason, turned King's Evidence against Russell who was subsequently hanged.

This may have been behind Bunting's decision to omit Lynch's work from his publications, although these were originally intended for his second volume, published in 1809: *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland, arranged*

[40] Ó Canainn, p. 13.
[41] Moloney, *The Irish Music Manuscripts of Edward Bunting,* pp. 145–48.
[42] Munnelly, *Collected Essays,* p. 337. Footnote added by Anne Clune (ed.).
[43] Alfred Perceval Graves, *Irish Literary and Musical Studies* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1913), p. 195. White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 42.

for the Piano Forte. This volume announced that 'some of the most admired melodies are adapted for the Voice, to Poetry chiefly translated from the Original Irish Songs by Thomas Campbell, Esquire and Other Eminent Poets'.[44] In the preface, Bunting makes oblique reference to 'a person versed in the Irish tongue', who accompanied him on his tours, taking down the words. Lynch's literal translations supplied the basis for the lyrics to the melodies, and nine poets in total contributed to the volume. However, only twenty of the fifty-four airs in the volume were given verses.

Having declined Moore's offer to set texts to his second edition, Bunting instead approached the popular Scottish poet Thomas Campbell. Campbell was not enthusiastic and contributed only four in total; two that Moloney describes as having 'indifferent lyrics' and two of his early ballads. The schoolteacher Mary Balfour contributed nine poems from Lynch's translations, and the remaining seven were contributed by seven individual poets, including William Drennan, Hector MacNeill, and pieces by Charlotte Brooke and Jonathan Swift taken from earlier publications. The Gaelic scholar Theophilus O'Flanagan also assisted with translations. However, the new lyrics were mostly out of sympathy with the character of Irish traditional song and were not successful as literary pieces even in their own day. Robert Welch in *A History of Verse Translation from the Irish 1789–1897* notes that some translations were more successful than others, singling out Mary Balfour's translation of 'An Sean-Triúcha' for preserving something of the clarity of the original Irish:

> Arise from thy slumbers, oh, fairest of maids!
> With me wilt thou wander to Triugha's green shades,
> Where sorrel and bright rowen berries abound,
> And notes in green clusters the branches have crown'd.[45]

However, Hector MacNeill's translation of 'B'fhearr liom ná Éire' gets an elaborate Romantic treatment:

> But adieu! though my hopes, by thy coldness and scorning,
> Fall faded like blossoms half blown on the tree,
> May love bless your eve, though it blighted my morning,
> I would rather than Ireland once more were I free.[46]

[44] Ibid., frontispiece.
[45] Mary Balfour, 'Arise from thy slumbers', in Bunting, 1809. Quoted in Robert Welch, *A History of Verse Translation from the Irish 1789–1897* (Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1988), p. 55.
[46] Hector MacNeill, 'O lov'd maid of Broka', in Bunting, 1809. Quoted in Welch, *A History of Verse Translation,* p. 55.

This illustrates the inherent difficulties in translating across cultural divides, and also the unhappy result of Bunting losing his focus as an antiquarian collector of folk tunes, for what White describes as 'a rash emulation of romantic individualism'.[47] Moloney notes that the songs have seldom been sung, and the 1809 edition, like the first, did not prove to be a profitable undertaking. When he published his final collection in 1840, Bunting did not repeat the experiment of adding lyrics—the airs stand on their own.

Bunting spent much of the period between 1809 and 1840 on other musical pursuits, but continued to edit and arrange music already collected, as well as new material sent from a number of correspondents including Eugene Curry, Richard McElligott and Christopher Higgins. In response to the exhortations of Dr James MacDonnell and George Petrie, he published his final and largest volume in 1840: *The Ancient Music of Ireland arranged for the Piano Forte*.[48] The collection includes scholarly essays by Bunting on the 'Characteristics of Irish Melody' and the methods of playing employed by the old Irish harpers, as well as contributions from Samuel Ferguson and George Petrie. In the preface to the 1840 volume, Bunting expressed a wish to 're-arrange and republish' his two earlier volumes. Ill-health prevented him from doing so; he died on 21st December 1843 at the age of 70. The final volume had as little commercial success as his earlier collections.

2.3.3 Later editions of Moore's Melodies

National melodies and their associated lyrics would undergo further metamorphoses as the century progressed. When the copyright expired on Moore's earlier collections, the opportunity was seized to put a more acceptable and sympathetic accompaniment to the pieces, and several new editions were published. Novello published a new collection in 1859, explaining:

> In submitting to the public a new edition of "Moore's Irish Melodies," the publishers have been influenced by a desire to present that popular work in a more perfect form than it has hitherto assumed,—when regarded from a musical point of view. It is now universally acknowledged that the symphonies and accompaniments of Sir John Stevenson are by no means irreproachable in a merely technical sense;

[47] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 42.
[48] Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840).

> nor do they exhibit that appropriate national colouring for which they have so long enjoyed the credit.[49]

The man Novello selected for the arrangements was the composer Michael William Balfe, then enjoying considerable success as a composer and conductor of opera. In a *Musical Times* review of Balfe's arrangements in 1859, Stevenson's arrangements were deplored, while Balfe's were given 'hearty praise', with a tone of relief that 'a task of some responsibility, which only a musician can accomplish in a satisfactory manner', had been successfully concluded.[50] This would not prevent Charles Villiers Stanford making another attempt at a definitive edition in 1895. He, too, found fault with the many 'corruptions' introduced by the Moore-Stevenson partnership, claiming that 'there is scarcely a melody which Moore left unaltered, and, as a necessary consequence, unspoilt.'[51] Stanford claimed to have 'restored' to the melodies their scales and characteristic intervals, and to have omitted airs which were not Irish, but was unapologetic in his use of 'frankly modern' accompaniments.[52] Noting that the melodies were originally conceived to be monophonic and that any attempt at polyphony must necessarily be intrusive, he chose a free form with the intention of improving the chance of bringing the force of the melodies home to the listener. With an argument Herbert Hughes would later echo, Stanford claimed that 'the airs are for all time, their dress must vary with the fashion of a fraction of time.'[53]

In what can only be regarded as a deeply ironic twist, another compilation was published in 1871, by John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, this time containing Irish translations of Moore's lyrics. Intended to have a moralising effect on its readers, Moore's original lyrics were printed side by side with MacHale's translation. The example below shows the first verse of MacHale's translation of 'Oh! breathe not his name' with Moore's text and demonstrates the song's journey from the traditional air 'An Cailín Donn' collected and arranged by Bunting (Figure 2.1), grafted to an entirely new text in English by Thomas Moore (Figure 2.2), which in turn was translated into Irish by MacHale as 'Ná cogaraidh Amháin Ainm'. MacHale's translation is quite a faithful rendering of Moore's text, with the added advantage of

[49] *Moore's Irish Melodies,* ed. by Michael William Balfe (London & New York: Novello, Ewer, 1859), preface.
[50] *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular,* 9 (1859), 28–29 (p. 29).
[51] *The Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore,* ed. by Charles Villiers Stanford, (London: Boosey & Co, 1895), preface.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

being a metrical translation which fits the melody. Moore's original English setting is given below MacHale's text here:[54]

> Ná cogaraidh amháin ainm, acht codladh sé faoi sgáth
> 'S an g-cré 'fuair 'n ar cuiseadh é go h-uaigneach ann a bláth:
> Agus tiugh, tuirseach, trom, bhidheach deóra ar súl,
> Mar dhrúchd na h-oidhche thuiteas ar néultaibh na n-dúl.
>
> Oh! Breathe not his name! Let it sleep in the shade,
> Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;
> Sad, silent, and dark, be the tears that we shed,
> As the night dew that falls on the grave o'er his head.

MacHale was a committed and influential nationalist, and an admirer of Thomas Moore who, MacHale explained, had introduced the melodies to 'the most fashionable musical salons of Europe'.[55] MacHale's intention in preparing the Irish translations was to introduce Moore's 'pure and lofty sentiments of patriotism and virtue' to his 'humbler countrymen'—that is, those who still spoke Gaelic as their primary language.

2.4 Thomas Davis and the Spirit of the Nation

In the 1840s Thomas Davis, the charismatic leader of the Young Ireland movement, successfully used song to propagate a political agenda through the periodical *The Nation*.[56] Davis admired Moore's poetry, although he found the music of the *Melodies* sentimental and the keys too high.[57] He felt they failed as political songs, and claimed that almost all were 'too desponding or weak to content a people marching to independence as proudly as if they had never been slaves.'[58] This was to be his short life's work, fostering public opinion to support a patriotic nationalism based on political self-determination and a nonsectarian national unity. With Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon, he co-founded the influential newspaper *The Nation* in 1842. The journal included stirring political ballads written by Davis and

[54] John MacHale, *A Selection of Moore's Melodies translated into the Irish language* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1871), pp. 14–15.
[55] Ibid., preface.
[56] 'Young Ireland' was a mid-nineteenth century movement of young radicals including Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillion and Charles Gavan Duffy, which was highly influential in the growth of Irish political and cultural nationalism.
[57] Thomas Davis, 'Irish Music and Poetry', repr. in *Thomas Davis: Selections from his prose and poetry*, ed. by T. W. Rolleston (London: Gresham Publishing: 1910), pp. 205–08 (p. 206).
[58] Ibid.

others, and the popular response to these led to the announcement, just six months after the founding of the journal, of their intention to reprint 'the best political songs, national ballads, epigrams, and squibs […] in a little book, with the title of the *Spirit of the Nation*, which we will sell, or rather give away, for sixpence.'[59] Comparing this with Bunting's 1840 collection, which was priced at one pound ten shillings, the Young Irelanders were clearly aiming at the mass market. In this, they were inordinately successful, and a second collection, as well as a revised edition of the first collection, was published the same year. A recent article by Timothy Love describes the impact of the songs:

> The popularity of *Spirit of the Nation* meant that their songs were sung throughout Ireland wherever people assembled—in the cottage, in the village forge, in the harvest field, in the workshop, in the lawyers' chambers, in the universities, in the public houses and in concert halls. They were even discussed and sung in the aristocratic drawing rooms. The breadth of the songs' appeal is important. One must recognize that music does more than symbolize or articulate nationalism: it participates in its formation.[60]

Figure 2.3 shows a detail from the contents pages of the first edition of *The Spirit of the Nation,* giving the title of the ballad, a suggested air to which it could be sung, and the pen-name of the author as published in *The Nation*. Pen names offered the Young Irelanders some protection to publish nationalist writings without fear of retribution—Davis's pen-name was 'The Celt'.[61] In this list, we can recognise tunes that are still familiar today. *The Minstrel Boy*, *Auld Lang Syne,* and even *Rule, Brittania!* were appropriated to the nationalist cause. Others are left without suggested airs, and the editors claimed of these that they could be 'read or recited at public dinners and soirees with scarcely less advantage.'[62]

Within the body of the book itself, suggested airs were referenced, but no melodies or piano accompaniments were published in the first volume, indicating the precedence of words over music for the Young Irelanders. This was rectified shortly after, when, spurred on by the success of the original publication, Davis excitedly announced the publication of a new volume, claiming that 'The popularity and immense circulation of the *Spirit of the Nation* proved that it represented the hopes

[59] *The Nation,* 25 March 1843, p. 376.
[60] Timothy M. Love, 'Irish Nationalism, Print Culture and the *Spirit of the Nation*', in *Nineteenth-Century Music Review,* 15 (2018), 189–208 (p. 196).
[61] Helen F. Mulvey, *Thomas Davis & Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 105.
[62] *The Spirit of the Nation*, 2nd edn (Dublin: James Duffy, 1844), preface.

and passions of the Irish people.'[63] The new volume, which became known as the 'Library Edition', was intended, like Moore's *Melodies*, for the drawing room and aristocratic circles, while a smaller pocket volume would continue to be published for the mass market.

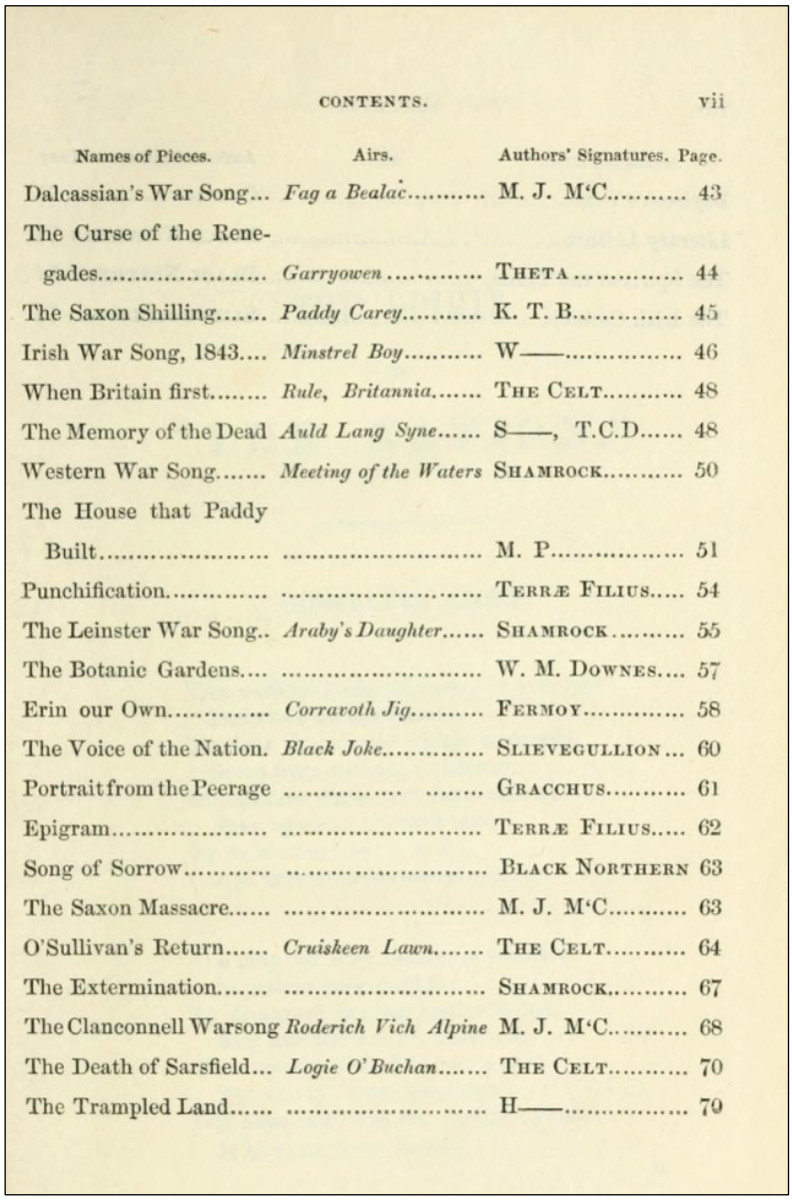

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Fig. 2.3 Facsimile of contents page from *The Spirit of the Nation*

Initially issued in parts, the songbook was published in its final form in 1845, including seventeen original compositions, as well as arrangements of twenty traditional tunes. Davis explained the need for new compositions that might make known a contemporary music 'fresh with the spirit of the time, and rooted in the

[63] Thomas Davis, 'Irish Music and Poetry', p. 206.

country'.[64] Albeit composed by amateur enthusiasts, these songs represent the first original songs written as a response to the nationalistic poetry of the Young Ireland movement. The composers and arrangers are unnamed (again, this was most likely as a protection to the individuals concerned).

In his essay on 'Irish Music and Poetry', Davis refers to a single unnamed but clearly appreciated composer responsible for the music to 'The Memory of the Dead', and 'Hymn of Freedom'.[65] Jimmy O'Brien Moran, writing in both *EMIR* and *CITM* names William Elliot Hudson as this composer, and also mentions John Edward Pigot as a contributor of melodies to the *Spirit of the Nation.*[66] Pigot was an accomplished musician and a founder member of the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, who also collected tunes and contributed ballads under the pen-name 'Fermoy'.

In the first (text-only) edition of *Spirit of the Nation,* 'Auld Lang Syne' was given as a suggested tune for 'The Memory of the Dead'. In the Library Edition, it is one of seventeen poems given a new musical setting by Hudson. Figure 2.4 shows the new composition in slow march time, printed with piano accompaniments as would have been expected in any such edition. Love claims that, in securing Hudson and Pigot to arrange traditional melodies as well as writing original song, Davis had chosen men whose style was anchored in traditional music.[67] The piano accompaniments are generally simple, leaving issues of variation, ornamentation, phrasing and articulation to the performer. Love suggests that it was typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century transmission of tunes that melodies were represented in a very basic manner. Joseph Ryan refers to the accompaniments as 'bland' and claims that the ballads 'made better propaganda than art'.[68] The simplicity of the arrangements, however, maximised their potential audience as they were accessible to amateur musicians and domestic settings.

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[64] Ibid., p. 207.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Jimmy O'Brien Moran, 'Hudson, William Elliott' [sic] in *EMIR*, I, pp. 503–03; 'Pigot, John Edward', in *EMIR,* II, pp. 839–40; 'Hudson, William Elliot' in *CITM*, pp. 354–54.
[67] Love, p. 202.
[68] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland,* p. 115.

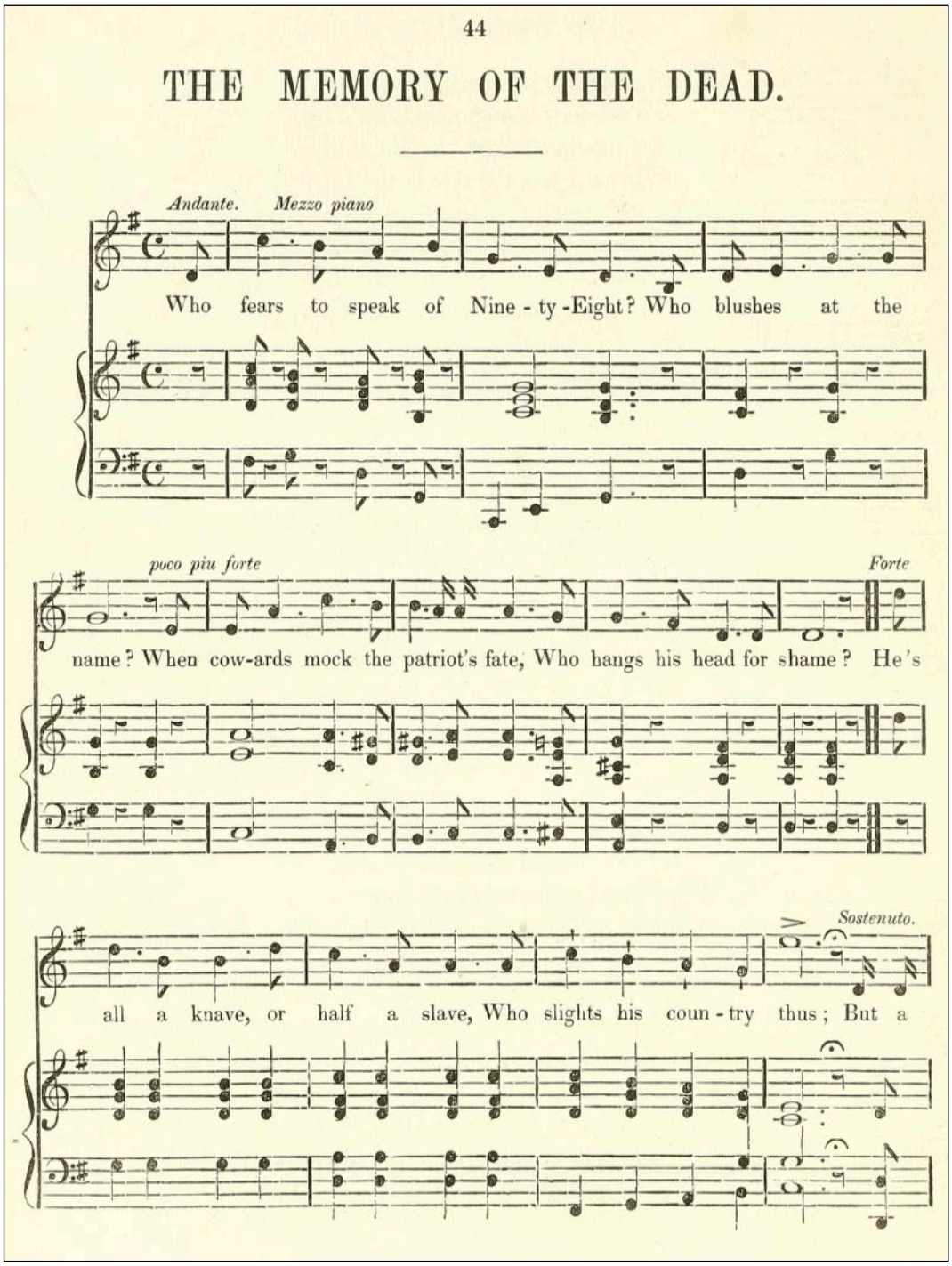

Fig. 2.4 Facsimile of 'The Memory of the Dead' from the *Spirit of the Nation,* 'Library' edn.

Davis made no apology for his appropriation of native airs for the purposes of nationalist propaganda, and his ballads became models for nationalistic verse for the rest of the nineteenth century. His philosophy towards the ballads was two-fold, as he claimed:

> music is the first faculty of the Irish, and scarcely any thing has such power for good over them. The use of this faculty and this power, publicly and constantly, to keep up their spirits, refine their tastes, warm their courage, increase their union, and renew their zeal, is the duty of every patriot.[69]

2.5 Antiquarian collections in the late Nineteenth Century

Throughout the nineteenth century, a succession of antiquarian collectors, primarily Anglo-Irish scholars concerned for the rapidly-disappearing indigenous culture, gathered up thousands of folksongs from the rural population, re-presenting the songs in various formats and for various audiences. This endeavour had the effect of crystallising the repertoire into a repository to be perused or plundered by composers, poets and song writers eager to meet the demand for songs suited to the recital hall, drawing room or domestic music-making of the middle class; or perhaps to be appropriated as political propaganda. In some cases, these newly re-purposed songs were intended to have a moralising effect on listeners and participants—they were seen as a wholesome antidote to the proliferation of degenerate ballads of the English music hall. In 1894, the Archbishop of Cashel, Dr Thomas Croke, wrote:

> No clearer proof can, I think, be given of the deplorable extent to which Irish national degeneracy has gone in our days than the melancholy fact […] that in most places of public amusement in Dublin, no less than in private circles, the vulgar slang and contemptible inanities of the London music halls are much more in favour with a large section of our people than Moore's unrivalled melodies or the soul-stirring songs of Davis.[70]

This juxtaposition of English music hall 'inanities' and the exalted songs of Moore and Davis was intended to highlight the superiority of Irish music and culture to that imported from England. However, songs intended to 'improve' society might first need to be improved themselves. The very act of writing down the songs imposed

[69] *The Spirit of the Nation: Ballads and* Songs *by the writers of "The Nation" with Original and Ancient Music arranged for the voice and Piano-Forte* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), vi.
[70] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 October 1894, p. 6.

certain modifications considered necessary either to the process of documentation or to conform with the tastes and expectations of a class literate in Western art traditions. Ancient modes were adjusted to fit the more familiar major and minor scales; and, unshackled from the metres of the original Irish lyrics, rhythms were changed to suit new English words. Songs of a bawdy or licentious nature were prudishly edited to conform to the conservative tastes of the intended audiences. These changes, severely criticised by later musicologists, reflect the conventions of the time and provide an insight into complexities inherent at the interface of two different cultures.[71] In this case, the attempt of the coloniser to understand the music of the colonised began as a benign attempt to preserve the remnants of a disappearing culture, and many of the collectors evince a sincere affection for the native music of Ireland, and a passion for its preservation. Their efforts were viewed with deep suspicion by the native Irish from whom the songs were collected, and this rejection would cause a mid-century writer in *Dublin University Magazine,* the literary and political journal of Trinity College Dublin, to comment ruefully:

> There is not a nation under heaven that appreciates the Beautiful in music through lower grades of society than the Irish. Their ear is exquisite, and their taste, as far as it goes, singularly chaste; but we regret to think they are impatient of cultivation; and besides, by a peculiarity more to be regretted than wondered at, turn away moodily from any improvements that may be brought to them from the sister island.[72]

Dissemination to a wider audience was seen as an expedient route to the preservation of the airs, and towards this end, the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland was founded in 1851 by the antiquarian and archaeologist George Petrie. Petrie had a lifelong interest in Irish music and had previously given tunes he had collected to both Bunting and Moore. The Society consisting of a number of Irish intellectuals, including Petrie, Pigot, William Wilde (father of the playwright Oscar Wilde), Charles Graves, and Eugene Curry. The main aims of the Society were the 'preserving, classifying, and publishing these airs of every kind, and likewise all such words (whether in the Irish or English language) connected with any of them, as appear to possess any peculiar interest'. The intention seems to have

[71] Tom Munnelly, 'George Petrie: Distorting the Voice of the People?', *Journal of Music* (2003) <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/george-petrie-distorting-voice-people> [accessed 1 November 2018]
[72] 'An Apology for Harmony', *Dublin University Magazine*, 17 (1841), 570–84 (p. 583).

been to bring the scientific approach adopted by Petrie in the fields of literature and archaeology to the study of 'ancient' music.[73]

Although a founding aim of the Society was to collect and classify the many hundreds of unpublished airs in known manuscript collections, it would only publish a single collection in 1855, *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland.* Containing 147 airs, the volume also included extensive historical and descriptive notes by Petrie. This represented only a small proportion of Petrie's manuscript collection: by the time of his death in 1866, he had more than 2500 in his possession. A further posthumous collection of thirty-nine airs was published in 1882, including additional sheets of music that Petrie had sent to his publisher after the 1855 volume. Francis Hoffman published a further collection in 1877 with piano arrangements, and Charles Villiers Stanford published *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by George Petrie* in three volumes between 1902 and 1905. Stanford also collaborated with Alfred Perceval Graves setting many of Petrie's airs to Graves's poetry, and his early exposure to the Petrie collection was undoubtably formative in Stanford's sense of musical identity, as is discussed further in Chapter 4. Breandán Breathnach notes that the Society also introduced the young Patrick Weston Joyce to the 'vocation of music collecting, forming one of a trio [Bunting, Petrie and Joyce] of what may be styled the antiquarian school of Irish music.'[74] Joyce came from a rural Catholic background and began his education in a hedge school.[75] His progress to the Ascendancy stronghold of Trinity College Dublin where he completed a BA and an MA can be viewed as an exemplar of the rising middle class. In 1873, Joyce published his *Ancient Irish Music*, and in 1888 followed this with *Irish Music and Song*, the first collection to contain words in the Irish language associated with the tunes. *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs* was published in 1909, a collection of 842 Irish airs and songs, 'hitherto unpublished'.

Joyce retained a deep affection for Irish music, history and culture, and published over thirty books on folklore, music, placenames, language and social history. Nonetheless, some of his writings have elements of sycophancy and social ambition which jar with a modern reader—he has been accused of a patronising

[73] *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*, ed. by George Petrie (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1855), vi.
[74] Breandán Breathnach, p. 111.
[75] The Hedge Schools were informal, and initially illegal, schools which came into being in response to the Penal Laws of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which outlawed non-conformist education. Antonia McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and its Books, 1695–1831* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002).

attitude to the rural Irish.[76] Tom Munnelly has argued that both Petrie and to some extent, his successor, Joyce, were constantly on guard lest they 'offend bourgeois respectability'.[77] This attitude can be evinced in some of the dismissive comments about the worthlessness of certain texts, an apologetic attitude to rural speech, or a prudish censoring of texts deemed improper.[78]

The antiquarian efforts of song collection continued to pick up momentum during the nineteenth century. Joyce estimated in 1909 that upwards of ninety different collections had been published, containing over five thousand individual melodies.[79] While the veracity and appropriateness of the approaches used by collectors has been the subject of considerable academic scrutiny and some criticism, less attention has been paid to the extent to which the collections influenced composers of art song in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stanford, John F. Larchet, Herbert Hughes, Alicia Needham and other composers all expressed their Irish identity in ways which showed more of a debt to the collections of the preceding century than to their immediate predecessors in the field of Irish composition (for example, Wallace and Balfe). For many of the revival composers, Irish song arrangements gave them their first opportunities in publication and in collaborations with poets, working together to make Irish melodies accessible to a larger audience. The end of the century would also see exponential growth in the number of societies and organisations that built on the work of earlier initiatives to promote Irish music and song, and through this medium assisted with the formation of a new national identity. These developments will be surveyed in the next chapter.

[76] Jimmy O'Brien Moran, 'Joyce, Patrick Weston', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 549–50.
[77] Munelly, 'George Petrie: Distorting the Voice of the People?'
[78] Ibid.
[79] Joyce, *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs,* xxii.

3. Revival Societies and the Dissemination of Irish Song

Chapter 2 examined the nineteenth-century collection and translation of Irish airs and melodies into arrangements of songs intended for consumption by other audiences than those for which the songs were originally created. This re-presentation of traditional melodies aimed to reach a broader audience (specifically an Anglophone audience versed in Western art music traditions) and hence to preserve this heritage from what the collectors considered certain extinction. During the revival period when the assertion of Ireland's unique cultural identity was a national obsession, the dissemination of Irish song, carefully reinterpreted for a wider audience, was a specific aspiration of songwriters, poets, collectors, and performers. This chapter surveys the political and cultural movements that gave rise to the Cultural Revival and examines the infrastructure of voluntary societies that supported the cultivation and dissemination of songs through publications, concerts and festivals.

3.1 Irish Society during the Revival Period

Irish society at the end of the nineteenth century is typically portrayed as deeply fractured, most famously in D. P. Moran's essay 'The Battle of Two Civilizations' which depicts 'Irish Ireland' and 'Anglo-Ireland' engaged in a struggle for the very soul of the people.[1] Moran was perhaps the most truculent of the moral entrepreneurs who held up ancient Gaelic culture as an aspirational model, but his ideology was embraced by nationalists who sought greater political autonomy and the end of political union with Britain. In Moran's world-view, Irish Ireland was both Gaelic and Catholic, of noble mind and ancient descent, while the Anglo-Irish were 'the English who happened to be born in Ireland', Protestants whose religion and ancestry would perpetually deny them any claim to genuine Irish nationality.[2] Commenting

[1] D. P. Moran, 'The Battle of Two Civilizations', in *Ideals in Ireland*, ed. by Lady Augusta Gregory (London: At the Unicorn, 1901), pp. 23–41.
[2] D. P. Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1905).

more recently, P. J. Mathews points out that this idea of a neatly bifurcated society 'has been variously restated and elaborated from a broad range of ideological perspectives and by cultural analysts as diverse as Conor Cruise O'Brien, John Hutchinson, Harry White, Roy Foster, Deirdre Toomey and Stephen Regan among others'.[3] Mathews argues for a more multifaceted view of Irish society of the period, questioning the notion of two stable ethnic categories and suggesting that the cultural boundaries between these were not always so sharply drawn.

The Northern Irish historian George Boyce lists four groups and institutions 'which eyed each other with a mixture of suspicion and expectation' in the century after the 1801 Acts of Union—Roman Catholics, 'two main species of Protestants' (Episcopalians or Anglicans, and Presbyterian Dissenters), and the British.[4] Boyce details the activities of classes, sub-sects and organisations that often fractured what appeared to be monolithic sets of people, as they attempted to answer the question '*To whom does Ireland belong?*'.[5] On the most obvious level, this raised questions of land ownership and constitutional politics, issues which were to dominate Irish politics throughout the nineteenth century. On a more fundamental level, however, there was little actual agreement on what it meant to be Irish, and expressions of an Irish identity took very different forms across the different ethnic groups.

Joseph Ryan asserts that there were tensions and cross-fertilisations between these groups, and questions the legitimacy of any historical survey that fails to attend to the comprehensive constitution of Irish society.[6] Benjamin Dwyer also cautions that, in addressing history, all narratives need to be accounted for.[7] While highlighting the binary characteristic of colonialist and ethnic societies, Dwyer claims that cross-fertilisation of styles and genres did occur, and argues that simple binaries cannot be allowed to dictate the complex realities of Irish political and cultural life. Marie McCarthy also claims that, while clear lines of demarcation existed between different subcultural groups, these lines began to blur during the nineteenth century due to the spread of the English language, the growth of the

[3] P. J. Mathews, 'A Battle of Two Civilizations?: D.P. Moran and William Rooney', *The Irish Review,* 29 (2002), 22–37 (p. 22).
[4] D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005), p. 328.
[5] Ibid., p. 329.
[6] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, pp. 73–86.
[7] Dwyer, *Different Voices*, p. 33.

Catholic middle class, and the association of high culture with social advancement.[8] She argues that traditional musicians who aspired to new social groups began to assimilate the musical values associated with the literate and culturally elite, while Anglo-Irish groups were engaged in the collection and preservation of traditional music, appropriating such heritage to their own cultural values to bolster their own definition of cultural nationalism.

While the grand narrative of two opposing cultures in Moran's 'titanic struggle' has some validity in understanding the main opposing forces, it is constantly called into question by the evidence of co-operation across the cultural divides, particularly within artistic spheres. The composer Hamilton Harty, a confirmed unionist who claimed that he had never seen himself as other than British with an Irish accent, had no scruples in setting the poetry of Alice Milligan or Cahir Healy, who were committed nationalists and activists as well as poets.[9] Alice Milligan herself had a complex identity as outlined by Catherine Morris: 'She was a northern, Protestant, woman who renounced the political unionism of her upbringing: as such, Milligan occupied multiple identities that could not be fixed or easily defined.'[10] The republican and leading Fenian John O'Leary would actively cultivate the friendship of men such as W. B. Yeats and T. W. Rolleston, both members of the Protestant Ascendancy who could be recruited to his vision of a new Ireland 'where like-minded people of both religious traditions could share pride in an ancient culture rather than remember the conflicts and dispossessions of the past.'[11] Such examples suggest that, prior to the Home Rule crisis of 1912 when Irish society would polarise broadly along religious and unionist/separatist lines, there was a greater degree of cultural cross-over and fusion of traditions than is sometimes allowed in mainstream nationalist or unionist discourse.

[8] Marie McCarthy, 'The transmission of song in national schools of mid nineteenth-century Ireland: social, religious and political values in canon', in *Irish Musical Studies 9*, ed. by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, pp. 150–51.
[9] Hamilton Harty, 'The Discouragement of English Music', address to Incorporated Association of Organists' Congress, 28 August 1928. Harty Collection MS 14/5/4/9.
[10] Morris, p. 137.
[11] Maria O'Brien, 'Thomas William Rolleston: the forgotten man', in *The Irish Revival Reappraised* ed. by Betsey Taylor FitzSimon and James H. Murphy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p. 155.

3.1.1 Politics and Identity in Nineteenth Century Ireland

The politics of the last decades of the century were dominated by the call for self-governance, and the nationalist politician Charles Stuart Parnell succeeded in getting the Liberals to introduce a first Home Rule bill in Westminster in 1886. It became clear, however, that this would not succeed through parliamentary means while the House of Lords retained power to block legislation. Instead, a policy of 'killing Home Rule with kindness' combined with measures to suppress rural disorder resulted in a period of remarkable calm.[12] This was largely due to measures introduced throughout the nineteenth century to reform the most unjust social and political distinctions. The Roman Catholic Relief Act, passed in 1829, repealed the remaining Penal Laws and allowed members of the Catholic Church to sit in the parliament at Westminster. The founding of the Catholic University of Ireland in 1850 and the provision of public funds for secondary schools reflected the increasing demand for education for the middle classes. The Irish Church Act of 1869 disestablished the minority Anglican Church, repealing the law that required Catholics to pay tithes to it and disassociating it from the state. Significant victories had been won for tenant farmers in a series of Land Acts introduced between 1870 and 1909 as a result of rural agitation by the Irish National Land League. While such initiatives improved the conditions of some of Ireland's poorest sectors and increased the political influence of the middle classes, they fell well short of eradicating poverty or reconciling the majority population to foreign governance.

The poet and writer W. B. Yeats later conflated the death of Parnell and the resulting hiatus in Irish nationalist politics as a seminal point in the development of the Cultural Revival. Reminiscing on the period as he accepted the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, Yeats recalled:

> The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish war, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891. A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived; and the race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event's long gestation.[13]

[12] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), p. 409. The phrase was reputably coined by John Dillon, an Irish Nationalist and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1918.
[13] W. B. Yeats, 'The Irish Dramatic Movement', Nobel Lecture, 15 December 1923. Reprinted in W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1955), pp. 559–572 (p. 559).

Yeats's appropriation of history for his own narrative here is questionable, but with Home Rule indefinitely stalled, the nationalist movement had to seek other ways in which to advance their agenda.[14] Parnell had encouraged a policy of self-reliance, resulting in the formation of various societies set up to promote Irish interests. These societies gained impetus and influence as the century drew to an end. The peace resulting from the various reforms combined with a new mood of self-confidence provided an environment conducive to artistic expression and the exploration of Irish culture and identity. The revival of Irish culture embraced all aspects of Irish life—from agricultural practices, to dress, literature, theatre, games and education—as a more prosperous, educated and ambitious population reflected on and expressed its identity through all the cultural media available, including music, poetry and song.

The search for a cultural identity that would uniquely define Ireland and differentiate it from its nearest neighbour had begun more than a century before with the antiquarian work of collectors in the eighteenth century. Sylvester O'Halloran published *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland* in 1772, and his *General History of Ireland* in 1774. He also published arguments reclaiming the Ossianic legends, popularised by the Scottish poet James Macpherson, for Ireland.[15] Macpherson had taken elements of medieval Gaelic lays pertaining to the story of the mythological characters Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his son Oisín (hence, Ossian), which survived in Ireland and Gaelic Scotland in compilations such as the sixteenth century Scottish *Book of the Dean of Lismore* and the seventeenth century *Duanaire Finn.*[16] Macpherson liberally edited scenes from the Gaelic lays, adding some of his own fabrication and infusing them with atmospheric affects, pathos, and a pervading gloom—a portrayal of Celtic identity that would persist long after his alleged translations were proven to be forgeries. John O'Flynn identifies the period prior to the Anglo-Norman invasions as the point at which an 'ideal type' for a unique Irish-Celtic culture tends to be constructed, and notes that this projection of assumed Celtic characteristics continued well into the nineteenth century.[17] Although

[14] Alasdair D. F. Macrae, *W. B. Yeats—A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), pp. 66–67.
[15] Between 1760 and 1765 Macpherson had published what was purported to be the poetry of an ancient Scottish epic, which he claimed he had translated from Gaelic poetry collected in the highlands. These poems proved immensely popular both in Scotland, where patriotic Scots praised them highly, and on the continent, where they found a resonance with the 'natural' and 'unspoiled' aspirations of the Romantic movement.
[16] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv.MS.72.1.37 (The Book of the Dean of Lismore). Dublin, University College Dublin Library, Franciscan collection A20 (Duanaire Finn).
[17] John O'Flynn, '*Kalfou Danjere?* Interpreting Irish-Celtic Music', in *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond*, ed. by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn, pp. 233–58 (pp. 236–37).

the idea of Celticism in Ireland was something of a misnomer, the traditions and literature that the Revival celebrated were based on a Gaelic culture of much greater antiquity, and the idea of a Celtic identity became an important influence in the progress of the Revival.[18]

Thomas Moore's enormously popular *Irish Melodies* were a significant development in articulating and disseminating this sense of an Irish-Celtic identity, translating a rural Irish tradition into the language of the drawing-room, and conferring respectability on nationalist sentiment. Moore was a supporter of Catholic Emancipation and Irish independence, and while his romantic lyrics often concealed a scathing critique of English colonial power, such seditious sentiments were sufficiently disguised and made attractive to the drawing rooms of polite society in England and elsewhere. Moore's melodies and his vision of an Irish identity had remarkable persistence, and many of his more frequently invoked images—the harp, the halls of Tara, round towers and romantic landscapes, shamrocks and the colour green—remain potent symbols of Ireland today. But his poetry was also criticised for its sentimentality. The nineteenth century English essayist and social commentator William Hazlitt was dismissive about the poems' ability to express 'the soul of romantic feeling' in Moore's countrymen:

> If these prettinesses pass for patriotism, if a country can heave from its heart's core only these vapid, varnished sentiments, lip-deep, and let its tears of blood evaporate in an empty conceit, let it be governed as it has been. There are here no tones to waken Liberty, to console Humanity. Mr. Moore converts the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box! [19]

While Moore's poetry was criticised in some quarters for not being sufficiently nationalistic, the idea of a separate and culturally unique Ireland continued to gain traction. The Young Ireland movement of the 1840s was acutely conscious of the need to project a cultural identity for Ireland to substantiate its claims for nationhood. Founded to emulate the Italian movement *La Giovane Italia*, Young Ireland received a crushing blow when the leader of the Italian movement, Giuseppi Mazzini, refused

[18] It is an irony of history that the construct of a Celtic ancestry, so important to the promotion of a separate Irish identity and the claim for independent nationhood, has been the subject of sustained academic challenge over the last twenty years. The theory that the Celtic people of central Europe migrated to Ireland in waves of settlement from about 300–400 BC onwards has now been largely discredited. See Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?* (London: British Museum Press, 1999).

[19] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits* (London: Henry Colburn, 1825; repr. London: OUP, 1935) p. 256.

to admit Ireland's claims for a separate nationhood.[20] Arguing that Ireland had no unique principle of life that contrasted seriously with that of England, Mazzini refused to allow Irish members on the council of his People's International League. Mazzini's definition of a nation placed central importance on a distinct language and unique national mission that made it a separate nation.[21] Joseph Ryan writes:

> The culture of a people came to be regarded as the defining bond of the nation: it became the first prerequisite of any claim for political sovereignty. […] a people could be identified through their distinctive culture, of which language was the principal badge. Ireland's claim to be adjudged one of Europe's proud and distinct nations had been measured against this criteria and had failed.[22]

The language issue was to become a defining one both in supporting the claim for nationhood and as a symbol of authentic Irish identity. However, in the mid-nineteenth century, the continued existence of the Irish language as a living vernacular was fatally imperilled.

3.2 The Decline of the Irish language and the Gaelic Revival

Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, in his 2015 essay on the effect of the Great Famine (1845–49) on the Irish language, claimed that 'arguably the most fundamental social and cultural change in modern Irish history was the shift from Irish to English as the vernacular of the population at large.'[23] Ó Tuathaigh noted that the Famine decimated the rural underclass which was the mainstay of Irish-speaking Ireland. While the decline had begun in the seventeenth century as English became increasingly associated with economic and social advancement, the imperative to learn English was increased by emigration, predominantly to the Anglophone world. The 1901 census reports the total number of Irish speakers as a percentage of the population at 14.4%, while those who spoke Irish only had dropped to 0.5%.

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[20] Helen Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 76

[21] Michael Huggins, 'A Cosmopolitan Nationalism: Young Ireland and the Risorgimento', in *Britain, Ireland and the Italian Risorgimento*, ed. by Nick Carter (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 33–54 (p. 46).

[22] Joseph Ryan, 'The Tone of Defiance', in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. by Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), pp. 197–211 (p. 201).

[23] Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *i mBéal an Bháis*: *The Great Famine & The Language Shift in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), p. 7.

In a 2005 publication, Tony Crowley suggested that the psychological and cultural impact of the experience of mass starvation must be counted as a part of any explanation for the abandoning of the old ways: 'The sense of helplessness, loss, panic, and uncertainty, perhaps combined with a determination to avoid such a disaster at all costs in the future, no doubt helped to undermine even the most traditional communities'.[24] William Wilde claimed in 1849 that 'the festivals are unobserved, the rustic festivities neglected or forgotten'.[25] Wilde lamented the passing of traditional customs, noting that it was within the Irish vernacular that most Irish legends, romantic tales, ballads and bardic rituals, the vestiges of Pagan rites and the relics of fairy charms were preserved:

> The fairies, the whole pantheon of Irish demigods are retiring, one by one, from the habitations of man to the distant islands where the wild waves of the Atlantic raise their foaming crests…[26]

In rather more prosaic terms, Breandán Breathnach claimed that 'Fragments of songs in Irish and features associated with Irish systems of versification scarcely survived the first generation of speakers adopting the dominant culture, as all incentives in the community—social, economic, and political—operated against their retention.'[27] However, as the Gaelic language, culture and customs declined, the efforts to preserve and revive them, led largely by Anglo-Irish academics, paved the way for a new expression of Irish identity that reflected its hybridity, even as it sought to proclaim its unique national characteristics.

A number of societies had been established throughout the nineteenth century with the intention of preserving or arresting the decline of the Irish language, including the Gaelic Society of Dublin (founded 1807), the Ulster Gaelic Society (1830) and the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language (1876). The Gaelic League, or *Conradh na Gaeilge*, was founded in 1893 and proved more influential and enduring than its predecessors.[28] Its founding was a response to issues raised by Douglas Hyde in his inaugural speech to the Irish National Literary Society, itself a society for the promotion of an Irish literature in English. His seminal lecture 'The

[24] Tony Crowley, *War of Words: The Politics of Language in Ireland 1537–2004* (London: Routledge, 2000), quoted in O Tuathaigh, *i mBéal an Bháis*, p. 36.
[25] William Wilde, 'Irish Popular Superstitions' in *Ireland: Her Wit, Peculiarities and Popular Superstitions* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, [n.d.]), pp. 9–31 (p. 16).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Breandán Breathnach, p. 29.
[28] The original spelling, prior to standardisation, is 'Connradh na Gaedhilge'.

Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' delivered to the Society in 1892 was a 'call-to-arms' to reject the culture of 'West-Britonism'; to 'at once arrest the decay of the [Irish] language' and 'to help the Irish race to develop in future upon Irish lines'.[29] For Hyde, this also meant rescuing from oblivion all those aspects of Irish culture that were dependant on and integral to the language itself. Nineteenth-century nationalism defined nations not by geographical location but in terms of culturally linked language groups. Without their own language, Hyde asked, could a distinct Irish nation exist?

> What did Mazzini say? What is Goldwin Smith never tired of declaiming? What do the Spectator and Saturday Review harp on? That we ought to be content as an integral part of the United Kingdom because we have lost the notes of our nationality, our language and customs.[30]

Hyde's speech was described by his contemporary W. P. Ryan as 'almost sensational in its effect… going as it did to the heart of a national evil which was preying on Irish life like a cancer.'[31] The Gaelic League was founded the following year with the specific goal of not just preserving a dying language, but reviving it as a means of mass communication.[32] Organised in small branches set up in parishes throughout the country, it provided informal instruction outside the formal education system. In 1897, forty-three branches of the League existed around the country—this grew to almost 600 branches by 1904. The League printed books under the Connradh na Gaedhilge imprint, and produced a weekly journal, *An Claidheamh Soluis,* edited by Eoin MacNeill and Patrick Pearse. Activities included language classes, the recitation of poetry and stories, and social gatherings where Irish music and dancing were promoted. The League became a recognised authority on issues of Irish identity and authenticity, its influence on national life growing exponentially.

The League's support for Irish cultural projects extended to choral societies and opera performances, insofar as such media could be appropriated to promote the Irish language. The composer Robert O'Dwyer (1862–1949) conducted the Gaelic League choir from 1901. He was commissioned by the Gaelic League to write *Amhrán an Oireachtais* ('Songs of the Oireachtas'), a series of four-part choral pieces in the Irish

[29] Douglas Hyde, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland'. Speech delivered to the National Literary Society, Dublin, 25 November 1892, repr. in *The Revival of Irish Literature,* ed. by Charles Gavan Duffy (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), pp. 115–61 (p. 161).
[30] Ibid., p. 119.
[31] W. P. Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival: Its History, Pioneers and Possibilities*: (London, Ward & Downey, 1894), p. 129.
[32] P. J. Mathews, *Revival*, pp. 23–28.

language. He also set some children's songs to Irish lyrics by Douglas Hyde, *Sé Ubhla as "Ubhla de'n Chraoibh".* In 1909, he completed his most significant work, a three-act opera, *Eithne*, notable for its setting of an Irish language libretto. The opera has an important cultural significance as the first full-scale opera written and performed in Irish. Based on an Irish folk-tale, 'Éan an Cheoil Bhinn', the opera premiered at the Round Room in Dublin's Rotunda Hospital. The enthusiastic reception and promotion by the Gaelic League ensured a second performance the following year in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.[33] In this opera, O'Dwyer combined melodic lines derived from traditional music with a Wagnerian-influenced harmonic vocabulary. Following research by Gavan Ring for his doctoral dissertation, a concert performance of the work was presented at the National Concert Hall, Dublin by Opera Theatre Company in 2017*,* attracting considerable public and critical interest.[34]

Eithne was not, however, the first Irish-language opera to be written during the revival years as this distinction falls to Thomas O'Brien Butler's *Muirgheis,* which was commissioned by An tOireachtas.[35] Although originally intended to be sung to an Irish libretto by Tadhg O'Donoghue, the opera was never actually performed in Irish, apparently due to the difficulty in finding singers.[36] *Muirgheis* received its premiere in Dublin in May 1903 in an English version by Nora Chesson. While the Celtic-Irish subject matter and use of traditional tunes was applauded, contemporary criticism found the musical quality of the opera to be poor.[37] This was the only opera by O'Brien Butler, although he also published *Seven Original Irish Melodies*, a collection of original songs with lyrics by a variety of Irish poets including J. J. Callanan, Ethna Carbery and James Clarence Mangan, with Irish translations by Dan Lynch. Although supported by the Gaelic League, a recent analysis by David Scott suggests that this was more a reflection of its contribution to Irish language and Gaelic culture than on musical merit.[38]

Though it was initially intended to be non-political and non-denominational, The Gaelic League attracted a young, predominantly Catholic membership, many of

[33] Ibid., pp. 44–49.
[34] Gavan Ring, 'Performance Considerations for Robert O'Dwyer's Eithne (1909): A Contextual Study and Edited Vocal Score (unpublished doctoral dissertation, RIAM, 2016).
[35] David Scott, 'Rediscovering *Muirgheis:* The First Grand Opera in Irish', paper presented at SMI/ICTM Postgraduate Conference, NUI Maynooth, 20 January 2018.
[36] W. J. Lawrence, 'Correspondence to the Editor', *The Leader*, 17 January 1916.
[37] 'Irish Opera at the Theatre Royal: Muirgheis', *Weekly Irish Times*, 12 December 1903, p. 2. Axel Klein, 'Celtic Legends in Irish Opera', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 24/25 (2004–5), 40–53 (p. 45).
[38] Scott, 'Examining the Irish art song', p. 106.

whom held strongly nationalistic views. The historian F. S. L. Lyons asserts that the study of the language and history of Ireland made the more politically conscious of its members more rather than less political, and argues that the Gaelic League 'was the nursery for the revolutionary generation of 1916'.[39] The growing politicisation of the movement would eventually lead to the resignation in 1915 of its founder and president, Douglas Hyde, who believed that the culture of language should be above politics. Yet it became closely identified with Catholicism, partly, as Lyons argues, 'because its emphasis, which was necessarily on the cultural past of Ireland, was naturally seen to be an emphasis on a golden age before English and Anglo-Irish influences, both by definition Protestant, had together driven 'the hidden Ireland' underground.'[40]

The League impacted many areas of Irish culture, not least among them music and poetry, as it aimed to celebrate an Irish heritage of which the emerging nation could be proud. The Irish language, previously regarded as a benchmark of backwardness and provincialism, was promoted by the Gaelic League to a position of ancient dignity, and was embraced as an emblem of national pride. As it rose in social prestige, so too did the folklore and music associated with the language, resulting in new explorations of Irish musical idioms, poetry and songs. Composers including Michele Esposito, John F. Larchet, Annie Patterson, Alicia Adelaide Needham, and Carl Hardebeck were among those who responded to Irish language texts in their compositional output. These works are discussed further in the following chapters.

3.3 Irish Culture and the Diaspora in the Revival years

While Hyde hoped to restore the Irish language as the working language of the nation, many of his contemporaries believed that this was unlikely to happen. With the Gaelic language on the verge of extinction by the 1880s, many of the revival writers and activists were convinced of the need for translations of the traditional texts and a new literature in English that would reflect the glories of their Irish heritage. Working in

[39] F. S. L. Lyons, 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891–1903', in *A New History of Ireland,* VI, pp. 81–110 (p.105).
[40] Ibid.

parallel with the growing Gaelic movement, an equally ambitious movement to promote Irish culture in the English language was underway.

3.3.1 Francis Fahy and the Southwark Literary Society

Literary societies were particularly popular among the immigrant populations in Britain. Peter van de Kamp, in a scholarly essay on the Southwark Literary Society, lists Irish literary societies in Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester, Glasgow, Sunderland, East Anglia, Southampton, North London, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Coatbridge.[41] Such societies existed to instil a sense of national pride through literature, and to keep the memory of Ireland alive in the minds of the immigrants through the promotion of a distinctly Irish culture. In London, the industrial district of Southwark had become a prime centre for Irish political, intellectual and social activity. It was here that the Irish language activist and songwriter Francis Fahy founded the Southwark Junior Literary Club in 1881, with the aim of teaching the Irish language and culture to the children of immigrants. Children were admitted to Sunday meetings for the price of a penny, for which they were given a book from John Denvir's *Illustrated Irish Penny Library* series. Fahy wrote and published *The Child's Irish Songbook* for this imprint, a twenty-four page pamphlet marketed as 'compiled by the Southwark Junior Irish Literary Club'.[42] In an essay on nationalist children's culture in the nineteenth century, scholar Ríona Nic Congáil described typical activities of the Southwark club, including the use of nationalist song:

> On the Southwark Club's schedule, occasional Gaelic nights competed with lectures on every aspect of Irish culture. These events were all imbued with nationalism. The children performed Thomas Davis's songs at their concerts, for example, and as the adult organisers were involved in politics and cultural affairs, several high-profile nationalist figures attended meetings and addressed the children.[43]

Fahy came to London as a civil servant in 1873 and became involved with the Southwark branch of the Land and Labour league. Although not a native speaker, he became fluent in the Irish language and rose to the position of President of the Gaelic

[41] Peter G. W. van de Kamp, 'Whose Revival? Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club', in *Tumult of Images: Essays on W. B. Yeats and Politics,* ed. by Peter Liebregts and Peter van de Kamp (Amsterdam: Rodopi Academic Press, 1995), pp. 157–182 (p. 174).
[42] Francis A. Fahy, *The Child's Irish Songbook* (Liverpool: John Denvir, 1881).
[43] Ríona Nic Congáil, 'Young Ireland and *The Nation*: Nationalist Children's Culture in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Éire-Ireland*, 46 (2011), 37–42 (p. 54).

League in London in 1896. Under the pen-name of 'Dreoilín' ('Wren', a reference to his diminutive height), he published *Irish Songs and Poems*, a book of poetry concerned with themes of patriotism, exile, and the beauty and humour of his native land.[44] As had been the practice with some of the Young Ireland publications, several of the poems were prefaced with suggestions for well-known tunes: for example, Fahy's poem entitled 'Erin's Isle', lamenting the loss of Ireland's freedom, could be sung to the tune of 'Love's Young Dream' from Moore's melodies; 'Maureen' could be sung to 'The Cruiskeen Lawn'; while others would later be set to music by other composers. One of his most popular songs, 'The Ould Plaid Shawl', extolling the beauty of an Irish *cailín* in his home town of Kinvara, was set to music by the English composer Walter Battison Haynes and featured in the 1904 pastiche *Peggy Machree*, a light-hearted drama written by Elizabeth Curtis O'Sullivan which later toured in America. Another popular song 'Flower of the Flock', for which Fahy suggested the tune 'The Top of the Cork Road' describes a young maid, who sings like a lark on the theme of 'Erin, her rights and her wrongs'.[45]

Other poems were more provocatively nationalistic. For example, 'A National Duet' describes a hypothetical conversation between 'John Bull' (a political caricature of England or English character) and 'Paddy Doyle' (symbolising Ireland).[46] Fahy juxtaposes the two positions: 'John Bull' confused as to why his ruling is rejected despite his 'good graces', and 'Paddy' rebuking him, claiming that 'sorrow and disaster' has 'wrecked our land' since coming under English rule. The poem makes specific reference to the eighteenth-century Penal Laws which disenfranchised the Catholic majority from political and economic power, as well as the confiscations of land associated with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century plantations:

A NATIONAL DUET (Excerpt)

JOHNNY BULL
WHY are you so unfriendly, Paddy Doyle?
And treat me so unkindly, Paddy Doyle?
Why are all my offers slighted,
My heart's love unrequited—
Why can't we live united, Paddy Doyle?

[44] Francis A. Fahy, *Irish Songs and Poems* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1887).
[45] Ibid., pp. 24–25.
[46] Ibid., pp. 34–36.

Some say you hate my ruling, Paddy Doyle?
But such people must be fooling, Paddy Doyle?
For you know the real case is
That of all my subject races
You've had most of my good graces, Paddy Doyle?

PADDY DOYLE
Musha, do you think we're draming, Johnny Bull,
That you go on with your schaming, Johnny Bull?
Hasn't sorrow and disaster,
Coming oftener and faster,
Wrecked our land since you were master, Johnny Bull?

First you broke in without raison, Johnny Bull,
And you called resistance traison, Johnny Bull;
Then by force and usurpation,
Penal laws and confiscation,
You laid waste our hapless nation, Johnny Bull.

The poem continues in a similar fashion with threats of 'agitation' and rousing the sleeping nation. 'Paddy Doyle' is forthright in naming his grievances—rack-rents, coercions, dying mothers, exiled brothers and 'little starved ones crying'. Such lyrics led one (unnamed) unionist paper to refer to the volume as 'a shilling's worth of sedition', an epithet that was gleefully repeated in *The Nation.*[47] Although Fahy used the pen name of 'Dreolín' the collection was also published with his real name, unlike the Young Ireland writers of 1848 who kept their identities hidden. This suggests that the political climate had changed to the extent where such obvious subversive propaganda was tolerated or was at least considered a normal part of political discourse.

Following the success of the Junior club, Fahy founded the Southwark Irish Literary Society in 1883, with a programme of social involvement, patriotism, and a commitment to the political and cultural nationalism of Young Ireland. Activities included lectures and 'Original Nights' where new work could be performed or recited. Adopting the motto 'Sgar an Solas' or 'Spread the Light', the club attracted notable political and literary figures, including the Young Irelander Charles Gavan Duffy, Irish-Irelander D. P. Moran, journalist William Patrick Ryan, and Home Rule politicians, as well as litterateurs such as D. J. O'Donoghue and Lady Wilde ('Speranza'). Despite the literary focus, however, the club's aims included more practical matters, as van de Kamp notes:

[47] 'Irish Literary Celebrities: No. VII: Francis A. Fahy', *The Nation*, 29 December 1888, p. 3–4.

> Literature for the sake of literature was as unthinkable to the founding members of the club as it had been to the leaders of the Young Ireland movement, upon which the club was grafted. More than being just a gathering of 'ladies and gentlemen' with an active or passive interest in Irish letters, the club offered the opportunity for 'active propagandism', of 'becoming acquainted with the true facts of the history' of Ireland, and of counteracting the English 'charges made against the Irish people'. Thus among its literary papers and lectures, which championed Mangan, Kickham and the poets of '48, can be found such titles as 'The Cost of Provincialism', 'The Everyday Life of an Irish Labourer', 'Labour Representation in Ireland'.[48]

Such pragmatic aims were far from the more high-minded literary aspirations that the young W. B. Yeats brought to the Society in 1888. The writer W. P. Ryan recalled that Yeats visited the club in 1888, delivering his first lecture shortly thereafter, which 'was on the good people' (or, the Irish fairy folk), and that it 'was something of a revelation to us—in fact he spoke as one who took his information firsthand [sic]'.[49] Yeats's later recollections of the Southwark club were less than flattering:

> I had occasionally lectured to a little patriotic society of young Irish men and women at Southwark, clerks for the most part, and their sisters and sweethearts. I made an appointment with the most energetic of them [Fahy] to explain my new plan. He was ready for it, for his society had ceased to meet. The women had taken to laughing at the lectures—they were always the same and they had heard them so often – and nobody would give another lecture.[50]

Whether others agreed with Yeats's assessment or not, he did command respect as a poet and there seems to have been a willingness or even an enthusiasm to revive the Society's activities and to guide it in a new direction. With Fahy's evident co-operation, Yeats was responsible for the reformation of the Southwark Society into the Irish Literary Society (ILS) in 1892 with T. W. Rolleston, Douglas Hyde, Alfred Perceval Graves and other leaders of the Revival among its founding members. Charles Gavan Duffy, then in retirement in France, was appointed President, connecting the new society to the radical nationalism of the 1840s. Yeats set up the Dublin branch, the National Literary Society, the same year, with Douglas Hyde as its first President.

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[48] van de Kamp, pp. 161–62.
[49] W. P. Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p. 30.
[50] W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs: Autobiography and first draft journal,* ed. Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 51–52.

3.3.2 Irish Literary Societies in London and Dublin

The academic Richard Fallis points out that the Revival in Ireland was unique among nineteenth-century nationalist literary movements, in that its writers 'mostly chose to use something other than the traditional language of their country.'[51] At the inaugural meeting of the ILS, Hyde's 'De-Anglicisation' lecture of 1892 was mirrored in a rather prescriptive address by Stopford Brooke: 'The need and use of Getting Irish Literature into the English Tongue'. In this lecture, Brooke argued that the majority of Irish people knew nothing of Irish literature, and cared little about it:

> Translation, then, is our business. We wish to get the ancient Irish literature well and statelily afloat on the worldwide ocean of the English language, so that it may be known and loved wherever the English language goes. […] Hidden away in these tales there is lying unused a mass of poetic material, and of such historic interest as belongs to the science of folklore which is rapidly perishing. The young men and women who speak Irish have fled from Ireland; the old who speak their own language, or who have kept their tales in memory are dying out. In twenty years it will be too late to do this work. And it will be a great pity if it is not done.[52]

Hyde had already embarked on this work and his *Love Songs of Connacht*, published the same year, would be a best-seller. A collection of poems originally published in *The Nation* in 1890, the book presented the poems both in their original Irish and in a metrical English translation. Hyde also included a more literal prose version of the translation in what came to be known as 'Hiberno-English', allowing the reader to engage with the directness and flow of the originals. These literal translations were much admired for the beauty of their phrase-structure and their inherent poetry. Yeats wrote that it represented 'the coming of a new power into literature.'[53] The literary critic Vivian Mercier noted that Hyde's attempt to create an Irish-English literary language out of Irish folk-speech was a significant technical innovation, and that what was wholly new was the idea that a modern scholar could express himself in the English of the country people without loss of dignity.[54]

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[51] Richard Fallis, *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978), pp. 30–31.
[52] Stopford A. Brooke, address to the Irish Literary Society, 11 March 1893, repr. in *The need and use of getting Irish literature into the English tongue* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), p. 43.
[53] W. B. Yeats, *Samhain: An Occasional Review* (Dublin: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902), pp. 7–8.
[54] Vivian Mercier, 'Literature in English, 1891–1921', in *A New History of Ireland*, VI, pp. 357–84, (p. 367).

The Society proclaimed its objects of promoting the study of the Irish language, Irish history, literature, music, and art, and of providing a platform for social and literary discourse for persons of Irish nationality. This represented quite a move away from the programme of propaganda and social reform which had been a mainstay of the Southwark club. *A Book of Irish Verse* was published in 1895 to publicise the new societies, edited by Yeats and dedicated 'to the members of the National Literary Society of Dublin and the Irish Literary Society of London'.[55] The volume contained poetry by Oliver Goldsmith, Samuel Lover, J. J. Callanan, James Clarence Mangan, Samuel Ferguson, William Allingham, and Thomas Moore, as well as by Yeats's contemporaries Tynan, George Russell ('Æ'), Hyde and Rolleston. An introduction by Yeats laid out his philosophy on the poetic arts: he aspired to the building up of an Irish literature in English, and a re-invigoration of a literature in Gaelic, although his support for the latter would soon wane.

Yeats made it clear that the aim of his literary movement was to 'create a reading class among the more leisured classes, which will preoccupy itself with Ireland and the needs of Ireland.'[56] This elitist programme, along with reservations concerning Yeats's more extreme nationalist associates, resulted in his increasing marginalisation within the Society. Failing to receive the support of the Society for his elite literary aims, a disgruntled Yeats turned his attention to other projects. Thereafter the Irish literary societies of London and Dublin played a relatively minor role in the efflorescence of world-class literature which ensued from the activities centred around the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and its associated writers. However, the societies continued to provide social networks and platforms for individuals interested in Irish culture, and membership facilitated important introductions to contacts in the national and international publishing industries, lecture circuits, concert promotion, and the media.

An article in the *All Ireland Review* titled 'Irish Music in London' in 1900 demonstrates the importance of the Society for singers, composers and folk song researchers.[57] The article begins with an account of a lecture given to the ILS by Kate Lee on 'Irish Music', which had been accompanied by performances of arrangements of traditional airs by Charlotte Milligan Fox and the Scottish musician and collector

[55] *A Book of Irish Verse*, ed. by W. B. Yeats (London: Methuan, 1895).
[56] Ibid., xxii.
[57] C. M. F., 'Irish music in London', *All Ireland Review*, 6 January 1900, p. 5.

Alfred Moffat. This is followed by a description of a musical evening hosted by Lord and Lady Russell of Killowen for members of the ILS, where songs by Stanford, Fox, and Alicia Needham were performed, along with Fahy's 'The Ould Plaid Shawl'. The article concludes with a review of a London ballad concert, where baritone Harry Plunkett Greene performed arrangements by Stanford of Irish airs, and a final paragraph in the article looks forward to the imminent publication of Stanford's arrangements of airs collected by Petrie.[58]

A similar report in the *Irish Times* on the 'Conversazione and Concert of the National Literary Society' describes another event in Dublin in 1909.[59] The Italian term *conversazione* had come to refer to a gathering of intellectuals interested in the arts and sciences, in this instance, a monthly gathering of members of the Society. The programme for the evening included notable musicians from the RIAM and actors from the Abbey Theatre. The article reports 'A charming programme of music, embracing several Irish airs, was arranged for the occasion.' While this event was held at the Society's rooms at 6 St Stephen's Green, the Abbey Theatre and the Ancient Concert Rooms at Great Brunswick Street were used as concert venues for larger events.

These two articles evidence typical activities of the societies in both London and Dublin, which presented a number of opportunities to their members, including lecturing, performing, publishing and networking, among a well-connected group interested to promote Irish culture. They also mark contemporary attempts to establish a discourse around the idea of a canon of Irish song, and to promote song literature through the channels available. The literary societies also became the seedbed for numerous other societies that focused on more specialised aspects of cultural revival, both in Ireland and among Irish diasporic communities, particularly in Britain and America. The societies that were directly involved in the cultivation and dissemination of Irish song literature are considered in the following discussion.

[58] Ibid.
[59] 'National Literary Society', *Irish Times*, 20 March 1909, p. 2.

3.3.3 Folk Song Societies

Alfred Perceval Graves took over the role of secretary of the ILS in 1895, and his activities included arranging the Society's lectures, concerts and 'Original Nights' featuring the work of new writers. Graves was also one of the instigators in setting up the Folk Song Society after a conversation with Kate Lee (a fellow member of the ILS), Harry Plunket Greene, and Graves's brother Charles. They decided that an attempt should be made to draw all collectors of folk song in both Great Britain and Ireland into one society. A circular was sent out to interested parties, proposing the formation of 'a Folk Song Society for the purpose of discovering, collecting and publishing Folk and Traditional Songs of the United Kingdom and other Countries', and that the constituted Society would 'hold periodical meetings, at which these songs would be introduced and form the subject of performance, lecture and discussion, and from time to time to publish such collections of them as may be decided on by a committee of musical experts.'[60]

The Society was always intended to have an international focus, with particular emphasis on the 'Five Nations'—England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man. The 'List of Members' published in the first issue of the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* demonstrates this: four vice-presidents represent leading musicians from England, Ireland and Scotland (Hubert Parry, John Stainer, Charles Villiers Stanford and Alexander MacKenzie), while W. H. Gill (a folksong collector in the Isle of Man), Graves, Lucy Broadwood and Kate Lee were among those who served on the committee.[61]

The new initiative was warmly received with the *Musical Times* reporting that 'All genuine music-lovers will be gratified to learn that a Folk-song Society, having for its chief objects the preservation and identification of people's songs, is in active process of formation.'[62] Graves's account of that first meeting was that it went off well, praising Mrs Kate Lee, who had been appointed secretary of the Society, as a most active organiser of the movement.[63] This account somewhat belies a

[60] Douglas, Isle of Man, Manx National Heritage Library, MS09702 Detester J.F. Gill Papers, 'Proposed Folk Song Society'. Reproduced in Arthur Knevett, 'Cultural and Political Origins of the Folk-Song Society and the Irish Dimension', *Folk Music Journal*, 10 (2015), 592–608 (p. 599).
[61] Journal of the Folk-Song Society, 1 (1900), front matter.
[62] 'Occasional Notes', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 39 (1898), 165–67 (p. 165).
[63] Alfred Perceval Graves, *To return to all that* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), p. 266.

disagreement in approach which emerged at the very beginning of the society. Lucy Broadwood, who was one of four speakers at the meeting and a major figure in the later development of the Society, recalled in her diary that 'Graves talked of "restoring" traditional songs, which I objected was the last thing that such a Society should do'.[64] Graves, Stanford and Harold Boulton were representatives of a substantial group among the founders that saw folk music as raw material to be re-worked and presented in accordance with public taste. Kate Lee, Lucy Broadwood, and others including the music critic J. A. Fuller Maitland represented a newer generation of collectors who were determined to accurately present the music they took down. They would privately refer to Graves and his associates as 'the fakers'. W. H. Gill, in a letter to his brother discussing the first meeting of the provisional committee, reported that the committee 'were unanimous in deciding that only the naked melodies should be published and that "no payment whatever should be made for harmonies"'.[65] The *Musical News* noted that

> The methods pursued by Sir John Stevenson earlier in this century are so far out of sympathy with our present ideas of propriety, that it is surprising to find the Irish Literary Society even putting the matter to the vote last week, and it is not surprising at all to find that the suggestion to modernise old tunes in a proposed new collection was at once rejected.[66]

This decision was a defining one in focusing the new society on the path of fieldwork and scholarly editorial methods, and away from popular printed collections of national songs and drawing room arrangements. Whether the Folk Song Society would have objected to use of the melodies once safely outside the important work of the Society itself is a matter for conjecture, but there was a popular demand for, and response to, such usage, as had been demonstrated in other countries by nationalist composers including Dvořak, Grieg and Sibelius.

Certainly, these were interests that Graves consistently pursued outside of the Society. In *The Irish Song Book,* which had been published by the ILS in 1894, he had called for a 'restart [of] a school of national Irish music', drawing a parallel with the work of the scholars in the field of literature:[67]

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[64] Diary of Lucy Broadwood, 27 January 1898. Quoted in C. J. Bearman, 'Kate Lee and the Foundation of the Folk-Song Society', *Folk Music Journal*, 7 (1999), 627–43 (p. 634).
[65] Letter, W. H. Gill to Deemster J. F. Gill, 10th February 1898. Quoted in Stephen Miller, '"You will be interested to hear of a project to form a Folk Song Society": W. H. Gill and the Founding of the Folk-Song Society', *Folk Music Journal*, 10 (2011), 73–88 (p. 76).
[66] *Musical News,* 3 February 1898, p. 129.
[67] Graves, *The Irish Song Book*, *with Original Irish Airs* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895), xvii.

> As surely as Mr. Stopford Brooke can point to the most precious manuscripts and printed materials for minting into Irish romance, story, drama and ballad, so surely could a great musical critic like Dr. Hubert Parry, in reviewing the Bunting, Petrie, Holden, Joyce and Levey collections, which contain over 2,000 musical pieces, indicate theme after theme suitable for treatment in oratorio or opera, sonata or song.[68]

Graves attempted to demonstrate this principle himself in his subsequent collaborations, including several collections of song arrangements with Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood; a one-act opera *The Post Bag*, commissioned by the ILS with music by Michele Esposito; and an 'Irish Vocal Suite' *Roseen Dhu*, also in collaboration with Esposito, all of which made considerable use of existing Irish folk tunes. Musicologist Jeremy Dibble argues that this practice served to consolidate the view in Ireland that indigenous art music could not exist without the presence of a traditional air.[69]

Edmund Hunt notes that this idea of a national school has persisted through much discussion of twentieth-century art music in Ireland.[70] Hunt quotes Aloys Fleischmann writing in 1936, remarking that unless an Irish composer's music was confined to arrangements of traditional tunes, he risked begin classed as Anglo-Irish, or even anti-Irish.[71] Other scholars such as Harry White have commented on how the arrangement of folk melody came to seem 'like a *sine qua non* in Irish art music.'[72] Yet more careful perusal of the call for an Irish school of composition during the revival period suggests that the composers of the era intended something more nuanced: Esposito, in a 1906 interview encouraged the use of the 'vast store of thematic material in the [Irish] melodies', but emphasised that this should be according to modern methods, arguing that modern music by Irish composers was as much Irish as 'single, primitive melodies'.[73] Harty, Esposito's protégé*,* also advanced a nuanced idea of nationalism in music: he claimed that any school which based itself too obviously on the free use of folk song was bound to be narrow and circumscribed, and encouraged a sense of nationality in music impressed by more subtle means.[74]

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, p. 129.
[70] Edmund Hunt, '"A National School of Music Such as the World has Never Seen": Re-appropriating the Early Twentieth Century into a Chronology of Irish Composition', in *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond,* ed. by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn, pp. 53–67 (p. 53).
[71] Aloys Fleischmann, 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', *Ireland To-Day*, 1 (1936), 37–44 (p. 44). Quoted in Edmund Hunt, '"A National School of Music Such as the World has Never Seen"', p. 59.
[72] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 115.
[73] J. H. Cousins, 'Irish music – a chance for Irish composers', *Irish Independent*, 19 February 1906, p. 4.
[74] Harty, 'The Discouragement of English Music'.

In 1904, an Irish faction led by Graves and Charlotte Milligan Fox broke away from the Folk Song Society to form the Irish Folk Song Society (IFSS) with the aims 'to collect all the unpublished traditional airs and ballads of the Irish race and to print and publish as many as possible from time to time'.[75] Graves explained the split in an address to the Welsh National Eisteddfod, remarking that Ireland, with its Home Rule tendencies, felt that her own folk song affairs needed special treatment.[76] In his autobiography, Graves also explained that the work of the Folk Song Society had extended so widely that it was found necessary to subdivide its activities.[77]

In the same year, the newly formed Irish society commenced publication of the *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society* (*JIFSS*), edited initially by Charlotte Milligan Fox and Herbert Hughes. After the first few issues, Fox assumed sole responsibility for the journal. The journal disseminated a variety of literature on folksong, including published and unpublished songs with accompanying historical notes, reviews and illustrations. The first volume of the journal featured biographical notes on the eighteenth-century harper Arthur O'Neill, an illustration of a Gaelic harper by Seaghan MacCathmhaoil (John Campbell), poetry and articles by Seosamh MacCathmhaoil (Joseph Campbell), and dance tunes and airs collected by Fox, Hughes, P. W. Joyce and Cecil Sharp. The Irish antiquarian Francis Joseph Bigger provided engravings of the harpists and source material for an article on the life of the eighteenth-century harper Denis Hempson.[78] Continuing the effort to translate Irish song to appeal to an Anglophone audience, (and apparently unfettered by his critics in the founding society), Graves wrote a plea for 'Song-Craftsmen'—a call to wordsmiths in the English language to assist in the 'patriotic work' of providing lyrics to the thousands of Irish airs in the various collections. To demonstrate the non-partisan nature of the society, and in an attempt to appeal across political divides, the journal also included reviews of 'An Orange Broadsheet' and 'A Nationalist Broadsheet'. The specific broadsheets are not reprinted in the journal, making the comments of the reviewer, Edward John McKean, somewhat obscure at a historical remove, but they provide glimpses into the balladry of the Orange order and the subterfuge of historical singers selling proscribed nationalist ballads at country fairs.

[75] Adeleh Davis, 'Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society (JIFSS)', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 547–48.
[76] A. P. Graves, *Irish Literary and Musical Studies* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1913), 175–90, (p. 176).
[77] Graves, *To return to all that*, p. 267.
[78] James Wilson, *Biography of the Blind* (Belfast: D. Lyons, 1821), pp. 303–11.

McKean is careful to provide an objective assessment on the merits and characteristics of both broadsheets. This is in keeping with the early intention of the revival movement to embrace both cultural traditions through highlighting a shared cultural inheritance.

Both of the folk song societies, and particularly the IFSS, played a role in the promotion of folk song as a symbol of national identity, and in extending the network of societies that informally made up the revival movement in Ireland. Through the activities of Graves, Fox, Hughes and other contributors, the translation of folk song into an art song format for the concert platform continued inexorably. Despite the denuciation of such work as 'fakery' and the official rejection of arrangements by the societies, many of the individuals promoting the work of the societies were active creating and performing stylised arrangements of traditional airs set to new English words, and promoting new opportunities for their performance and dissemination.

3.4 The Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre

The theatrical movement in Ireland during the period of the Cultural Revival has been the subject of sustained academic interest for over a century.[79] While the primary concern of this movement was obviously the dramatic arts, the theatres also provided a platform for Irish songs and compositions in the form of incidental music during the progress of plays, or as intermission music, when Irish songs and arrangements of airs were played alongside popular offerings from opera and instrumental works.

In 1897, W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn published a manifesto for an 'Irish Literary Theatre', with the high ambition of building up 'a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature'.[80] *The Celtic Twilight*, a collection of supernatural writings by Yeats published in 1893, gave the movement a popular name.[81] Yeats was fascinated by Irish mysticism and the occult: for him, both offered a route to the remnants of a pre-modern age, and hence escape from all that was least attractive in

[79] Robert Hogan and others, *The Modern Irish Drama: A Documentary History,* 6 vols (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1979–92). Robert Welch, *The Abbey Theatre 1899–1999* (Oxford: OUP, 1999). Anthony Roche, *The Irish Dramatic Revival* 1899–1939 (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015).
[80] Lady Gregory, *Our Irish Theatre: A Chapter of Autobiography* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 8–9.
[81] W. B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893).

the modern world: urbanisation, industrialisation, disrespect for tradition, and the glorification of the scientific and the rational. If England was seen to embody these excesses, then Irish identity must be constructed along opposite lines: rural, traditional, and open to the otherworldly. The Celt was promoted as a cultural ideal which distinguished Ireland from English urban society.

Such was Yeats's conviction of the importance of the theatre project that he asked Alice Milligan if the Gaelic League could postpone their 1898 festival so that it would not clash with the inaugural plays by Gregory and Martyn.[82] The festival went ahead, regardless, and the Literary Theatre had its debut in 1899, when the Antient Concert Rooms in Brunswick Street, Dublin were secured for their first production, Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen.* From its earliest productions, the Literary Theatre included music within its offerings, and this practice was maintained when the company secured a permanent home in the Abbey Theatre which had its own small orchestra.[83] In February 1900, the theatre company presented Edward Martyn's play *Maeve*, along with *The Last Feast of the Fianna,* a short play by Alice Milligan. Milligan's play featured a score composed by her sister, Charlotte Milligan Fox, which was performed from the wings of the theatre.[84] This was the only play by Milligan performed by the Irish Literary Theatre and it received a lukewarm response. However, it was lauded by Yeats and, according to scholar and drama critic William J. Feeney, it held the distinction of being 'the first completely Celtic Twilight play in setting, characters, and theme'.[85] It also predates the founding of a regular orchestra at the Abbey Theatre in 1906, prior to which music was provided by a solo violinist, Arthur Darley, who is also mentioned as the composer of the music for Yeats's plays *The Shadowy Waters* and *Deirdre*. Yeats described Darley's setting of the text as 'dramatically effective', but nonetheless preferred a chanted version by the actress Florence Farr. He had very precise requirements as to the precedence of the words over music: 'No vowel must ever be prolonged unnaturally, no word of

[82] R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life*, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 1997 & 2003), I: *The Apprentice Mage* (1997), p. 184. In this case Yeats has used the term 'feis' (meaning 'festival') generically, and almost certainly meant the *Oireachtas*, i.e., the festival run by the Gaelic League.
[83] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, pp. 353–54.
[84] Morris, p. 244.
[85] *Maeve: A Psychological Drama in Two Acts by Edward Martyn, The Last Feast of the Fianna: A Dramatic Legend by Alice Milligan,* ed. by William J. Feeney (Chicago: De Paul University, 1967), p. 43.

mine must ever change into a mere musical note, no singer of my words must ever cease to be a man and become an instrument.'[86]

Yeats had a strikingly unconventional approach to music, and admitted 'I have always known that there was something I disliked about singing'.[87] Nevertheless, the relationship of words and music was a subject that fascinated and preoccupied him throughout his life, and his views changed over time as he explored conventional musical settings, speech-song or chanting, and the more experimental techniques of the avant-garde composer George Antheil.[88] It is notable that, for a prolific poet, comparatively few of his poems have been set to music. Stephen Banfield notes that where Yeats's poetry was set, it was generally from his earlier 'Celtic' period. [89] Further, Banfield claims that Yeats rejected art song as a form of expression and went as far as employing a censor to examine all musical settings of his poetry pending publication.[90] When the composer Peter Warlock found his publishers unwilling to consider songs with texts by Yeats, due to the difficulties in dealing with this censor, Warlock took up the issue directly with Yeats. The poet explained that his intention was not to prevent composers from setting his words to music but to make them careful in doing so. Yeats explained that his caution derived from his horror at being invited to hear a setting of his 'Lake Isle of Innisfree'—a poem which voices a solitary man's desire for still greater solitude—sung by a choir of a thousand boy scouts. Despite Warlock's plea to Yeats, the unnamed censor rejected both his song settings, and Warlock was unable to extract any explanation with respect to how the songs had offended. [91]

Herbert Hughes and John F. Larchet also provided songs for plays by Yeats, including Hughes's setting of the 'fool's song' from Yeats's 1904 play *On Baile's Strand*, which Yeats also later replaced with a chant by Farr. Figure 3.1 shows the opening of Farr's setting, which visually demonstrates the confines in which Yeats limited the musical setting of his words. Similar to *recitative* in opera which puts the

[86] W. B. Yeats, *Plays in Prose and Verse* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 433.
[87] W. B. Yeats, 'Singing to the Psaltery', in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1914), pp. 12–20, (p. 12). Harry White, 'Yeats and the Music of Poetry', in *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), pp. 79–109.
[88] Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford: OUP, 2008). Jacqueline Genet, *"Words for Music Perhaps": le "new art" de Yeats / "Words for Music Perhaps": Yeats's "new art"* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2010).
[89] Banfield, p. 252.
[90] Ibid., p. 253.
[91] Peter Warlock, 'Mr Yeats and a Musical Censorship', *Musical Times*, 63 (1922), 123–124, (p. 123).

emphasis on text rather than music, Yeats's treatment is even more austere. Each phrase is constrained to two or three notes, none of which is more than a semitone apart. The starting notes of each line form a major triad, and the rhythm is free, signalling Yeats's insistence on the priority of speech-rhythm.

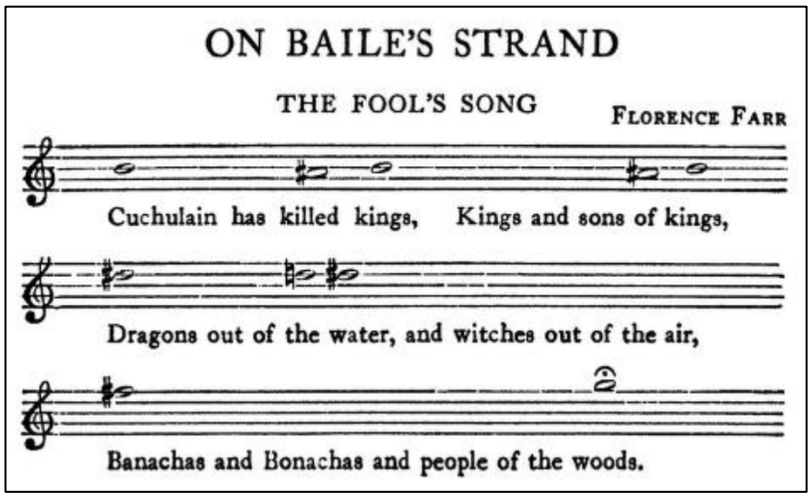

Fig. 3.1 Opening of 'The Fool's Song' from Yeats's *On Baile's Strand*, setting by Florence Farr
Image reproduced from W. B. Yeats, *Plays in Prose and Verse*, p. 437

Yeats's views on musical settings of his words were complex (and sometimes hostile) and depended on the particular texts that were being set. Nonetheless, the theatre he helped to found provided a network where writers, musicians, actors and singers could meet like-minded individuals. Some of these associations led to fruitful collaborations: Larchet provided music for several of Yeats's plays, as well as *The Spell* by Bernard Duffy; Esposito composed music for A. P. Graves's *The Postbag* and Douglas Hyde's *The Tinker and a Fairy*; and Herbert Hughes also collaborated with a number of Irish playwrights including the Belfast writer James Bernard Fagan (*An Adventure with Pepys*), Seán O'Casey (*Within the Gates*) and with A. P. Graves and W. W. Keene (*The Absentee*). Later chapters examine these collaborations alongside the composers' other Revival-inspired works.

3.5 The Foundation of the Feis Ceoil

In 1894, Thomas O'Neill Russell, a founding member of the Gaelic League, published an article deploring the neglect of Irish music, and calling on the NLS to join forces with the Gaelic League to address the situation.[92] The societies responded with alacrity: on the 12th October 1894, Annie Patterson (a noted Irish academic and musician who was a member of both societies) addressed a 'crowded attendance at the Gaelic League', setting out a proposal to hold a festival in which the music of Ireland and the national language would be the prominent features.[93] The meeting was documented in the *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, which reported that the festival would consist of a programme of musical and literary exhibitions, including 'not only our ancient music but the work of our present day Irish composers'.[94] Vocal music, as far as possible, should be in the Irish language. The proposal was enthusiastically supported, a committee appointed, and an agreement was made to approach the NLS in order to make the festival a joint project. The new festival was given the title of 'Feis Ceoil' or 'Festival of Music', referencing the ancient assemblies on the Hill of Tara; it would be planned for the beginning of May, a gesture to the ancient festival of *Bealtaine.*

The first Feis Ceoil was inaugurated in 1897, and Graves, who did not attend, marked the occasion with a humorous poem that was sent by telegram, encouraging the project:

> With Irish musical recitals
> Refresh old Grannia's tuneful vitals;
> Throw off the Sassenach's music hall tunes—
> With reel and jig replace his ball tunes.[95]

The poem makes clear the rejection of English values in favour of 'Irish musical recitals'. Graves was not alone in considering the 'Sassenach's music hall tunes' to be a reflection of degeneracy in morals and manners, and that the promotion of the 'Irish modes in loftier harmony, purer strain' would be an improving mechanism on

[92] T. O'Neill Russell, 'Our Irish Music: What is to be its Future?', *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 8 September 1894, p. 8.
[93] 'The Irish Musical and Literary Festival: Launching the Scheme – Dr Annie Patterson and the Gaelic League', *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, 13 October 1894, p. 3.
[94] Ibid.
[95] 'The Feis Ceoil', *Irish Daily Independent,* 30 June 1897, p. 5.

society.[96] Joseph Ryan notes that such sentiments were blatantly propagandist in nature, but underpinned much contemporary thought, which opined that the entire movement of revival was imperative if Ireland 'were to avoid what were considered the social excrescences of her neighbour'.[97] In praising native Irish melodies and the songs of Irish nationalists, citing them as examples of a more noble and moral culture, the leaders of the revival movement asserted another point of differentiation from their English rulers, adopting a moral high ground along with a superior musical taste. However, the founders of the Feis Ceoil, many of them themselves Anglo-Irish, had something more cosmopolitan in mind than a chauvinistic insistence on traditional Irish music to the exclusion of all other genres. Instead, they espoused a liberal view, which aimed to promote Irish music, composers and players, while also encouraging the practice of Western art music and the possibility of collaborative compositions which embraced both styles of music. Negotiating the delicate balance between the traditions promoted by the Gaelic League and those who encouraged a more cosmopolitan approach could lead to frictions on both sides. The Gaelic League split away from the Feis Ceoil after an early dispute on language issues, forming their own festival, An tOireachtas (the 'gathering' or 'assembly'), which launched the same year.

The first Feis Ceoil featured concerts of 'Antient Irish Music', typically harp music and Irish folk songs, as well as 'Modern Irish Music', including a scena from the opera *Amelie* (1839) by William Michael Rooke, and glees by the Earl of Mornington (Garrett Wesley), who had been appointed first Professor of Music at Trinity College, Dublin in 1764. Prize-winning compositions written for the Feis Ceoil were also featured, including Esposito's cantata *Deirdre*, the text of which was provided by T. W. Rolleston. Similar composition competitions encouraged the use of Irish airs and Irish idioms, including a prize for a suite or symphony based on traditional airs which was offered from 1901.

Like the Literary Societies, the Feis Ceoil created performance opportunities for Irish music. The festival specifically encouraged both the composition of songs in an Irish style and their dissemination through the compilation of 'set works' for specific competition categories. Their 'Prize Compositions' were also assured of a

[96] Ibid.
[97] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, p. 287

performance in concerts at the festival, and included such categories as 'Unaccompanied Part Song'; 'Original Song'; 'Song in Irish'; 'Irish air, arranged as a song'; 'Irish air, arranged as a part-song'; as well as more generic categories such as 'Overture'; 'Anthem' and 'Cantata'.[98] The competitions attracted some of Ireland's most distinguished musicians at home and abroad, including Hamilton Harty, Alicia Needham, Michele Esposito and Carl Hardebeck. Some of the prize-winning compositions were later published, proudly proclaiming their Feis Ceoil credentials.

Harry White comments that the Feis Ceoil 'filled a void in Irish cultural discourse: it transcended the nationalist symbolism of Irish music as a subset of the Gaelic League and it consolidated the movement towards music as a cultural preoccupation which might reduce the polarisation of native and colonial traditions'.[99] The organisers of the Feis Ceoil held firm to this middle-ground where Irish music and musicians were promoted and celebrated within the context of a wider European heritage. This approach attracted criticism from some contemporaries who embraced a strictly nationalist approach. Following the 1900 Feis, the organisers took to the press to defend themselves and justify their reasoning, as 'some incoherence of thought appears to exist in the mind of certain critics as to what it is that the Feis Ceoil tries to effect'.[100] Clarifying the matter, this anonymous writer explained:

> It is true that a foremost place in its programme is given to the fostering and resuscitation of Irish music, ancient and modern, but it is no less true that the Society aims at assisting in the general progress of the musical art in Ireland, and one aim is no less patriotic than the other.[101]

When a pseudonymous review of the 1900 festival deplored the 'German' nature of the festival and suggested it should be termed 'Musik Feste', the writer Edward Martyn, who was a major supporter of the Feis Ceoil and generous patron of music in Dublin, replied defending the festival.[102] While agreeing with the authors on the importance of 'the incomparable folk music of Ireland', Martyn asserted that the Feis Ceoil's aim was to promote the general cultivation of music in Ireland. He argued that this object could not be effected by a restriction to the folk music of Ireland, and

[98] Dublin, NLI, MS40, 226/1. Records of the Feis Ceoil Association, Annual Programmes 1897–1901.
[99] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 113.
[100] 'Some features of the recent Feis Ceoil', *All Ireland Review*, 2 June 1900, p. 3.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Federigo and Sebastin, 'The "Feis Ceoil" Fraud', *All Ireland Review*, 30 June 1900, p. 5. Edward Martyn, 'The Feis Ceoil and "The Magpie"', *All Ireland Review,* 14 July 1900, p. 2.

extolled equally the importance of the works of European composers, asserting that the Feis Ceoil 'is a sincere artistic institution, and free from all anti-national servility, and should be supported by everyone who has the artistic interests of Ireland at heart.'[103] In adopting this stance, the Feis Ceoil created and protected a performance space for music that attempted to cross cultural divides, and promoted new compositions that incorporated the traditions of the past into European musical forms. The fracture with the Gaelic League, and the accusations of 'fraud' in the forementioned debate, however, illustrates that this approach was not universally admired.

This chapter has surveyed revival societies that, in their various ways, provided platforms or opportunities for the performance, publication and development of Irish song during the time of the Cultural Revival. A number of themes emerge across the various endeavours documented in this chapter: the promotion of Irish heritage and culture as a common cause; the aspiration that these endeavours would attract support across political divides and religious persuasions; and the attempt to express a modern Irish identity through a hybrid form of culture that articulated, translated and re-presented cultural artefacts from both literary and musical traditions. The movement grew organically to embrace a wide spectrum of activities—while the language movement was one of the most significant, there were few aspects of life in Ireland that were untouched by the Revival.

This examination of the societies of the Revival also highlights the critical role played by individuals such as Alfred Perceval Graves, Annie Patterson, and Charlotte Milligan Fox. Their contributions go beyond their specific work as poets and musicians and into the realm of cultural activism. In actively promoting Irish music and culture—and song literature in particular—these activists provided a cultural space in which Irish song could be created, published, and performed. This theme of cultural activism supporting Irish song literature will be further examined in the following chapters.

The role that Irish musicians played in the Revival has received little historical attention, and yet many were at the heart of the societies that were responsible for its proliferation, working alongside some of its pioneers. In the following chapters, the

[103] Ibid.

leading Irish composers of the period are considered from the perspective of the Revival, with particular attention paid to the context in which they worked, their collaborations with Irish poets, and their resulting song output, both in the terms of their re-working of traditional materials and their original songs.

4. The Irish songs of Charles Villiers Stanford

The life and music of the composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) is better-known and more thoroughly documented than any of the Irish composers of his era, and he attained a stature and international recognition that few of his contemporaries would ever enjoy. He was known for his achievements as an organist and choir-master, conductor, pedagogue and prolific composer, as well as his training of a new generation of composers. His compositional output included seven symphonies, ten operas, three masses, three piano concertos, numerous choral works, string quartets and many smaller works including a large body of solo songs, part songs, and song cycles. Yet his substantial oeuvre has always been seen as 'problematic', both during his own lifetime and in the near-century since his death in 1924.

Stanford's prolific output included arrangements of folksongs, editions of collections, as well as original art songs set to texts by Irish writers. Joseph Ryan described Stanford as 'the father to that whole movement of Irish nationalist expression through music', while suggesting that his position as a pillar of the British musical establishment made this somewhat ironic.[1] While Stanford's role in the resurgence of British composition in the early twentieth century has long been acknowledged, his influence on Irish composers as suggested by Ryan has received less scholarly attention.[2] This chapter will consider Stanford's Irish identity and his contribution to the Cultural Revival through consideration of those of his songs that represent his 'Irish' output.

[1] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland,* p. 244. Such positions belie the notion of multinarrativity in national identity. There is little to suggest that Stanford experienced any personal difficulty in expressing his Irish identity within the context of his unionist loyalties.
[2] Walford Davies and others, 'Charles Villiers Stanford', *Music & Letters*, 5 (1924), 193–207.

4.1 Stanford's Irish Identity

The playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw targeted his formidable wit at Stanford's expense on numerous occasions, most memorably in a review of his 1893 Symphony No. 3 in F minor (dubbed the 'Irish' Symphony for its dance-like second movement and for the quotation of Irish folksong in the final movement):

> The 'Irish' Symphony, composed by an Irishman, is a record of fearful conflict between the aboriginal Celt and the Professor. The Scherzo is not a scherzo at all, but a shindy, expending its force in riotous dancing. However hopelessly an English orchestra may fail to catch the wild nuances of the Irish fiddler, it cannot altogether drown the 'hurroosh' with which Stanford the Celt drags Stanford the Professor into the orgy.[3]

Shaw would return to this analogy of the Celt and the Professor on other occasions when reviewing his compositions, finding fault with his conservatism and failure to deliver on his early promise as a composer. Another contemporary commentator, the composer and writer Arnold Bax, was equally dismissive, remarking in his autobiography *Farewell, My Youth*:

> Stanford was not Irish enough. An Irishman by birth, he belonged to that class abominated by Irish Ireland, the 'West Briton'. There are intimations in some of his work that he started not without a certain spark of authentic musical imagination, but quite early he went a-whoring after foreign gods, and that original flicker was smothered in the outer darkness of Brahms.[4]

As is further discussed in Chapter 8, Bax had a highly romanticised view of Ireland that did not take multiple identities into account. However, the image of Stanford as a composer conflicted between his Irish heritage and his Anglo-German training has persisted. Paul Rodmell, writing in 2002, argued that the particular historical circumstances of Ireland placed Stanford in a highly ambiguous position with regard to nationality, and that a perception persisted that the Anglo-Irish 'only ever played at being Irish, that they avoided assimilation and were never, therefore, the genuine article'.[5] With the approaching centenary of Stanford's death, there has been

[3] George Bernard Shaw, *Music in London 1890–94,* 3 vols (London: Constable, 1932), II, p. 305.
[4] Bax, *Farewell, My Youth,* p. 22.
[5] Rodmell, p. 398.

increased interest in his Irish music, including new recordings of his songs and revivals of his operas.[6]

Stanford was born to a legal family with close connections to Dublin's musical and intellectual community. His family home in Herbert Street was a meeting place for many of the city's musical elite, including Robert Prescott Stewart, the organist at Christ Church Cathedral, who taught him organ and theory of music; Michael Quarry, who taught him piano; and Richard Levey, leader of the orchestra of the Theatre Royal, who taught him violin. Rodmell suggests that Stanford's formal education 'was narrow but supplemented by a much wider cultural education facilitated by the churches, concert halls, theatres and well-to-do society of Dublin'.[7]

Securing one of the first organ scholarships at Queen's College, Cambridge in 1870, Stanford broke with family tradition by not attending Trinity College in Dublin. Rodmell notes this as a crucial decision that set his career on a course it could never have followed had he been educated in Ireland.[8] In 1874, he was appointed assistant organist at Trinity College, Cambridge, with an arrangement that also allowed him to study for part of the year in Germany. He was appointed professor of composition at the newly founded Royal College of Music in London in 1883. His operatic, oratorio and symphony compositions contributed to his national and international reputation, and in 1887 he was appointed to the position of professor of music at Cambridge University, a position he held for thirty-five years.

Although he left Ireland at the age of eighteen, Stanford retained a sincere attachment to the country of his birth. Like many of the Irish diaspora, he supported societies promoting Irish culture. He was a member of the ILS, which commissioned him to edit the Petrie collection, and was also appointed as a vice-president of the IFSS, a largely honorary position acknowledging his standing as an authority on Irish song. He was also involved in the founding of the Feis Ceoil, an alliance which came to an unsatisfactory end when differences about the nature of the festival emerged between the composer and the organisers. Stanford, who had been invited to be the first President, withdrew over a dispute concerning the expense of bringing the Hallé

[6] Stanford, *Songs of Faith, Love and Nonsense* (SOMM Recordings, SOMMCD 0627, 2021). Recent productions of Stanford operas have included *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan* at the 2019 Wexford Opera Festival, and *Much Ado About Nothing* at the 2019 Leeds Festival. Retrospect Opera have announced plans to record *Shamus O'Brien* with the BBC Concert Orchestra in 2021, see <https://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/STANFORD/Shamus.html> [accessed 30 May 2021]
[7] Rodmell, p. 32.
[8] Ibid., p. 35.

Orchestra to perform at the first festival. This aspiration jarred with the Feis Ceoil's objective of promoting Irish music and musicians, but was defended by Stanford in a letter to the *Musical News*:

> I conceived […] that for a festival of this sort, it was important not only to interest the Irish in their own possessions, but also to show them what other nations are doing, and to show other nations what Irish music is capable of. It was for this reason that I suggested two first-rate orchestral and choral concerts, one of music by Irish men, one of music by representative composers of other nationalities, and I had hopes of inducing some of these famous writers to visit Ireland on the occasion, to conduct their own works; a step which would have interested them in Ireland, and Ireland in them.[9]

Stanford's cosmopolitan approach was not approved by the committee, and his subsequent resignation as President attracted strongly-expressed views in the press: the *Nation* applauded the organisers' decision to resist the subordination of Irish interests to those of England, while the *Sunday World* suggested that the Feis committee should 'go back repentant to Dr Stanford and put itself in his experienced hands'.[10] Dibble notes that the Feis Ceoil, 'like so many other Irish cultural institutions of this period, found it hard to tread a path of political neutrality'.[11] Stanford, while stepping down as President, did not completely dissociate himself from the festival: he would later return as a conductor, and his compositions were a regular feature in Feis programmes.

Stanford saw no conflict in his affection for his native country and his allegiance to the British crown and held himself aloof from the political nationalism that was gaining impetus in Ireland. Constitutionally he supported the Union with Britain and publicly disassociated himself from any suggestion of separatism on several occasions. In 1900, when Yeats was publicly protesting Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland and the actions of the British Empire in the Anglo-Boer War, Stanford resigned his membership of the ILS, writing in a letter to A. P. Graves that 'they can't have this Yeats on the Committee if they wish to be considered non-combative and non-political'.[12] In 1912, as a Home Rule bill was being debated in Parliament,

[9] Quoted in J. E. B., 'The Feis—Local, or International?', *Musical News,* 11 July 1896, p. 56.
[10] 'The Irish Musical Feis', *The Nation*, 20 June 1896, p. 12. 'Irish Musical Society', *Sunday World*, 21 June 1896. Quoted in Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, p. 284.
[11] Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, p. 284.
[12] Stanford to A. P. Graves, 19 November 1900. Dublin, NLI, MS 17,797. Quoted in Rodmell, p. 390. Rodmell points out the irony of the concept that 'supporting the *status quo* is an apolitical act, while questioning it introduces politics into an issue that had previously been somehow above the fray'. (Ibid.)

Stanford banned performances of his opera *Shamus O'Brien* as he was concerned the opera might be misconstrued as anti-British.[13]

As a member of the privileged class, any nationalist movement based on anything other than strictly cultural and artistic grounds was deeply distasteful to Stanford. He was distressed by the Home Rule crisis and in later years felt increasingly alienated from the country of his birth. In another letter to Graves in 1912, he wrote concerning his attempt to donate the Petrie manuscripts to the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin:

> I offered [the Petrie MSS] to the Irish Academy but the Sec. wrote me such a curt epistle in which he did not even trouble to spell my name right, and apparently did not know from Adam who I was, that I put them back on my bookshelves where they remain. Dublin has invariably shown me such a cold shoulder, that I have no particular desire to be forthcoming to it!!![14]

The war years were difficult for Stanford: he found himself in financial difficulties as his work dried up, and he was horrified by developments in Ireland in 1916 and after. He continued to compose until the end of his life, although with diminishing publishing success. In his latter years, he struggled with the realisation that his vision and his music was out of step with the times: a new aesthetic was emerging which he never understood or tolerated. His health deteriorated after 1920, and he died just days before he was due to retire from Cambridge in April 1924.

Stanford's Irish identity was strictly based on cultural and artistic grounds. He took a cosmopolitan view on the role that the Irish musical heritage could play in the larger field of European art music, but the growing polarisation of allegiances in Ireland, the threat of war with Germany (a country that had played an important role in informing Stanford's musical style), and the rapidly changing shifts in musical approaches of the early twentieth century contributed to a mixed reception of his 'Irish' works, many of which dropped out of the repertoire soon after his death.

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[13] Rodmell, p. 389.
[14] Stanford to A. P. Graves, 16 February 1912. Dublin, NLI, 17,797. Quoted in Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford,* p. 369.

4.2 Collaboration with Alfred Perceval Graves

Stanford's early compositions evidence his cosmopolitan tastes rather than any fledgling Irish identity. Not until 1882 when he was thirty years old did he publish his first 'Irish' project—a collection of traditional Irish melodies with his own arrangements and words by Alfred Perceval Graves. This would be the first of several fruitful collaborations undertaken by the pair.

Alfred Perceval Graves was the son of Charles Graves, the Anglican Bishop of Limerick, and one of the founder members of the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland who had been responsible for the publication of the Petrie Collection. When the second (posthumous) volume of the collection was published in 1882, the publisher Boosey approached Stanford to bring out a collection of Irish songs. Stanford duly contacted Graves, a childhood friend, to ask if he would write or adapt words to tunes taken chiefly from the Petrie collection. Graves had already published a volume of poetry, *Irish Songs and Ballads*, containing fifty-one poems inspired by Irish melodies taken from the Bunting, Petrie, and Hoffmann collections, twenty-seven of which he included in a musical appendix.[15] Thus, when Stanford approached him regarding a possible collaboration, Graves was able to send him about twenty pieces that were already completed. In 1882, their first collaboration was published: *Songs of Old Ireland: A Collection of Fifty Irish Melodies.*

In the preface to the *Songs of Old Ireland*, Stanford described the melodies as 'new to English ears', thus clearly identifying his target audience.[16] The songs comprise lullabies, laments, love songs, and songs of occupation, as well as dealing with popular historical subjects such as the Flight of the Earls, Brian Boroimhe (Boru), the Battle of Clontarf, and the Jacobite risings. Songs such as 'Awake, awake, Fianna' and 'Emer's farewell to Cuchullain' refer to romantic Gaelic legends, while humorous songs of rural domesticity are also included. Stanford took a number of songs directly from Graves's musical appendix in *Irish Songs and Ballads*, and the correspondence between the two men suggests that in the case of folk song, both

[15] A. P. Graves, *Irish Songs and Ballads* (Manchester: Alexander Ireland, 1880).
[16] Charles Villiers Stanford, *Songs of Old Ireland: A Collection of Fifty Irish Melodies* (London: Boosey, 1882), preface.

understood that the poem had to fit the music; according to Stanford's biographer Harry Plunket Greene, this was 'a matter of honour which neither transgressed'.[17]

The first song in the compilation is 'The Little Red Lark', a tune drawn from the Petrie collection which had first appeared in print in 1877 in Frederic Hoffmann's *Ancient Music of Ireland from the Petrie Collection* (Figure 4.1).[18] Hoffmann's arrangements are for piano, without words, and other than a general attribution to Petrie, the publication fails to give any indication of source.[19]

Fig. 4.1 Hoffmann, 'The Little Red Lark', bars 1–8

When Graves included the piece in *Irish Songs and Ballads*, he cited Hoffmann's arrangement as a source rather than the Petrie manuscripts, and claimed that the inspiration for the poem came from Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, where she described a song where a lover 'tenderly reproaching his mistress, asks him why she keeps morning so long indoors? and bids her come and bring him the day'.[20] Graves's mention of Brooke's book is significant as it was the first important collection of Irish verse translations with their original Gaelic text: it has been cited as one of the seminal antiquarian works leading to the Irish Literary Revival.[21] The

[17] Greene, p. 169.
[18] F. Hoffmann, *Ancient Music of Ireland from the Petrie Collection: Arranged for the Pianoforte* (Dublin: Pigott, 1877), p. 96.
[19] Stanford later included it as No. 384 'The Little Red Lark of the Mountain' when preparing *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by George Petrie* for the Irish Literary Society in 1903. This project is discussed later in this chapter.
[20] Charlotte Brooke, *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (Dublin: George Bonham, 1789), p. 232. Quoted in Graves, *Irish Songs and Ballads*, p. 243.
[21] Welch, *A History of Verse Translation*, pp. 28–43.

words in *Irish Songs and Ballads*, however, are Graves's own, as shown in Figure 4.2.[22]

THE LITTLE RED LARK.

Oh, swan of slenderness,
Dove of tenderness,
Jewel of joys, arise!
The little red lark
Like a rosy spark
Of song to his sunburst flies.
But till thou art risen
Earth is a prison
Full of my lonesome sighs;
Then awake and discover
To thy fond lover
The morn of thy matchless eyes!

The dawn is dark to me;
Hark! oh, hark to me,
Pulse of my heart, I pray!
And out of thy hiding
With blushes gliding,
Dazzle me with thy day.
Ah, then, once more to thee
Flying I'll pour to thee
Passion so sweet and gay,
The lark shall listen,
And dewdrops glisten,
Laughing on every spray.

Fig. 4.2 Facsimile of 'The Little Red Lark' from Graves's *Irish Songs and Ballads*

Other than stripping out the phrasing marks and dynamics, and a single pitch difference in bar 6, Graves has made no changes to the melody as it appeared in Hoffman's version. However, Stanford's arrangement in *Songs of Old Ireland* (see Figure 4.3) re-imagines and completes the song for drawing-room performance:

[22] Graves, *Irish Songs and Ballads*, p. 203.

Fig. 4.3 Stanford, 'The Little Red Lark', bars 1–10

The key has been lowered to bring it to a more generally acceptable singing range, and a piano prelude and postlude added. In terms of the melody itself, Stanford has made a number of modifications to both pitch and rhythm. Several dotted rhythms have been replaced with even quavers (e.g., bars 5 and 9 in Stanford's score), most likely to better suit the accentuation of the new English lyrics, and the pitch of some of the upbeats has been adjusted (e.g., upbeat to bar 7). The piano arrangements have a little more interest and texture than those provided by Hoffmann, and the dotted

rhythms which had been part of the character of the original melody have been used more liberally here. Stanford's use of pedal notes on open fifths in the bass line are suggestive of a drone, and while he makes occasional use of harmonic modulation and prepared dissonances, the accompaniment supports rather than competes with the melodic line.

Clearly Stanford took some liberties with the original melody, but this volume was intended to introduce Irish melodies (which both Stanford and Graves admired) to an English-speaking audience unfamiliar with the originals. The songs were drawn principally from the Petrie collection, but also those of Bunting and P. W. Joyce. As Dibble has pointed out, this allowed Stanford to ally himself with the scholarly wing of Irish music research.[23] Dibble notes the importance of the collection in the development of Stanford's musical personality and suggests that the contours of Irish melody undoubtedly influenced Stanford's melodic style, whether in his symphonic essays, Irish song-cycles, or his six orchestral Irish Rhapsodies.[24]

Another air from the Petrie collection which Stanford also included in this first volume would later achieve iconic status as a musical emblem of Ireland: the tune which became known as the 'Londonderry Air' or 'Derry Air' (See Figure 4.4).[25] Petrie included the song in his 1855 collection as an 'anonymous air' collected by a Miss J. Ross of Limavady, and agreed with Miss Ross's remark that the song was 'very old'.[26]

[23] Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford,* pp. 127–30.
[24] Dibble, 'Stanford, Sir Charles Villiers', in *EMIR*, II, pp. 955–58 (p. 957).
[25] 'Londonderry' was the official name of the city and county in the north of Ireland at the time of the collection and publication of the air. It has since been the subject of a politicised naming dispute with nationalists favouring 'Derry' and unionists 'Londonderry'. In future references, I have opted for 'Londonderry' as the name by which the tune was most commonly known at the time.
[26] This claim has been challenged and the provenance of the song questioned by Anne Gilchrist in 1934 and Hugh Shields in 1979. A more recent paper in 2000 by Brian Audley for the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* makes a counter-claim for the song's authenticity and suggests relationships with other contemporary tunes including 'The Young Man's Dream', 'Castle Hyde' and 'The Groves of Blarney'. Anne G. Gilchrist, 'A New Light upon the Londonderry Air', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1 (1934), 115–21. Hugh Shields, 'New Dates for Old Songs—1766 to 1803', *Long Room*, 18–19 (1979), 34–41. Brian Audley 'The Provenance of the "Londonderry Air"', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 125 (2000), 205–47.

Fig. 4.4 Facsimile of the 'Londonderry Air' from Petrie's 1855 collection

Graves had set words to the melody in *Irish Songs and Ballads*, the first verse of which was based on a translation from a 'Celtic' song given to him by P. W. Joyce, who had also worked with Petrie.[27] The text transcribed below shows the translation provided by Joyce (the melody to which it originally belonged is not mentioned) and the first setting that Graves matched to the Londonderry Air. The first verse bears a clear debt to Joyce's translation, the second is Graves's original work.

[27] Graves, *Irish Songs and Ballads*, p. 243.

Translation from a ‘Celtic song’ by Patrick W. Joyce:

Would God I were a little apple,
Or one of the small daisies,
Or a rose in the garden
Where thou art accustomed to walk alone;

In hope that thou wouldst pluck from me
Some wee little branch,
Which thou wouldst hold in thy right hand
Or in the breast of thy robe.

Graves’s setting which he matched to the ‘Londonderry Air’ in *Irish Songs and Ballads*:

Would I were Erin’s apple-blossom o’er you,
Or Erin’s rose in all its beauty blown,
To drop my richest petals down before you,
Within the garden where you walk alone;
In hope you’d turn and pluck a little posy,
With loving fingers through my foliage pressed,
And kiss it close and set it blushing rosy
To sigh out all its sweetness on your breast.

Would I might take the pigeon’s flight towards you,
And perch beside your window-pane above,
And murmur how my heart of hearts it hoards you,
O hundred thousand treasures of my love;
In hope you’d stretch your slender hand and take me,
And smooth my wildly-fluttering wings to rest,
And lift me to your loving lips and make me
My bower of blisses in your loving breast.

Graves, like Stanford, was motivated to produce an artistic work that would succeed in the drawing room and on the concert platform, rather than a work of ethnological accuracy. For these audiences, Graves believed that issues of translation had to be addressed. This involved finding solutions to problems resulting from the processes of oral transmission, such as missing verses, breaks in narrative, and conflicting or hybrid lyric variants. Graves defended his approach in the preface to *Irish Songs and Ballads,* freely acknowledging that

> wherever the Celtic or Anglo-Irish words to these airs or fragments of them remained, I have not for a moment scrupled to press into my service whatever appeared to me poetical in the original; though in such cases I have taken care in the notes at the end of the volume to give my readers an opportunity of comparing my version with these older forms.[28]

[28] Ibid., preface.

This confident but somewhat cavalier attitude raises questions around cultural appropriation, but this issue never concerned either Graves or Stanford, who had a colonial attitude to the re-purposing of artefacts and never questioned their right to use and amend this cultural inheritance as they saw fit. As a member of the IFSS, Graves had come under fire for failing to respect the traditional sources, and in a comment in a later publication, he took a defensive stance:

> Dealing with these folk-songs and later lyrics is extremely delicate work. Yet I feel it would be a pity to have to omit them […] when the removal of an excrescence here, or the omission or transposition of a stanza there, would make just the difference needful to the entire success of the song or ballad. For this treatment of Irish songs I shall no doubt be roundly attacked by those to whom every syllable of the "Battle of the Boyne" and "Shule Agra" or every individual verse of our more recent national lyrics is sacred. I am none the less persuaded that, on both literary and musical grounds, such treatment will do these lyrics the truest justice.[29]

Greene, writing in Stanford's biography about the collaboration between the two men, admits that 'many mistakes were made', observing:

> It should be remembered that in mitigation of error that in the England of those days folk-music was not yet in the glare of the footlights. Cecil Sharp had not yet arrived on the scene as a prophet in his own country, and musical folklore had not yet become a movement.[30]

His discussion further suggests that a significant grievance was the use of some of the tunes without the permission of the holder of the collections, but argues that, at the time, 'they were regarded as in the same category with manuscripts in the British Museum'.[31] In Ireland, where folk music had been 'in the glare of the footlights' for almost a century, ethical issues of cultural appropriation had yet to be explored.

Graves had published 'Would I Were Erin's Apple Blossom' to a musical arrangement by a Dr Hills prior to its inclusion in *Irish Songs and Ballads*.[32] Stanford was impressed by the heroic quality of the song, and asked Graves to write another set of words to it, which resulted in its inclusion in *Songs of Old Ireland,* where the air appears as 'Emer's Farewell to Cucullain' (Figure 4.5):

[29] Graves, *The Irish Song Book,* p.8.
[30] Greene, p. 161.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Published by Forsyth Brothers, London and Manchester some time before 1882. While I have not been able to locate a copy of this setting, this appears to be the first time the tune appeared in print with lyrics.

Fig. 4.5 Stanford, 'Emer's Farewell to Cucullain', bars 1–11

In this arrangement, Stanford remained faithful to Petrie's version of the melody, making changes only in details of articulation and dynamics. In particular, he replicated the quaver passage in bar 6 of Petrie's version (bar 10 of Stanford's arrangement), including the B♮ that briefly suggests the key of C minor. Greene claims that Stanford left this in place against his better judgement, and that he later felt it should have been B♭.[33] The quaver movement in this bar also suggests the instrumental origin of the tune, as the extended phrasing demanded by its inclusion would present some breathing challenges to untrained singers. Graves claimed that this version of the air 'held the field' until Frederic Weatherly's famous version 'Danny Boy', published in 1913.[34] Weatherly's version was popularised internationally by an early recording by the renowned contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink in 1917.[35]

Weatherly's version addresses the chromaticism of the B♮ in the third phrase by avoiding it altogether, allowing the phrase to come to rest briefly on middle C, a factor which would also have removed some of the difficulties presented by the instrumental phrasing of the original air in Petrie and Stanford's versions (see Figure 4.6 below):

Fig. 4.6 Weatherly, 'Danny Boy', bars 5–7

The two examples above ('The Little Red Lark' and 'Emer's farewell to Cucullain') show Graves's and Stanford's engagement with the antiquarian work of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and the influence of Petrie's collection, in particular, on their first collaboration. It also demonstrates that the collection and publication of a folksong did not necessarily halt the processes of variation and modification typical of oral transmission even within the Western art song tradition. The songs continued to evolve and change in details of rhythm, pitch, and word-setting as they were passed from poet to poet, from musician to musician, and even from publisher to publisher.

[33] Greene, p. 181.
[34] Audley, p. 207.
[35] F. E. Weatherly, *Danny Boy*, sung by Ernestine Schumann-Heink (Victor, 6276, 1917).

Stanford's collaboration with Graves was one of his more successful professional partnerships, and they published a second collection of thirty song settings, *Irish Songs and Ballads*, in 1893. This was followed by *Songs of Erin* in 1901, containing settings of fifty songs which Stanford dedicated to 'Her most gracious majesty Queen Victoria', declaring himself her loyal and devoted subject and servant.

4.3 Stanford as Editor: Moore's Melodies and the 'Complete' Petrie collection

In 1895, Stanford was given the opportunity to edit Moore's melodies in a new publication by Boosey. The title *The Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore: The original airs restored and arranged for the Voice* sets out his premise for the edition—restoring what he perceived to be the original modality of the melodies and providing harmonies which supported the modes involved. The edition included a preface which deplored the work of Stevenson in altering the scales and characteristic intervals of the melodies, while justifying his own 'modern' piano arrangements:

> For the accompaniments I can only say that they are frankly modern. As the melodies themselves were seldom or ever imagined from any but a monophonic standpoint, polyphony must be an interloper, no matter what its style. Therefore I have adopted a free form, while preserving in all cases the scale of the melody; for my view is (and I admit that there are two sides to the question) that the more vivid and the more in accordance with the spirit of the present age they can be made, the better their chance of bringing the force of the melodies home to the listener.[36]

This was exactly the stance to which the Folk Song Society would later take exception, and while Stanford seemed aware of objections, he was convinced that his own preferred approach was the appropriate one. Modern criticism has judged his arrangements to be more skilled and sensitive than those of previous editors such as Stevenson and Balfe, while faulting aspects of his scholarship with respect to Moore's sources.[37] Stanford included notes for each of the songs delineating the various alterations in the melodies which he attributed to Moore or Stevenson; however, in several examples, the mistake was Stanford's in identifying an incorrect

[36] C. V. Stanford, *The Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore: The original airs restored and arranged for the Voice* (London: Boosey, 1895), preface.
[37] Rodmell, p. 391. Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, pp. 263–64.

source for Moore's work. Greene, who had consulted with the twentieth-century scholar Donal O'Sullivan, described some such errors: for example, in the song 'Let Erin Remember', Stanford claimed that Moore altered Bunting's setting by halving the speed into a march; however, this tune appears in Bunting's last collection of 1840, thirty-three years after Moore published the song.[38] Greene pointed out that Moore's version is practically identical with Holden's version of 1806, which is therefore a more likely source of Moore's arrangement. Similar examples are quoted with respect to 'Silent O Moyle', where Stanford claimed that Moore destroyed the character of the tune and obliterated the scale by raising the seventh, essentially forcing a harmonic minor scale on a melody in the Aeolian mode. Greene identified the source as Holden (1806), which also has the raised seventh. In 'She is far from the land', which Stanford claimed was 'An air from Bunting's First Collection, of which Moore left scarcely a note unaltered', Greene claimed Moore's source was the Calliope collection of 1788, and that Moore did not change it at all. Greene concluded that Stanford had allowed misplaced loyalty to the airs to cloud his judgement in ascertaining the correct sources of Moore's melodies before levelling his criticism at imagined alterations.[39] However, this is not to exclude the possibility that Holden or the Calliope collectors had not themselves tampered with the traditional melodies.

Similar carelessness can be found in Stanford's editing of the Petrie manuscripts. The Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland had published Petrie's first collection of 147 airs in 1855; this was followed by a partial collection that Petrie had been working on at the time of his death in 1866, containing thirty-nine further airs and extensive notes by Petrie. This represented only a fraction of the tunes Petrie had collected, either personally or that were sent to him by other collectors in his capacity as President of the Society. Petrie's daughter gave the collection of over 2,000 tunes to Stanford after her father's death, which Stanford accepted with enthusiasm. The ILS commissioned the project, and Stanford continued working on it despite his resignation from the Society after 1900. The airs were reproduced without the piano accompaniments that had been added in the earlier collections, which Stanford deemed 'wholly unsuitable to their character', and modifications to the melodies which had appeared in the printed edition were

[38] Greene, p. 166–67.
[39] Ibid., p. 167.

removed. Stanford claimed that the new edition left Petrie's work untouched, noting only doubtful points as they occurred.[40] Greene worked directly with Stanford on the project, and recalls:

> He and I went through the Collection twice (later Mr. Cecil Forsyth, I believe, helped him with them) and I can remember our excitement as one beautiful tune after another turned up. Out of the 2,148 tunes some 500 (as stated in a note by Stanford) were duplicates or variants. There were also a few which though no doubt faithfully recorded, were not up to the standard of the rest. He produced eventually a set of 1,582 tunes, edited and annotated, whose authenticity, so far as we could see, was unshakable.[41]

The new collection was released in three volumes, (Part I, June, 1902; Part II, October 1902; Part III, June, 1905), before the complete work was issued in a single volume: *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as noted by George Petrie.* Greene admits that in spite of their care, many repetitions of the same tune escaped them, and the collection immediately garnered criticism on a number of other counts, including the lack of systematised arrangement (song airs, dances, marches, laments and hymns are mixed up together); lack of reference to Petrie's published notes from his earlier volumes; and errors in the copying and translating of Gaelic titles.[42] Rodmell also criticises Stanford for failing to ascertain the provenance of the melodies, and for the uncritical inclusion of an archetypically English folk song, 'Green Bushes'.[43] Rodmell notes that Stanford was 'unable in practice, and probably unwilling in theory, to check any of the transcriptions to see if they were accurate or to enquire into the veracity of their sources and probity of the contributors'.[44]

Greene, who was a friend and colleague of Stanford's, accepts his own share of blame for the errors but concludes that Stanford was 'not the right type of man for this work'.[45] Nonetheless, his transcriptions of the actual melodies are generally acknowledged as having been faithful to their source, and the publication did assist the revival project of bringing the full extent of Petrie's scholarship in this area to a much wider public.

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[40] Charles Villiers Stanford, *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as noted by George Petrie* (London: Boosey, 1905), preface.
[41] Greene, p. 178–79
[42] Donal O'Sullivan, 'The Petrie Collections of Irish Folk Music', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society,* 5 (1946), 1–12 (p. 2).
[43] Rodmell, p. 395.
[44] Ibid., p. 394.
[45] Greene, p. 167.

4.4 Stanford's Original Irish Songs

Stanford was a prolific composer of original art songs, although few of his early song compositions bear any relation to Ireland. His first song collection, *Eight Songs from 'The Spanish Gypsy'* was written between 1872 and 1874 and featured the poetry of George Eliot. With this collection, Hold claims, the young composer made a mark for himself as a songwriter to be watched.[46] Over the next thirty years, Stanford composed and published songs by many of the major poets of the day. He published two sets of songs by the German poet Heinrich Heine in 1874 and 1877. Other individual songs and collections followed, featuring lyrics by poets such as Keats, Shelley, Browning, Robert Louis Stevenson and Robert Bridges.

Prior to his first Irish song cycle published in 1901, Stanford's Irish song output was primarily confined to the arrangements of folksongs discussed above, with a few exceptions. Two early songs (1876) were composed to lyrics by Graves: 'Irish Eyes' and 'From the Red Rose'. In 1896, he published three original songs with lyrics by the Irish playwright George H. Jessop, 'The Calico Dress', 'Parted' and 'Where is the man?'. Jessop had written the libretto for Stanford's opera *Shamus O'Brien,* which enjoyed considerable popularity after its first performance that year.

His first collection of original art songs with an Irish theme and by an Irish poet was *An Irish Idyll* published by Boosey in 1901. This collection is note-worthy as the first Irish song-cycle using original composition rather than traditional melodies, and in this sense marks a significant departure from the Irish song collections previously discussed. Stanford chose lyrics from Moira O'Neill's poetry collection *Songs of the Glens of Antrim* for this first song-cycle.[47] Moira O'Neill was the pseudonym of Agnes Shakespeare Skrine (née Higginson), who was born in Antrim but lived in Canada for some years before returning to Ireland. Her poems were, by her own admission, 'written by a Glenswoman in the dialect of the Glens, and chiefly for the pleasure of other Glenspeople'.[48] The poems, which focus on scenes of domesticity, emigration, and nostalgia for Ireland, were extremely popular, and several were set by other composers, including Hamilton Harty and Carl Hardebeck.

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[46] Hold, pp. 43–44.
[47] Moira O'Neill, *Songs of the Glens of Antrim* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900).
[48] Ibid., preface.

An Irish Idyll is described on the title page as 'Six Miniatures', and each song presents a different scene and mood. The opening and closing songs ('Corrymeela' and 'Back to Ireland') deal with themes of exile and thoughts of returning to Ireland; 'Cuttin' Rushes' is an exulting song of youth and love; 'Johneen' describes a mother's pride in her young son; and 'A Broken Song' suggests the heartbreak of a lost love through a question-and-answer dialogue format. Despite Stanford's attractive piano accompaniments and strong melodies, the overly sentimental dialect verse used in some of the songs has not stood the test of time, and occasionally drifts into outright bigotry, for example, the following lines from 'Corrymeela':

> The people that's in England is richer nor the Jews,
> There' not the smallest young gossoon but thravels in his shoes!
> I'd give the pipe between me teeth to see a barefut child,
> *Och! Corrymeela an' the low south wind.*

Such lyrics and sentiments were commonplace at the time but pose difficulties for modern-day performers. The songs have been more successful where the lyrics are less contentious. One of the most popular of the songs from this collection was 'The Fairy Lough', a *berceuse* in 9/8 time that describes a magical scene of a lake with waters 'black and deep', visited by the fairy horsemen before dawn, with 'no-one there to see'. Here Stanford creates a sense of remoteness which begins with an impressionistic avoidance of key in the first motif, where an upbeat on the tonic chord of D major is followed by a borrowed chord from the parallel minor (♭III), a device conventionally used to convey awe or wonder (Figure 4.7):

Fig. 4.7 Stanford, 'The Fairy Lough', opening bars

Stanford uses the Schubertian device of nature motifs in his piano accompaniment: arpeggiated figures and triple metre times suggest wave-like motion; later as 'a little

wave runs up the shore', Stanford uses semiquaver figures which Greene rather charmingly described as waves that 'laugh under their breath' (Figure 4.8):[49]

Fig. 4.8 Stanford, 'The Fairy Lough', bars 36–38

The song barely breaks out of the tranquil atmosphere set at the beginning: the only dynamic markings are between ***p*** and ***ppp***, and even when the horsemen arrive towards the end of the song, indicated by a dotted 'trotting' figure, the dynamic is not disturbed (Figure 4.9):

Fig. 4.9 Stanford, 'The Fairy Lough', bars 51–54

In 1910, Stanford published another set of original songs, *Cushendall*, using poems from the Belfast poet John Stevenson's collection *Pat M'Carty*.[50] Pat M'Carty was an alter-ego adopted by the poet as a riposte to common caricatures of the Irish. Stevenson describes these stereotypes of contemporary literature in an introduction to the volume:

> Of Ireland the average Englishman knows little. Of Irishmen he knows two kinds. Travellers who have landed at Dublin and penetrated to Glasnevin, or followed the coastline as far as Howth, have described one of these in numerous books and magazine articles. Associated with pigs, sticks, and potatoes, he is found wearing a tattered old hat, a long-tailed

[49] Greene, p. 209.
[50] John Stevenson, *Pat M'Carty: Farmer, of Antrim* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903).

> coat of grey homespun, knee-breeches, and ventilated shoes. Nature has given him a long upper-lip and a nose turned skyward. He says, "Tare an' ages, ye spalpeen, holy murther, the divil, array, be jabers," and more to that pattern. His wife is himself in a minor key. She says "The saints preserve us" with any communication circumstances may require. Her name is Norah; she dusts a chair with her apron and curtsies very nicely to an Englishman.
>
> He of the second class is mystic, wonderful. Our knowledge of him is from the poets. His background is of wolf-dogs and round towers, his gaze is backward to the old time of collars of gold, and he carries a harp, for his use of which please see Moore's Irish melodies.
>
> Strange to say, we who have been born and bred on the island have not been able to find the Englishman's Irishmen. The failure may be due to lack of powers of observation, or to the common inability to see the wood for trees.[51]

The first caricature addressed by Stevenson is reminiscent of the blatantly racist cartoons of *Punch* magazine from the middle of the nineteenth century, depicting the Irish as simian types or latterly as dim-witted gombeen-men with the obligatory pig and shillelagh.[52] The second type is a product of the romanticism espoused by Moore, and is equally rejected by the poet. Instead, Pat M'Carty is a variant of the stereotype, a man who is neither 'consistently ignorant nor learned', a hard-working farmer with a rudimentary education, who possesses a love of nature and a humorous side which moves him to express himself in dialect verse. Stevenson intersperses M'Carty's verse with prose descriptions of the man, his life, and the various cast of characters who make up his community, creating a portrait that is both touching and mildly satirical. Of the verses, Stanford chose seven to set to music, opening with 'Ireland', a hymn-like tribute to his homeland. 'Did you ever?', 'Cushendall', 'How does the Wind Blow' and 'Night' reflect the nostalgia of the exile for Ireland, a theme to which Stanford would frequently return. These are balanced by two humorous songs: 'Daddy-Long-Legs' and 'The Crow', which show a side of Stanford not always considered in the criticism of his works. With his family's legal background, Stanford must have enjoyed setting Stevenson's 'The Crow', the first verse of which reads:

If men hae got their coonterpairts
Amang the birds, the craw
Wi' a' his cuteness and his airts
Is sure the man o' law.
He's got the impudence and cheek
That skill in thievin' brings,

[51] Ibid., introductory.
[52] Donal Casey, '19th-Century Irish "Ape-Man" Cartoons and the Aesthetic of the Grotesque' (unpublished master's thesis, TCD, 2015).

He wears a black coat a' the week—
He's got a lang attorney beak
For pokin' into things.[53]

Stanford chooses a minor key and a tempo of *Andante moderato* for the setting of this poem, with a deft use of dynamics and articulation to underscore the humour of the text, for example in the juxtaposition of the low tessitura of the 'stern and grim' crow (i.e., the 'man of law') with the whimsical treatment of the narrator's tongue-in-cheek pronouncement on his wisdom (Figure 4.10); or in the syncopated stabbing chords in the accompaniment as the crow 'kills a slug or twa' (Figure 4.11):

Fig. 4.10 Stanford, 'The Crow', bars 18–21

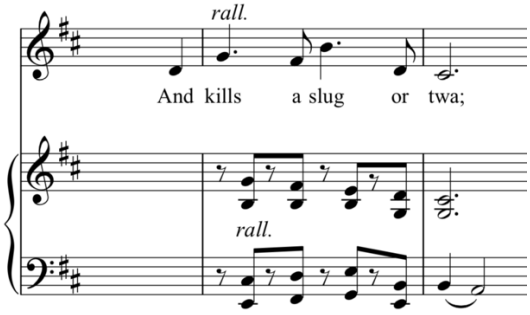

Fig. 4.11 Stanford, 'The Crow', bars 34–36

In 'Daddy-Long-Legs', Pat M'Carty muses on the wonder of the insect with its incongruous long legs. The piano prelude and interludes to the song suggest the insect's long ungainly legs, both visually in the cross-beaming across the staves and the leap of a tenth before the voice enters (Figure 4.12). Stanford wittily injects a brief quotation of Brunhilde's 'Fire' motif from Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the point where the insect tries to avoid the flame (Fig 4.13):

[53] Stevenson, *Pat M'Carty*, p. 147.

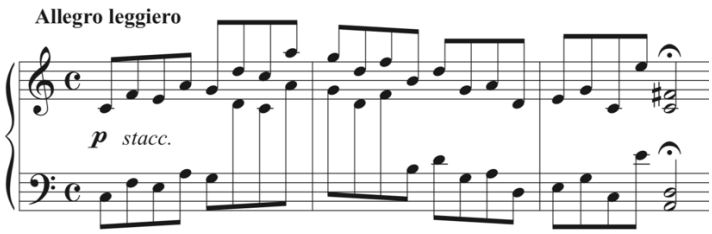

Fig. 4.12 Stanford, 'Daddy-Long-Legs', opening bars

Fig. 4.13 Stanford, 'Daddy-Long-Legs', bars 58–61

Stanford's next two song collections were completed in 1913: *A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster*, and *A Fire of Turf,* to the poetry of Winifred M. Letts. Born in England in 1882 to an English father and Irish mother, Letts spent many childhood holidays in Ireland in her grandparents' home near the Phoenix Park.[54] Aged sixteen, she persuaded her parents to move her from a boarding school in England to Alexandra College in Dublin, eventually moving to Dublin with her mother after her father's death in 1904. She was active throughout the revival period, when she became the second woman (after Lady Gregory) to have a play performed on the stage of the Abbey Theatre, as well as publishing several novels and children's books.[55] Her first published poem was 'Blackberry Time', which was published in the *Spectator*, by Charles Graves (Alfred Perceval Graves's brother) who was editor at the time. Further poems were published by the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Saturday Review,* before being gathered up and published in a volume, *Songs from Leinster,* in 1913.[56] Letts credits Charles Graves with finding her a publisher for the poems. He also encouraged her and suggested she write words for songs and may have introduced

[54] Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Letts, Winifred M.' in *DIB* <https://dib-cambridge-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=18440F06F41B0A32E1C152C55F575192> [accessed 4 June 2021]
[55] Winifred M. Letts, *The Eyes of the Blind,* premiered in the Abbey Theatre on Easter Monday, 1 April 1907. <https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/archives/production_detail/147/> [accessed 29 April 2019]
[56] Winifred M. Letts, *Songs from Leinster* (London: Smith, Elder, 1913).

her to Stanford. In an interview in the *Irish Times* in 1969, Letts (then aged eighty-seven) described the collaboration with Stanford:

> I wrote these poems in a musical type of language, then a musician would arrange them for a singer. Plunkett Green [sic] was singing Irish melodies then and Stanford arranged 13 of my poems for him to use in his recitals. Then Stanford wrote the music for my poem 'A Soft Day' and it was one of the best songs at the Feis. I think that I got most pleasure out of the fact that Kathleen Ferrier loved the song so much, I felt very proud that she was singing my words.[57]

Academic David Clare, who published a recent appreciation of Winifred Letts, notes how the poet positioned herself as an Irish writer, despite her English birth.[58] Her first poem in the collection, 'The Harbour', seems to be autobiographical in nature and implies that the writer was born in Wexford, causing some confusion in later biographies.[59] Letts seemed to have allowed this confusion, as she did with her middle name, (actually Mabel), but frequently assumed to be Mary. She also wrote poetry and other literature that suggests a fascination with Roman Catholicism and Marian devotion, despite her Protestant upbringing and affiliation. She firmly established herself as a revivalist writer through the use of Hiberno-English and her preoccupation with rural subjects. She would later become known as a World War I poet, and also wrote novels and children's literature, including *The Mighty Army: Lives of the Saints* (1912) and *St Patrick the Travelling Man* (1933).

Stanford set thirteen of her poems: seven in *A Fire of Turf* (out of nine poems Letts included in this cycle) and six in *A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster.* Stanford was particularly taken with Letts's poetry, evidently convinced of her Irish credentials. In a letter to John Pentland Mahaffy (the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin), Stanford referred to Letts, saying 'Such poets are rare birds: and the ones which smell of the real genuine turf are rarer still.'[60] Both of these collections were composed towards the end of 1913, at a time when Stanford was preoccupied with the issue of Home Rule in Ireland. He expressed his frustrations and anxieties in a series of letters to *The Times* declaring that Home Rule was not wanted and would make unionists

[57] Maeve Binchy, 'Talking to Winifred M. Letts', *Irish Times*, 22 April 1969, p. 6.
[58] David Clare, 'An Appreciation of Winifred Letts', Irish Women's Writing (1880–1920) Network <https://irishwomenswritingnetwork.com/2019/03/13/an-appreciation-of-winifred-letts/> [accessed 28 April 2019]
[59] Even as late as 1996, *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* gives her place of birth as Wexford. Letts was, in fact, born in Salford in England. Robert Welch, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* (Oxford: OUP, 1996).
[60] Stanford to Mahaffy, 5 May 1917. Dublin, Trinity College, MS 2075/270. Quoted in Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, p. 330.

outside Ulster highly vulnerable.[61] *A Fire of Turf* is a highly nostalgic portrait of an idealised Ireland, referencing the passing of time and youth, and can be interpreted as a deeply personal reflection on the unwanted winds of change in his homeland.

As in the earlier collections, Stanford balances nostalgia with humour, allowing the songs to progress as a cohesive song cycle. Throughout, the accompaniment has figures which reference earlier material, giving consistency to the work as a whole. The title song of *A Fire of Turf* opens the cycle in D major (in the setting for lower voices), describing the cutting and drying of turf in summer, in order to protect against 'the time of snow, black frost, a gale from the north'. By his fire in the wintertime, the protagonist is thus protected from the elements but not from the progress of time. A livelier middle section uses a semiquaver figure in the accompaniment to suggest 'a barefoot child', a device which is also used later in the cycle and adds a light-hearted piquancy contrasting with the more reflective sections. 'The Chapel on the Hill' continues in this nostalgic vein, describing childhood days 'on the green hillside'. Letts's poetry includes Catholic references: the 'stations on the wall' and the reciting of the rosary 'each evening in the Maytime'. Stanford's setting responds with a hymn-like melody in D modal minor, using interspersed plagal cadences to reinforce the idea of the sacred space. The 'bare feet' make further appearances with remembrances of the cold of the chapel floor and the boys' feet 'patting up the aisle'. A *tierce de Picardie* ends the song as the protagonist remembers the noonday sunshine 'caught in Mary Connor's hair'.

'Cowslip Time' is a lively pastoral with a delicate piano accompaniment. The shift up a semitone to the key of E♭ major and an *allegro piacevole* tempo marking sets the scene for a celebration of Spring that contrasts with the solemnity of the preceding songs. It is followed by 'Scared', a character piece in C minor, full of superstitions and colourful word-painting. References to 'the Taxman murdered there by the wall' and 'Old crazy Nelly or mad John Byrne' are suggestive of darker themes, but are not explored here, apart from their potential to scare a child.

'Blackberry Time' sets Letts's first published piece, which she claims was inspired by an old woman who called selling blackberries and stopped to tell about collecting blackberries in the dawn with the dew lying heavy on the ground, and the weariness of the long days working. Stanford sets the text in E major and uses a

[61] Stanford to *The Times,* 9 April 1914, p. 10.

perpetuum mobile figure with a syncopated bass in the piano suggesting the busyness of 'the poor that thravels round upon their feet'. The piano comes to a sudden, brief pause as the travellers momentarily rest, before again resuming its incessant motion. This is followed by 'The Fair' in D major, a lively patter song describing the protagonist's pride in his 'fine new ass-and-cart', as he sets off to the fair.

The cycle concludes with 'The West Wind' which is the most substantial song in the collection. The song opens with the stillness of the night before a storm which Stanford paints with a lyrical melodic line and gentle piano accompaniment. In bar 22 a *più mosso* marking picks up the tempo to the words 'But after dawn the gale awoke'; thereafter the storm is described with semiquaver runs, accented syllables, *crescendi* and further accelerations in the tempo as the wind comes 'across the Wicklow hills' and visits a litany of other familiar Irish placenames: Lough Nahanagan, the Vale of Clara, Glenmacross, Glenmalure, Glendalough, and Glencullen causing havoc in its wake. The song finishes with a heartfelt plea that the 'wild wind from the distant west' will be still again, recalling the gentler music of the beginning.

Themes of loss, nostalgia for past days and exile continue in the second set of songs to Letts's poetry, *A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster*, which includes one of Stanford's most popular settings, 'A Soft Day'; a patter song in his humorous vein, 'The Bold Unbiddable Child'; and one of his loveliest offerings, 'Irish Skies' to conclude the collection. 'Irish Skies' is full of the nostalgia of the emigrant for the skies around south County Dublin (See Figure 4.14):

Fig. 4.14 Stanford, 'Irish Skies', opening bars

The song opens in C modal minor with yearning arpeggios leading to a melancholy melodic line contrasting the grey streets and skies of London with the softer 'pearl' and 'buff' clouds of Ireland. When the lyrics recall the 'far Glencullen road', Stanford switches to C major, momentarily bringing the sun out, before returning to the minor when the city scapes are again brought back. The accompaniment is based on a pattern of semiquaver arpeggios followed by a crotchet; the repetition of this figure suggests the relentless turning of the days in London, contrasted with a simpler motion from bar 6 in response to the wistful 'I wish I were in Ireland'. The song is largely strophic in form with only minor differences between the first four verses in

the melodic line. Stanford uses the piano accompaniment to vary the texture and to fill in the emotional landscape. The fifth verse provides the melodic and emotional climax as the poet dreams of the Wicklow hills, 'and ev'ry hill and valley there brimful of radiant mist'. The final verse returns to C modal minor as the poet wakes to realise he is still among the London streets and calls for a blessing on 'the far off roads'.

His final Irish collection was *Six Songs from the Glens of Antrim*, which was published after the first World War in 1920. For this, he returned to the poetry of Moira O'Neill. Like the previous collections, the collection contained a mix of genres including an opening lament for a deceased young girl ('Denny's daughter'), a patter song ('The Sailor Man'), a nostalgic song of the emigrant ('Lookin' back'), a song in celebration of the sea and the Antrim coastline ('At Sea'), a simple love song ('I mind the day'), and a concluding ballad telling the story of a young adventurer who leaves his young love and homeland, only to return a rich man after she has died ('The Boy from Ballytearim'). This collection marks Stanford's last significant 'Irish' song collection.

4.5 Reception and Legacy

As a teacher of composition at the RCM, Stanford oversaw the instruction of a whole generation of composers, including Samuel Coleridge Taylor, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, Ivor Gurney, Herbert Howells, the Anglo-Irish composer Ernest John Moeran, and the Irish-born composer Charles Wood. These composers, with their professors Parry and Stanford, were to give rise to the idea of an 'English Musical Renaissance'. Rodmell notes that, as Stanford's students became significant composers in their own right, their achievements tended to overshadow his, and in his later years Stanford became increasingly disenchanted with the course of modern music as even his students steadily disregarded his more conservative beliefs.[62] He outlined his view of the importance of aesthetic beauty and technical facility in a 1922 treatise titled *Musical Composition*:

[62] Ibid., pp. 341–73.

> It is not necessary, in order to depict an ugly character or a horrible situation, to illustrate it with ugly music. To do so is the worst side of bad art. Ugly music is bad music. […] No composer of inherent nobility will so sacrifice the most noble of the arts.[63]

This conservatism set Stanford in direct opposition to the German Expressionist composers of the early twentieth century who were beginning to explore darker emotions through the use of atonality, angular melodies, extreme contrasts in dynamics and the distortion of melody and harmony, all of which were anathema to Stanford's aesthetic ideal. In a comment comparing Stanford to the French composer Saint-Saëns, Banfield sums up the dilemma both composers faced in 'trying to maintain a moderate, mainstream approach to compositional technique in the late-Romantic period when there was no longer any mainstream to follow.'[64] Banfield considers that Stanford's failure to find an individual voice or to align with any particular school gave his compositions a 'curiously emasculated style'. Yet there is evidence to suggest that Stanford had some success in founding a school of his own among Irish composers who followed his lead. Hamilton Harty is perhaps the composer who had the greatest similarity of approach: he set many of the texts that Stanford had first chosen. Later, Stanford returned the compliment. Charles Wood was a pupil of Stanford and composed several Irish songs that evince a clear debt to Stanford's work. These later song compositions will be considered in the following chapters.

In *Sensibility and English Song,* Banfield categorised Stanford as a 'Reticent Victorian', and claimed that Stanford's attachment to Ireland was 'the one fixed point in Stanford's career as a song composer'.[65] The 'reticence' refers to a critical perception that has judged Stanford's music as professional and polished, but conservative in innovation and restrained in emotional landscape. Rodmell, in a lengthy and considered essay on Stanford's compositional style, suggested that his renowned fluency may have also been a weakness.[66] Stanford's ability to turn out polished scores without draft or sketch was legendary. His contemporary Harry Plunket Greene, who sang in many of the first performances of Stanford's song

[63] Charles Villiers Stanford, *Musical Composition* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 86.
[64] Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, p. 32
[65] Banfield, p. 32.
[66] Rodmell, pp. 374–417.

compositions and arrangements, referred to the 'dizzy speed' at which he composed.[67] The composer Thomas Dunhill, another student of Stanford's, claimed:

> The ease with which he trampled over all difficulties and rode straight ahead with unhesitating purpose reminds one of Mozart. He scarcely ever made a sketch. Even complicated orchestral works were written straight into the score, in ink, without previous preparation. He scarcely ever made an alteration, or needed to make one.[68]

Critics of Stanford's work argue that this facility in composition can indicate a lack of self-criticism or technical superficiality. Stanford's compositional style also attracted criticism for its eclecticism and lack of individuality. He was a gifted mimic: in his *Ode to Discord: A Chemerical Bombination in four Bursts* (a skit on contemporary compositional trends), his ability to parody Wagner and Richard Strauss was, according to Banfield, 'convincing enough to make one wish he could take their idioms as serious models'.[69] He could parody other composers with ease—Brahms, Grieg, Tchaikovsky and Handel were all subjected to his musical wit. He was equally eclectic in his choice of poets: apart from Irish poets, he set poetry by Shakespeare, George Eliot, Walt Whitman, Heinrich Heine, and Alfred Tennyson. Geoffrey Bush, who edited Volume 52 of *Musica Brittanica* (featuring the songs of Stanford) claimed that:

> there are few human emotions between tears and laughter on which he did not touch, and he was as much at ease working on a vast heroic scale ("Prospice") as he was writing an exquisite miniature thirteen bars long ("To carnations").[70]

While this versatility was a testament to Stanford's genuine facility as a composer, it has been viewed as problematic. With respect to the variety of the poetry Stanford chose to set, Hold remarked that 'the very eclecticism makes one question Stanford's literary discrimination and ask whether he had any clear literary touchstone'.[71] Ryan suggests that the 'Irish note' in Stanford's music was another such identity, a 'mantle to be assumed and discarded at will; it was not central to his creative personality and many of his works bear no trace of it.'[72]

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[67] Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford*, p. 113.
[68] Thomas Dunhill, 'Charles Villiers Stanford: Some aspects of his Work and Influence', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 53 (1926), 41–65, p. 45.
[69] Banfield, p. 32
[70] C. V. Stanford, *Six Songs for Medium Voice* ed. by Geoffrey Bush (London: Stainer & Bell, 1978), introduction. *Musica Britannica: A National Collection of Music*, 104 vols (London: Stainer & Bell, 1951–2021), LII: *C. Villiers Stanford: Songs* ed. by Geoffrey Bush (1986).
[71] Hold, p. 57.
[72] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, p. 246

Such criticisms themselves merit further scrutiny as they suggest that, for a composer to be taken seriously, their music should reflect fidelity to a particular creative direction. From such a perspective, Stanford's eclecticism and prolific output suggests a dilettante who failed to establish his own compositional voice. Yet this argument is itself problematic—Stanford was vocal on what he considered good composition and rejected the experimentation of later twentieth-century composition. His compositional style was anachronistic in the eyes of his younger contemporaries, but nonetheless demonstrated his fidelity to a rapidly disappearing aesthetic.

Although Stanford's legacy has undergone some rehabilitation in recent decades, his contribution to Irish cultural life during the years of the Revival has yet to be fully acknowledged. His professional standing as a musician lent credence to the folk song movement and the early days of the Feis Ceoil. His work as an editor and arranger of Moore's melodies and the Petrie Collection, while flawed, introduced Irish songs to a much wider audience, and several remain in active recital repertory today. His folk song arrangements carried on a somewhat contentious tradition set in train by Bunting and Moore almost a century earlier. This tradition continues in various forms to the present day. His years of editing and arranging Irish airs informed his approach to songwriting, which advocated the precedence of melody and the value of simplicity in composition. He made a unique contribution to Irish song literature as the first composer of original art songs that could be said to be in a recognisably Irish idiom. His corpus of Irish songs contain many fine examples of songwriting and were influential on other composers who followed his lead in both arranging traditional airs and in creating original Irish songs. These developments are surveyed in the following chapters.

5. Educators and Revivalists

This chapter surveys the contribution of three leading musical educators to the Revival, with a particular focus on their songs, including those written for stage works. The Italian pianist and composer Michele Esposito (1855–1929) spent more than forty years working in Dublin, where he is remembered for the distinguished school of piano playing which he founded at the RIAM, and for the influence he exerted on musical activities in the city and throughout the country. His contributions to the Revival are less celebrated, including works on Irish themes written for the Feis Ceoil, a song cycle, folk song arrangements and collaborations with writers for the stage.

Annie Patterson (1868–1934) was a music educator and composer who had the distinction of becoming the first woman in Ireland and Britain to receive a Doctorate of Music. She was an enthusiastic Gaelic League supporter and wrote songs in Irish and English promoting revival interests. She is particularly credited for her role in the founding of the Feis Ceoil.

John F. Larchet (1884–1967) was based in Dublin and also had a marked impact on the musical life of the city. He both completed his musical education and built a subsequent career in Ireland at a time when many composers were forced to leave the country to make a living elsewhere. He is best remembered as a teacher and advocate for music and music education in Ireland and had a particular affection for Ireland's folk and literary traditions. While his output of original music was small, his work brought him to the very centre of the Irish Cultural Revival, and his compositional output was marked by the influence of that movement for decades thereafter.

5.1 Michele Esposito

Born in Castellammare di Stabia, Naples in 1855, Esposito received his early musical education in the city's Conservatorio di San Pietro a Majella. His early compositions included short piano pieces, chamber works and songs, some of which were published by Ricordi and its principal Italian rival, Lucca. In 1878, he left Naples for Paris, where he came into contact with prominent French musicians including Saint-Saëns, Massenet and Gounod, although he failed to secure regular employment. When Luigi Caracciolo (a former acquaintance of Esposito's from his student days at the Conservatorio) informed him of a vacancy for a piano teacher at the RIAM, Esposito applied for and secured the position.[1] His subsequent activities in Dublin left little time for composition as his reputation as a teacher and recitalist grew, and he became increasingly involved with all aspects of musical activity in his adopted city.

When the idea of a national festival of music was being mooted in the late 1890s, Esposito lobbied with Annie Patterson for a cosmopolitan approach to the programming of music. In this, they were more successful than Stanford, and their efforts resulted in the inclusion of competitions for classically trained musicians and composers when the Feis Ceoil was subsequently founded.[2] The composition competitions of the Feis Ceoil were open to Irish composers as well as those who had been resident in Ireland for three years or more. This circumstance may have encouraged Esposito to return to composing. Over the ensuing years, his compositional output shows a marked interest in Irish influences, with some pieces specifically composed to meet the requirements of the Feis Ceoil syllabus. The pedagogue in Esposito may also have taken the opportunity to demonstrate how the heritage of traditional music might be used in a 'modern' context.

Esposito advocated for a school of Irish composition, but in an interview given in February 1906, he claimed that the vast store of thematic material in the melodies might be developed according to modern methods, but that there was 'too much loose thinking on the subject'.[3] He argued that a school of national expression would not be achieved through any obvious devices:

[1] Jeremy Dibble, 'Esposito, Michele' in *EMIR,* I, pp. 358–61.
[2] Ibid., p. 359.
[3] J. H. Cousins , 'Irish music – a chance for Irish composers', *Irish Independent*, 19 February 1906, p. 4.

> Your lovely Irish airs are not Irish because they are written in a particular mode. They are Irish because they are the expression of the emotions of Irish people. You will not get a school of Irish music by any mechanical means. The music that the future will call Irish will be written by Irishmen, and will be Irish by virtue of something of his race—consciousness which his music will set free—no matter what his creed or political opinions may be.[4]

In his own original compositions, Esposito attempted to show how such a response might be formulated. Like many of the composers considered in this study, however, his first works in an Irish vein were instrumental arrangements of Irish airs. In 1896, he published piano arrangements of two of Moore's melodies 'Avenging and Bright' and 'Though the last glimpse of Erin' (The Coolin), as *Two Irish Melodies* for piano, with the Dublin publishers Pigott and Co. This was followed by *Three Irish Melodies* for voice and piano: 'O, Hush O!', denoted as 'A Southern Lullaby'; 'The Heather Glen', based on the air 'An Smachtaoin crón' ('The little brown mallet') from P. W. Joyce's collection; and 'Movourneen Mine' which used the air of 'The Wheelwright' from the Bunting collection. Esposito dedicated the three songs to A. P. Graves, but utilised lyrics by the poet and physician George Sigerson. Sigerson was a well-known figure in the Literary Revival, succeeding Douglas Hyde as president of the NLS in 1893, a position he held until his death in 1925. Further folksong arrangements followed, including 'The Lark in the Clear Air' (lyrics by Samuel Ferguson to a tune collected by his wife, Mary), and 'The West's Awake!' (lyrics by Thomas Davis).

Esposito's cantata *Deirdre*, for soloists, chorus and orchestra, marked his first major engagement with the revival movement. Written for the inaugural Feis Ceoil of 1897, the cantata's libretto was specially written by T. W. Rolleston, also a prominent leader of the NLS, having been one of the founding members and first Secretary of the ILS in London.[5] The myth of *Deirdre* or *The Lamentable Fate of the Sons of Usnach* became a potent symbol for Irish Celticism and provided inspiration for several revival projects. The earliest mention of the story dates back to a twelfth century manuscript known as the *Book of Leinster*, now housed in TCD. In 1808, the Gaelic scholar Theophilus O'Flanagan published the Deirdre story in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin*.[6] The text was reprinted in the journal of the Gaelic League in 1884, and Douglas Hyde published a verse translation in *The*

[4] Ibid.
[5] W. P. Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p. 60.
[6] Theophilus O'Flanagan, 'Deirdri [sic], or the Lamentable Fate of the Sons of Usnach', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin* (Dublin: John Barlow, 1808), 1–177.

Three Sorrows of Story-telling and Ballades of St Columkille in 1895. Later adaptations included a translation by Lady Augusta Gregory in *Cuchulain of Muirthmne*, published in 1902, and John Millington Synge's play *Deirdre of the Sorrows,* written in 1909. Yeats and George Russell also wrote plays based on the story.

Esposito's setting of Rolleston's three-part libretto is arranged for three soloists, chorus and orchestra. The story concerns three main protagonists: Deirdre, the ill-fated heroine betrothed to the High King; Naisi, a warrior and chief of Usna's clan; and Fergus, agent of the High King, bent on retribution when Deirdre elopes with Naisi. The chorus acts as a narrator of the story. Dibble has reviewed the work in detail in his biography of Esposito, noting Wagnerian touches: in particular, Deirdre's longing for death and the radiant conclusion to the cantata recalling the denouement of Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*.[7] Dibble argues that the cantata's treatment of the main characters Deirdre and Naisi as anti-heroes anticipates the new emotional levels found in later dramas by Yeats and Synge.

The composition won the Cantata Prize at the Feis Ceoil and was given its first performance on the 20th of May 1897 with Esposito conducting. A review in the *Freeman's Journal* noted that the composer had avoided any attempt to use 'characteristic Irish strains', and that the composition was entirely in the manner of the great modern writers of the continent.[8] With this approach, Esposito demonstrated that Irish subject matter could be treated with a modern musical language, rather than depending on historical airs to carry the text. *Deirdre* was Esposito's most substantial work up to that point, and it did much to establish his reputation as a composer. The cantata was also performed in London at the promenade concerts at Queen's Hall in February 1898.

The work prompted further collaborations between Esposito and senior revival figures. In 1901, Esposito completed two collaborations with A. P. Graves: a vocal suite, *Roseen Dhu* and a one-act operetta, *The Post Bag: A Lesson in Irish.* Unlike *Deirdre*, both made extensive use of Irish melodies.

The title *Roseen Dhu* is from the Irish *Roisín Dubh* ('Dark Rosaleen' or 'little dark rose'), the name of a sixteenth-century *aisling* or dream-poem attributed to the

[7] Dibble, *Esposito*, pp. 65–72.
[8] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 May 1897, p. 6.

poet Costello, a Franciscan friar in Ballyhaunis, Mayo.[9] Various translations were published during the nineteenth century (including a highly nationalistic version by James Clarence Mangan in 1846) cementing the poem's reputation as a political allegory, where 'Roisín Dubh' was understood to represent Ireland. This association was well-known in Revival Ireland, yet Graves's collection of poems has little in common with the original excepting its evocative title and a background of imminent war.

Graves included an 'Argument' with the songs, setting out a rather convoluted story of an Irish patriot during the seventeenth-century Jacobite wars, and his doomed love for 'Roseen Dhu'. Graves's sentimental poetry lacks the majesty and pathos of the original but retains some of the nationalistic references:

> For Erin's sake I've face the field of slaughter,
> I've shared her smiles and mixed with hers my tears,
> And oh! her rarest, fairest, fondest daughter
> Is now my rose of hope, my rue of fears.[10]

In this storyline, however, the love affair is a simple mortal one lacking allegorical references, although 'Roseen' refuses to be parted from her lover as he sets out for battle, staying with him and urging him onward 'for Erin's sake'. She eventually falls by his side at the Siege of Limerick (1690), moments before victory.

Figure 5.1 shows the inside plate for the song cycle, advertising the connection with the internationally acclaimed Irish baritone Denis O'Sullivan who premiered the work at St James's Hall in London in 1901 and also performed the cycle at the Feis Ceoil in Dublin in 1902, with Esposito accompanying on both occasions.[11]

[9] Although the origins are disputed, Ferguson attributed the poem to the Franciscan friar Costello in a review of James Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy* in 1834. Samuel Ferguson, 'Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy.– No. II', *Dublin University Magazine,* 4 (1834), 152–67, (p. 157).
[10] Michele Esposito and A. P. Graves, *Roseen Dhu: Irish Vocal Suite* (London: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1901), p. 3.
[11] Dibble, *Esposito*, p. 198.

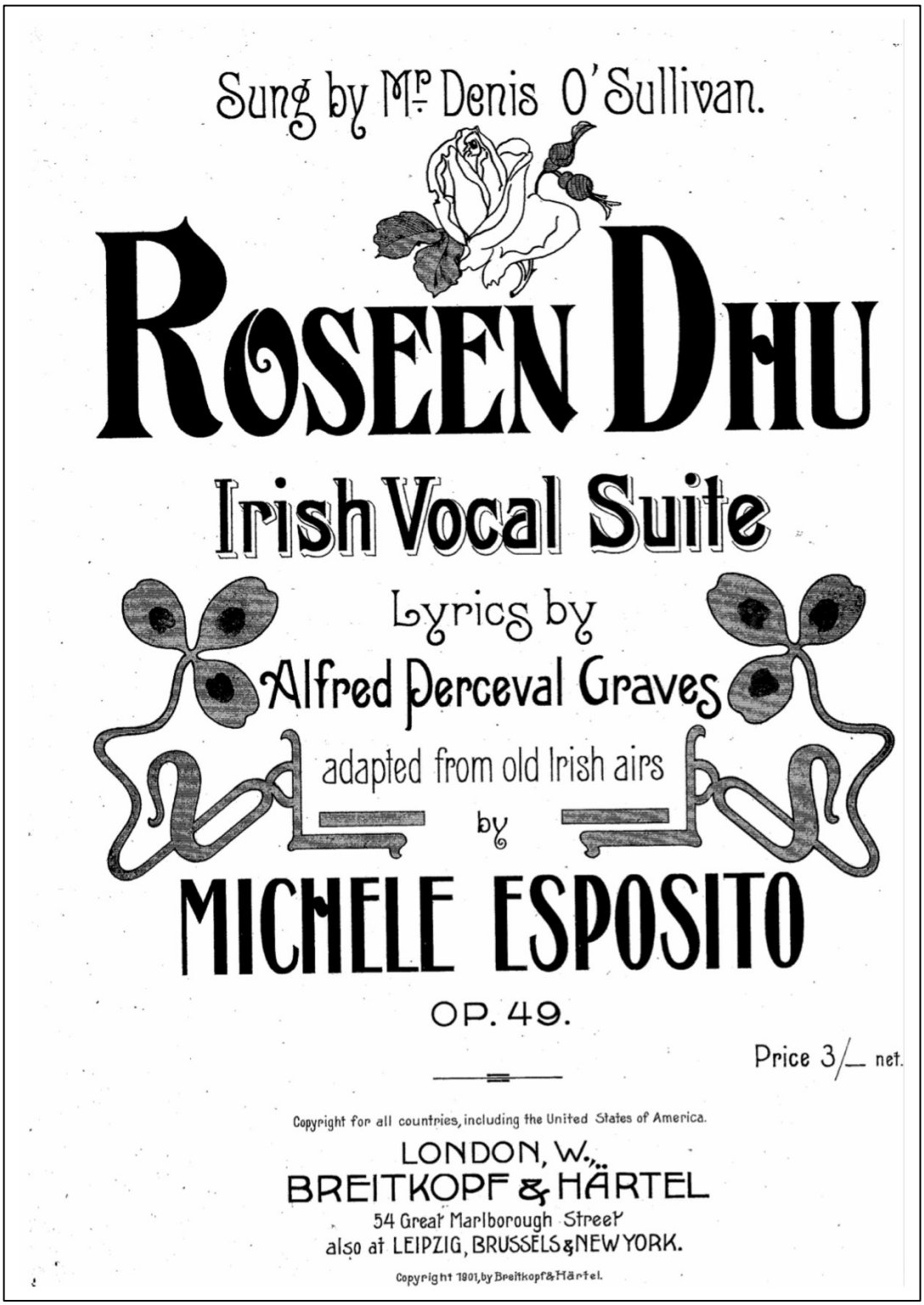

Fig. 5.1 Plate from the song cycle *Roseen Dhu,* arr. by Esposito.

This plate and the front cover feature images of roses and shamrocks. The rose has an obvious link to both the protagonist's beloved and the mystical name for Ireland, but it is also the national flower of England, and the juxtaposition may be deliberate, allowing a certain ambiguity suggestive of a shared, if unequal, history. The song cycle concludes with a victory for the Irish (Jacobite) army at the Siege of Limerick, thus allowing a triumphant end after tragedy. Historically, however, the victory was a temporary one, as the Irish were decisively defeated by Williamite forces the following year, leading to the fall of the city and the establishment of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Under the terms of the Treaty of Limerick, the defeated armies were permitted to travel to France and to serve under James II there; an exodus which became known in Irish history as the 'Flight of the Wild Geese'.

Esposito used existing Irish airs to set Graves's poetry and seems to have exercised careful judgement in matching the airs to the context of the poems. 'Is it True?' is set to the Irish air 'The Wild Geese', matching the story to a traditional air which commemorated the same events. 'She Stood at my side', which details Roseen's untimely end, is set to 'M'Donough's Lamentation', a tune first making its appearance in print in Neal's 1724 collection of celebrated Irish tunes.[12] 'The Clarion's Call' uses an air from Bunting's 1840 collection.

The vocal suite shows Esposito at his most conservative, re-using existing melodies with accompaniments in a style typical of *Lieder*. However, the work bears all the hallmarks of Graves's influence. Marrying new lyrics to existing melodies, with grand (if sentimental) gestures towards nationalist tropes was typical of the Irish poet. In 'My Rose of Hope' (Figure 5.2), Esposito indicates that the tune is 'If sadly thinking', a reference to lyrics set by the orator and judge John Philpot Curran (1750–1817) to the Irish air 'The Deserter'. These lyrics had been commissioned for George Thomson's 1814 publication *A Select Collection of Original Irish Airs for the Voice*, along with a rather incongruous arrangement by Beethoven for voice, piano, violin and cello (Figure 5.3). The melody in Esposito's setting has minor differences of rhythm and pitch to Beethoven's, some of which can be accounted for by requirements of Graves's lyrics, and which again demonstrate that such processes of change and variation were not limited to oral transmission alone.

[12] John and William Neal, *A Collection of the most celebrated Irish tunes proper for the violin, German flute or hautboy, Dublin 1724,* ed. by Nicholas Carolan (Dublin: ITMA, 2010)

Fig. 5.2 Esposito, 'My Rose of Hope', opening bars

Fig. 5.3 Facsimile of 'The Deserter', arr. Beethoven.

Graves and Esposito collaborated again in 1902 with a commission by the ILS for a stage work, a one-act ballad opera called *The Post Bag: A Lesson in Irish*. The opera had its premiere at St George's Hall in London in January 1902, where the orchestral accompaniment consisted of two pianos, expanded to include a pit orchestra under Esposito's direction at the Irish premiere at the Gaiety Theatre on the 14th of March.[13] The story is set in Connemara, where Seaghan (a role premiered by Denis O'Sullivan) and Phelim (Joseph O'Mara) compete for the attentions of Kitty O'Hea (played by the American-born soprano Evangeline Florence). Kitty receives a letter from America where her lover Brian O'Blake has gone in search of work. The more private parts of the letter are written in Irish, a language she has difficulty understanding. The action of the play centres around two suitors deliberately mis-translating the letter in order to place O'Blake in a bad light and to advance their own respective suits. The work is a light-hearted farce in the 'stage-Irish' style popular at the time, and Esposito again made use of Irish folk tunes for individual songs and ensemble pieces. A review in the *Irish Times* commended the ensemble cast: 'All three artists sang with rare ability' while 'Miss Florence has a very sweet soprano voice, and she has histrionic abilities of a high order'.[14] The unnamed reviewer also praised the music as 'bright and tuneful as the lyrics are apt and poetic':

> M. Esposito does not claim to be original in his music; but he has handled his materials and drawn upon the store of old Irish airs with an ingenuity and taste which amply justifies the high opinion of his talent for arrangement or for composition held among cultured musicians.[15]

Dibble, in a more recent assessment of the score and libretto, also commends the success of Esposito's setting, although he notes that the comic stage-Irish characters would probably be regarded with disfavour today.[16]

Esposito's next project for the stage followed only months later, when in May 1902 he collaborated with Douglas Hyde to produce another one-act opera, *An Tincéar agus an tSidheog (The Tinker and the Fairy)*. This was staged as a private, invitation-only event in the garden of writer and dramatist George Moore's home in Ely Place, Dublin. Hyde's first Irish language play *Casadh an tSúgáin* had been performed as part of the Irish Literary Theatre's 1901 season, using amateur actors

[13] Dibble, *Esposito*, pp. 106–07.
[14] 'The Post Bag', *Irish Times,* 15 March 1902, p. 9.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Dibble, *Esposito*, p. 109.

from the Gaelic League, to considerable acclaim and the delight of the nationalist press.[17] Encouraged by this success, Hyde set about writing his second play in Irish, based on a folktale concerning a fairy queen who must persuade a man to kiss her, in order to avoid a curse by a jealous rival which will condemn her to old age and death. Moore, who did not speak Irish himself but had begun to take an interest in the Irish Literary Theatre and the Gaelic League, promised to review the English translation as well as to host the event. He embraced Hyde's vision of Ireland as a country enriched by its two languages and hoped to force recognition of the language outside of the Gaeltacht by making Hyde's play the focus of a major event of the Dublin social season, including an elegant reception for more than three hundred guests.[18] Writing to his brother Maurice before the event, Moore, who was frequently provocative, claimed:

> I want to give a party. The garden in front of my house belongs to me and it will hold five or six hundred people easily; and there are apple trees; and nothing will be easier than to build a stage … On this stage I want to have performed a play in Irish. I want to have a Gaelic-speaking audience. I think this would be a very good thing, and I think it would annoy Dublin society very much, which will add considerably to my pleasure.[19]

The play and outdoor event were scheduled for the 19th May to coincide with the beginning of An tOireachtas, a delegation from which attended. Hyde played the role of the tinker, and the role of the fairy was played by Sinéad Ní Fhlannagáin, later the wife of Éamon de Valera. For this early production, Esposito provided songs and incidental music, but in 1910 developed the music into a one-act opera, *The Tinker and the Fairy*, based on Belinda Butler's translation of Hyde's play.[20] This larger production was staged in the Gaiety Theatre by the Dublin Amateur Opera Society on the 29th March 1910. While the orchestral score of the opera has been lost, Dibble claims that 'even a study of the vocal score reveals that the work is undoubtedly one of the most successful of the various attempts to compose operas on Irish subjects at this period.'[21] Like his *Deirdre* cantata, *The Tinker and the Fairy* shows more indebtedness to Wagner and the European Romantic tradition than to the repurposing of Irish melodies. The opera was well-received, but audience turnout appears to have

[17] Janet Egleson Dunleavy and Gareth W. Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), p. 219–20.
[18] Ibid., p. 221–21.
[19] Undated letter quoted in Joseph Hone, *The Life of George Moore* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), p. 240.
[20] 'The Tinker and the Fairy', trans. by Belinda Butler, *New Ireland Review*, 17 (1902), 183–92.
[21] Dibble, *Esposito*, p. 132.

been low, both for Esposito's work and for productions of Bellini's *Norma* and Weber's *Der Freischütz* which had also been presented by the Society.[22] Despite an appeal by the acting manager for more audience support, the Society continued to struggle to meet its costs, and closed down the following year.

Esposito was also involved in another stage work, *Peggy Machree*, which had some success in New York after initial performances in Grimsby and London. The libretto was written by Elizabeth Curtis O'Sullivan, wife of the singer Denis O'Sullivan, and included a pastiche of popular Irish songs and folk song arrangements, including music by Alicia Adelaide Needham, Esposito and Clarence Lucas, and additional lyrics penned by Francis Fahy and Denis O'Sullivan. The play ran for over a month in New York during the Christmas/New Year season 1908/9 and also featured Denis O'Sullivan and Joseph O'Mara in the lead roles. Following the success of the New York run, two volumes of popular songs from the show were published by John Church & Co: three of Esposito's arrangements in *Denis O'Sullivan's Song Successes in the new production Peggy Machree* which included 'The birds fly south'; 'Peggy Machree', and 'The Idle Colleen'; and a similar volume of Joseph O'Mara's successes including Fahy's 'The Ould Plaid Shawl' and Moore's 'Believe me if all those endearing Young Charms'.

Esposito arranged several other traditional airs, including 'Dear Land' and 'Rest, thou gentle sea', which were published some time around 1920 by 'C. E. Music Publishers Co.', a joint enterprise between Esposito and the wealthy Anglo-Irish businessman and arts patron Stanley Cochrane. Cochrane was a keen amateur singer and a governor of the RIAM, and the two men joined forces to publish music scores that were made suddenly inaccessible with the outbreak of the first world war. Esposito, with the intention of making affordable editions available to RIAM students and exam candidates, edited a diverse range of works from the standard classical repertory, as well as publishing several of his own works, and those of Hamilton Harty, under the imprint.

Although Esposito's songs and arrangements form only a small part of his compositional output, he is included here as an active songwriter in the Revival who worked closely with some of the leading personalities of the movement. He made Ireland his home and the centre of his professional life for over forty years (1882–

[22] 'Amateur Opera in Dublin: Want of Public Support', *Irish Times*, 4 April 1910, p. 5.

1928) during a period of remarkable change in the country's history. Yet it was not inevitable that he would be pulled into Ireland's expression of nationalist identity. Rather, he seems to have embraced it almost as an act of generosity, underscored by his passionate desire as a pedagogue to lead by example and in so doing, to improve the musical life of his adopted country.

5.2 Annie Patterson

Annie Patterson (1868–1934) began her musical education at the RIAM where she studied piano, harmony, and organ. She graduated from the Royal University of Ireland with a BA in 1887 and a MusD in 1889. She was a keen supporter of the Irish language and Irish music, and throughout her life promoted the idea of an Irish school of composers 'who by their Irish works may prove that it is possibly for Irish musicians to be as truly National in their art as Dvořak or Grieg have been'.[23] Although primarily associated with the foundation of the Feis Ceoil in 1897 (see Chapter 3), she was also a prolific writer, publishing several books on music including a biography of Schumann, an analysis of the technique of the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind, a guide for musical enthusiasts *How to Listen to an Orchestra* and others in a popular vein intended to encourage public participation in music.[24] Her prose output also included articles for the *Weekly Irish Times*, including essays on contemporary musicians in Ireland which provide insights not documented elsewhere.[25] She also wrote articles for the periodical *Girl's Own Paper*, on such topics as music in Ireland and music degrees for girls.[26]

Patterson joined the Gaelic League in the 1890s, encouraging the idea that a revival of the Irish language should include a revival of Irish music—this eventually led to the formation of both the Feis Ceoil and An tOireachtas in 1897. She was also

[23] Annie Patterson, *Curriculum Vitae*, 1922 and 1924, p. 3. Quoted in Ruth Stanley, '"Gaelic Songs and Foreign Arrangements": Issues of Authenticity and Race in the Reception of Annie Patterson's "Traditional Irish Airs" (1924)', paper presented at Women and Music in Ireland Conference, RIAM, Dublin, 15 September 2012, p. 8. <https://www.academia.edu/2219909/Gaelic_Songs_and_Foreign_Arrangements_Issues_of_Authenticity_and_Race_in_the_Reception_of_Annie_Pattersons_Traditional_Irish_Airs_1924_> [accessed 12 June 2021]
[24] Annie W. Patterson, *The Master Musicians: Schumann* (New York: Dent 1903); *Beautiful song and the singer: an appreciation of the methods of Jenny Lind* (Dublin: Hely's, 1909); *How to Listen to an Orchestra* (London: Hutchinson, 1913).
[25] Jennifer O'Connor, 'The Role of Women in Music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin', pp. 308–10.
[26] Jennifer O'Connor, 'Patterson, Annie [Wilson]', in *EMIR,* II, pp. 824–24.

a member of the NLS, which gave her a forum for her lectures on Irish music both in Ireland and through the sister society in London. She wrote a number of extended musical works on Irish themes, including an opera trilogy (*Ardrigh's Daughter*, *Oisín* and *The Bard of Eire*), cantatas and orchestral tone poems.[27] Ruth Stanley has pointed out that few of these works were published and there is a question as to whether her manuscripts survive today: hence, most of what is known of these works can only be derived from reviews of live performances broadcast by Radio Éireann, and Patterson's own writings on musical style.[28]

However, a number of her smaller works were published, including *Six Original Gaelic Songs*, the *Rallying Song of the Gaelic League*, and various arrangements of Irish airs for piano. Her *Six Original Gaelic Songs* were published by Boosey in 1896, at exactly the time that Patterson was promoting the Feis Ceoil. In her preface to the volume, she referred to the work of the '"Feis" movement' and other societies including the ILS and (indirectly) the Gaelic League, praising their work in awakening interest in the Irish language. She pointed out that the lyrics to the songs are given in English and also in 'that dialect of the Gaelic tongue which has been looked upon as "classic" for over four hundred years in Scotland as well as in Ireland, and which is the language of the Gaelic Press in America', thus adroitly increasing her prospective readership.[29] She went further to hope that the songs 'may meet with tolerance and favour, not only from those whom it may most nearly concern, but also from Ireland's many true friends among her Saxon neighbours.'[30] This dual identification with Gael and Saxon was central to Patterson's identity and would leave her open to criticism from Irish-Ireland who held more purist views (discussed below).

Patterson claimed the volume of songs was the first of its kind in that both music and lyrics were new, and that the accompaniments and general structure of the songs were intended to combine the characteristic traits of Irish music with the requirements of modern song form. Her success in this endeavour is mixed. The first song, 'Abhrán an Earraigh'/'A Bird Song' has a strong flavour of an Irish reel in 2/4, with a clear melodic line employing modal switching on the seventh note. The piano

[27] Stanley, p. 3.
[28] Ibid., p. 12.
[29] Annie W. Patterson, *Six Original Gaelic Songs* (London: Boosey, 1896), preface.
[30] Ibid.

accompaniment is supportive while staying within a tonal harmonic palette. The second song ‘Do’n Fhuiseóig’/‘The Skylark’ has a more intrusive piano accompaniment in the drawing room ballad style with trills suggesting birdsong and ascending and descending chords and arpeggios deployed to suggest flight. In both ‘Take up the Harp’/‘Tóg suas an Chláirseach’ and ‘The Poet’s Death’/‘Bás an Fhilidh’, Patterson deployed cross rhythms between the vocal and piano parts with triplet figures accompanying a melody in common time. This has the effect of complicating the rhythmic structure unnecessarily, and repeated chords have a particularly heavy effect in places (Figure 5.4):

Fig. 5.4 Patterson, ‘Bás an Fhilidh’/‘The Poet’s Death’, bars 5–8

The Irish lyrics throughout were supplied by Thomas O’Neill Russell, a member of the Gaelic League and advocate for Irish music who had been instrumental in the founding of the Feis Ceoil (see Chapter 3). The collection clearly enjoyed some success as Boosey issued a revised edition in 1912.

Patterson also collaborated with Fr Patrick A. Walsh (An tAthair Pádruig Breathnach), a Vincentian Catholic priest and fellow member of the Gaelic League, when he approached her to make arrangements of songs from his successful Irish songbooks. Walsh had published a series of cheap song sheets (referred to as 'penny songsters') and songbooks for schoolchildren and for members of the growing Irish language revival movement. Some of these were songs he had collected himself or selected from the published collections.[31] In many cases, Walsh created lyrics for songs by selecting verses by various authors and setting these to traditional airs. From 1915, Walsh also published collections of Irish songs with English words, which were referred to as 'Anglo-Irish' songs. The songsters and songbooks were uniformly published with tonic sol-fa notation, a system which had been widely in use in Irish schools since the mid-nineteenth century.[32] An example of from Walsh's songbooks is shown below (Figure 5.5):

Fig. 5.5 Facsimile of 'A chuisle mo chroidhe' from *Ár gCeól Féinig* (1920)

[31] 'The Songbooks of Fr Pádruig Breathnach', ITMA website. <https://www.itma.ie/features/discover/the-songbooks-of-fr-padruig-breathnach> [accessed 13 June 2020]
[32] McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 63.

Patterson's arrangements of these songs were published from 1924 in a series of four volumes of *Traditional Irish Airs,* selected from Walsh's Irish and Anglo-Irish songbooks *Ceól ár Sínsear, Ár gCeól Féinig, Sídh-Cheól* and *Songs of the Gael*. A sample from the third volume is shown in Figure 5.6, showing Patterson's treatment of Walsh's air above:

Fig. 5.6 Facsimile of excerpt from 'A chuisle mo chroidhe' arr. by Patterson.

This example is a typical treatment: the air has been translated to staff notation, and vocally harmonised in two and three parts, with piano accompaniments. She has retained the suggested key, and the air closely follows that indicated by Walsh's tonic solfa notation. In the preface, she indicated that while the voicing was written so as to be flexible, it was advisable 'in all cases […] to use the pianoforte accompaniment, in order to secure a complete harmonic effect'.[33] Patterson's arrangements, and indeed Walsh's original publications, were excoriated in the *Leader*, the journal of Irish-Ireland, by the singer and folk-song collector Maighréad Ní Annagáin, who claimed to be of a direct line of 'real bardic tradition'.[34] Ní Annagáin highlighted perceived errors in rhythms, time signatures, measures, intervals, accidentals, and appellations, and took exception to Patterson's suitability as an arranger in light of

[33] Ibid., preface.
[34] Quoted in Stanley, p. 5. The following discussion is largely condensed from Stanley's paper.

her Anglo-Irish background, declaring that 'she has not the tradition of the Gael. She should keep her hands off our music, as she does not understand it at all'.[35] Ní Annagáin further claimed that

> Dr. Annie Patterson is as vague about her Irish ancestry as she is about her 'authorities'. We Gaels don't recognise the descendants of the Cromwellian plantation as Irish—nor do they themselves claim to be so.[36]

Yet again the issue of ownership of Irish identity had been invoked to invalidate music that was deemed racially impure. Patterson, no doubt somewhat inured to such comments, made it clear in her reply that her vision of an 'Expert Irish Musical School of the Future' would brook no restrictions from those she considered 'extreme traditionalists'.[37]

Walsh also came in for criticism from Ní Annagáin, for his practice of setting words to tunes which did not belong to them, and for altering the tunes to fit words to which they were unsuited. On this she was on less firm ground, as Walsh was born in a largely Irish-speaking district near Carrick-on-Suir, in Waterford, and had been educated locally and at St Patrick's Seminary in Maynooth. Many of his songs had been collected in Cork and Waterford, and the practices of changing words and altering tunes did, after all, form part of the oral tradition.

Patterson's role as founder and chief promoter of the Feis Ceoil was short-lived. After the inaugural Feis in 1897, she publicly resigned from the committee, claiming that the event had fallen into the control of individuals who were unsympathetic to the idea of a purely Irish musical movement.[38] She remained an engaged critic and commentator on the Feis Ceoil, and continued to promote her vision of an Irish school of composition which embraced both traditional and classical genres.[39] She settled in Cork, where she succeeded Carl Hardebeck as lecturer in Irish music (see Chapter 8), a post she retained until her death in 1934.

While it is difficult to pronounce on Patterson's contribution as a composer when so much of her work remains unpublished or missing, it was perhaps her role as an activist that had the most impact on Irish song literature. In making Irish songs available in flexible arrangements that were suitable for school or domestic use, she

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., p. 7.
[37] Ibid., p. 6.
[38] *Weekly Freeman*, 29 May 1897, p. 7.
[39] Martin Dowling, 'Patterson, Annie', in *CITM*, p. 539–39.

aimed to promote her aesthetic of Irish melodies in westernised arrangements to future generations. Her original song compositions in the Irish language represented a potential new direction for song composition in Ireland. She promoted a particular vision of an Irish musical movement that embraced the ideals of the Gaelic League and her classical music training. Her lectures on music given to the NLS and ILS, along with her advocacy for the Feis Ceoil and An tOireachtas undoubtably influenced contemporary discourse around the role and importance of music in Irish culture and in this sense had more lasting impact than her relatively few published compositions.

5.3 John F. Larchet

John F. Larchet was born in Dublin and was educated at the Catholic University School in Leeson Street, studying piano at the RIAM with Michele Esposito. His father, John Edward Larchet, was a wine merchant and hotelier who came to Ireland in 1882 and set up Larchet's Hotel in Dame Street. The family business gave the young Larchet some early performing opportunities playing piano at various receptions, dinners and 'smoking concerts'.[40] Among his tutors at the RIAM, he studied with Dr Charles Herbert Kitson, whom he would succeed first as Professor of Composition, Harmony and Counterpoint at the RIAM, and later to the Chair of Music at UCD. He was awarded a BMus from TCD in 1915, and a DMus in 1917. In 1953, he was conferred with an honorary DMus from the National University of Ireland.

Larchet's musical activities were diverse and he directly influenced many aspects of musical development in Dublin. He joined the staff of the RIAM in 1920 and had the distinction of being named the first Fellow of the RIAM a few years later. In 1931, he was made a Vice-President of the Academy. He was appointed professor of music at UCD in 1921, initially to a part-time post which became a full-time position in 1944.[41] In 1923, he became Musical Advisor to the Irish Army, where he organised the formation of the army bands, and secured the appointment of the

[40] 'Smoking concerts' were gentlemen's evenings usually hosted by hotels or clubs, where live music was performed alongside comedy items, while the audience smoked and talked politics.
[41] Úna-Frances Clarke, 'Larchet, John Francis', in *EMIR*, II, pp. 579–80.

German musician Fritz Brase to establish the Army School of Music. He was an examiner for the RIAM and Director of Music Examinations in secondary schools for the Irish Department of Education, a role which brought him all over Ireland and gave him particular insight into the shortcomings of music education in the school system. He was credited with raising the general standard of music teaching in secondary schools, as well as building up the music faculty in University College Dublin where he introduced music as a subject for the B.A. honours degree and a music diploma course for teachers in conjunction with the Department of Education.[42]

Larchet had a unique position within the revival milieu through his associations with the NLS and the Abbey Theatre. His involvement with the Society in Dublin included assisting and performing in monthly *conversaziones*—gatherings of literary-minded people that included lectures, recitals, and discussions of the latest developments in arts and culture. Larchet's contribution to these events was to bring in performers, decide the musical programme, as well as accompanying and occasionally using the platform to showcase his own compositions. He was appointed to the position of director of music at the Abbey Theatre in 1908, a position which he held until 1935, working closely with Yeats, Synge, and Lady Gregory, for whom he had a deep regard.[43] His debut at the Abbey was on the 1st October 1908, when he directed the interval music for W. F. Casey's play *The Suburban Groove* (Figure 5.7). His responsibilities included directing a small orchestra, and the selection and performance of interval and incidental music for the theatre's programme of plays, some of which music he composed himself. Joseph Ryan, assessing Larchet's contribution, observed: 'To write incidental music for the plays of W. B. Yeats and Lennox Robinson, and to be at one with the work of that intelligentsia, which also included Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and, for a time, George Moore, was to share in the ideology at the heart of the greatest cultural concentration this country has known.'[44]

Ryan describes Larchet's commitment at the Abbey as 'particularly onerous', requiring his presence each evening except Sunday, with an additional matinee on

[42] 'Death of Noted Irish Musician', *Irish Independent*, 11 August, 1967, p. 10.
[43] Margaret Prandy, 'A key figure in music in Ireland', *Irish Times,* 17 July 1984, p. 10.
[44] Ryan, 'Nationalism and Music in Ireland', p. 354

Saturday.[45] Larchet is listed as Musical Director for over seventy plays at the Abbey, including works by Yeats, Lennox Robinson, Seán O'Casey, Padraic Colum, Lady Gregory, Terence MacSwiney and Douglas Hyde.[46] While much of his work for these involved making arrangements of Irish airs for the orchestra, he also wrote original music for four of Yeats's plays: *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894); *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1907); *The Cat and the Moon* (1931); and *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1931), as well as the score for the ballet *Bluebeard.*[47]

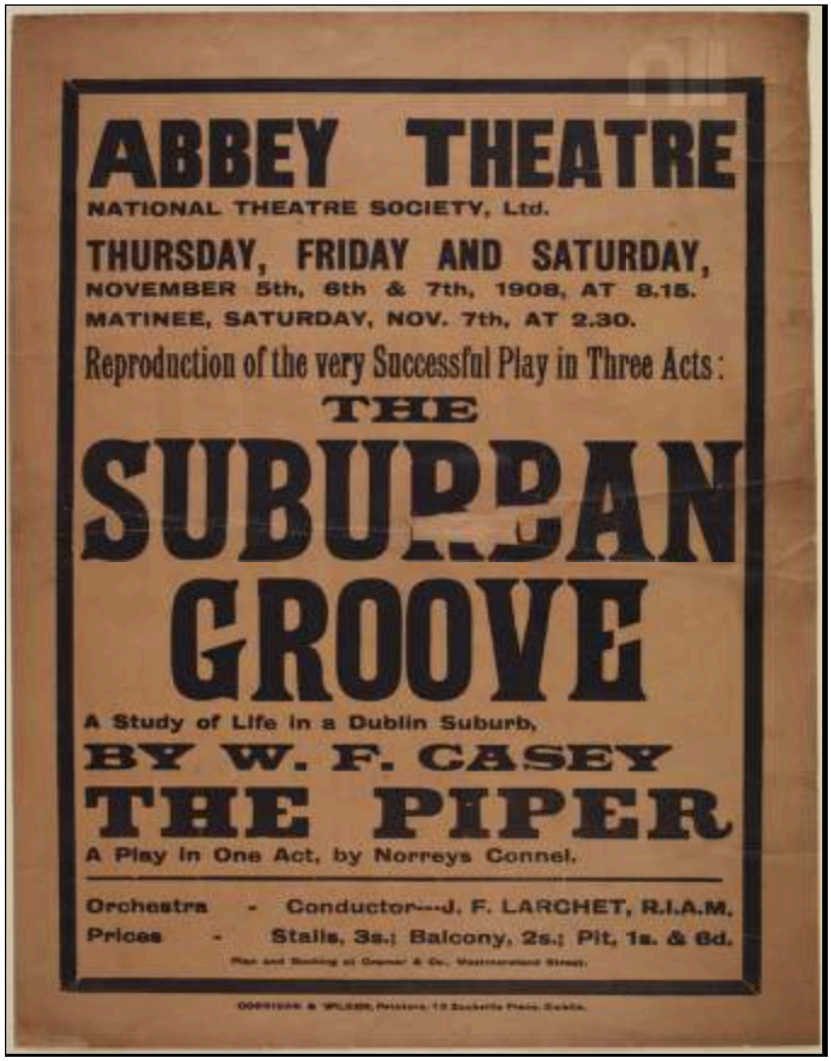

Fig. 5.7 Advertising poster for *The Suburban Groove*.
Source: National Library of Ireland, Department of Ephemera.

[45] Ibid., p. 353.
[46] 'Dr. John F. Larchet', in *PLAYOGRAPHYIreland* <http://www.irishplayography.com/person.aspx?personid=39927> [accessed 21 October 2019]
[47] Clarke, 'Larchet, John Francis', in *EMIR,* II, pp. 579–80

His Abbey work also included incidental music to two other plays: *The Spell* by Bernard Duffy (c. 1916), and *The Pipe in the Fields* by T.C. Murray (c. 1927). Hugh Hunt, the former Director of Plays at the Abbey wrote of Larchet's contributions to the theatre:

> When Larchet took over the musical direction he established a tradition of fine music that seldom failed to please the critics no matter how harshly they might judge the play. Larchet was to remain with the Abbey for twenty-six years, becoming in the course of time as well loved by the regular patrons as the most popular players. Indeed a popular myth records that there were those who would leave the theatre during the acts and return to enjoy Jack Larchet's music during the intervals. [48]

As well as providing incidental music and interval entertainment, the Abbey also mounted full concerts which Larchet directed, bringing in guest artists who contributed a variety of acts including songs, instrumental items, dances, magic and 'humourous items'.[49] These followed the format of similar concerts directed by Larchet in the Antient Concert Rooms, Gaiety Theatre, and Royal Dublin Society, where typical fare included violin and piano solos, operatic items, and Larchet's own arrangements of traditional tunes and original songs.

5.3.1 Larchet's Song compositions

Larchet's earliest songs were published in 1906, and are based on English rather than Irish poetry. They include 'Love, and a Garden' and 'Love's Question', with texts by an obscure poet, H. Wyles. A setting of Jane Taylor's 'The Violet' was published the same year with the title 'In Sweet Humility'. In 1908, the singer John McCormack facilitated the publication of Larchet's 'The Philosophy of Love', and recorded the song that same year.[50] This setting of Shelley's poem 'Love's Philosophy' bears an obvious debt to Roger Quilter's more renowned setting, which had been published a few years earlier in 1905.

Coinciding with his increased involvement with the NLS and his appointment as Musical Director to the Abbey Theatre, Larchet's compositions from about 1911 onwards evince a growing interest in Irish music and identity. It was in this year that

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[48] Hugh Hunt, *The Abbey: Ireland's National Theatre 1904–1979* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 86
[49] 'Concert at the Abbey Theatre', *Irish Times*, 27 February 1911, p. 4.
[50] Raymond Foxall, *John McCormack* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1963). *Art Songs in English*, John McCormack (Symposium, 1165, 1998)

he published 'Irish Dance No.1' for violin and piano; further Irish airs followed, and between 1919 and 1922 he published three songs to texts by the northern revival poet, Padraic Gregory: 'Padraic the Fiddiler'; 'An Ardglass Boat Song'; and 'A Stóirín Bán'.[51]

Gregory was a church architect by profession, but also a prolific writer, publishing works on poetry, painting and sacred drama as well as collecting words and airs of folksongs from Antrim and Down.[52] He believed that 'there are many of our old folk-songs worthy of being collected, properly patched, if absolutely necessary, and preserved'.[53] This preservation included the collection of fragments, which Gregory incorporated into his own poetry, being careful to avoid charges of plagiarism through his notes that acknowledged the source of such fragments. He was a cultural nationalist and a founder member of the Ulster Literary Theatre, which was envisaged by its founders as a northern branch of the National Theatre Society.[54] Much of Gregory's original poems are in an Ulster-Scots dialect of English, recording Ulster folk culture in recognisable accents, as in the case of 'Padraic the Fiddiler':

> Padric sits in the garden,
> Inundher the bright new moon,
> An' from his fidil coaxes
> A lovely, dreamy tune.[55]

Larchet's setting of 'Padraic the Fiddler', for voice, violin and piano, was particularly successful for him, and was published by Boosey in 1919. It was recorded in 1924 by John McCormack and Fritz Kreisler, giving it a level of international attention.[56] Marked *Andante dolente* and opening with violin double-stops on open strings, the vocal line is interspersed with cadenza-like interludes on the violin, with a subdued piano accompaniment. The violin plays a prominent part more suggestive of the East-European 'Gypsy' style than of any native Irish style.[57] Larchet makes use of

[51] Padraic Gregory, *The Ulster Folk* (London: David Nutt, 1912); *Ulster Folk Songs and Ballads* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1920).
[52] Padraic Gregory, *Complete Ballads* (Belfast: Lagan Press, 2013), introduction.
[53] Gregory, *The Ulster Folk*, x.
[54] This idea was rebuffed by Yeats, and the Ulster revivalists pursued their own path. Eugene McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), pp. 55–76.
[55] Gregory, *Ulster Folk,* p. 35.
[56] John F. Larchet, *Padraic the Fiddler*, John McCormack and Fritz Kreisler <https://www.itma.ie/digital-library/sound/padraic-the-fiddler-john-mccormack-fritz-kreisler> [accessed 5 November 2019]
[57] 'Gypsy' is an exonym for Romani people and culture.

virtuosic embellishment, dramatic descending and ascending passages across wide ranges, and pauses and temporal changes typical of the idiom (Figure 5.8):[58]

Fig. 5.8 Larchet, 'Padraic the Fiddiler', bars 21–33

Juxtaposed with a simply presented vocal line and the dialect lyrics, a sense of melancholy otherworldliness is conferred on the 'fiddiler', as observed by a young admirer falling for the exotic charms of his music. The song is a delicately wrought

[58] In the 1924 recording, Kreisler takes full advantage of Larchet's 'cadenza' note, adding further embellishment and extending the range of the violin part.

encounter between art song and imagined 'Gypsy' traditions, given further colour by the use of an Irish poem and the narrator's fascination with an exotic culture.

The title of Larchet's 'An Ardglass Boat Song' suggests a genre of song that is, somewhat surprisingly for an island nation, not typically found in the repertory of Irish traditional songs. Donal O'Sullivan wrote in 1960: 'In view of the maritime activity round our coasts [...] one would naturally expect that boat-songs in Irish would be common enough; but I have never come across even a solitary example.'[59] Here, O'Sullivan is referring to 'songs of occupation' typically sung by boatmen as they rowed or went about their tasks. Tom Munnelly similarly describes a lack of 'shanties and sea songs', but notes that songs describing boats, boatmen and their adventures were more common, referring to Ríonach Uí Ógáin's essay 'Songs of boats and boatmen'.[60] It is from this tradition that Larchet draws his inspiration, using Gregory's text concerning a mother at home with her children, waiting for her husband to return from the sea.

Fig. 5.9 Larchet, 'An Ardglass Boat Song', opening bars

Larchet selects the 6/8 time signature of a *barcarolle*, but creates an atmosphere of tension through a repeated tonic pedal and the use of neighbour notes cycling between E♭–D–C♯, depicting the anxieties of the mother as she notes the dark skies and threatening weather (Figure 5.9). From bar 20 on, the piano takes on a more dramatic role, with the voice rising in pitch and dynamics to the climax of the song 'Wind o' the South my love's at sea' before the music comes to a brief halt, emphasising the text 'An' I cannae take a wink of sleep'. The third verse suggests the night has passed and a morning star heralds the imminent return of the boatman: 'A wee while more an' he's back to me!' The melody rises to a brief moment in the tonic major, as the

[59] Donal O'Sullivan, *Songs of the Irish* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1960), p. 32.
[60] Munnelly, *Collected Essays,* pp. 144–78. Ríonach Uí Ógáin, 'Songs of Boats and Boatmen', in *Islanders and water–dwellers*, ed. by Patricia Lysaght, Séamus Ó Catháin and Daithí Ó hÓgáin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 325–36.

long boat crosses the harbour bar, before a piano interlude that descends back to the minor key and a vocal coda, suggesting that any such relief from anxiety will be short-lived, as the boatman will head out again.

Larchet's third song to a text by Gregory stays with the theme of an anxious mother, this one more directly concerned with her child and the possibility that he will be stolen away by the 'wee folk'. 'A Stóirín Bán', sometimes anglicised as 'Asthoreen Bawn', translates as 'Fair little love', and is dedicated to 'little Máire', Larchet's eldest daughter, who was born the previous year (1921). The poem again is in dialect and describes evening falling in 'Samhain-tide', the Gaelic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. The song reflects the fluidity of a folk culture that gave equal credence to Christian and pagan ideas: the mother prays that Mary will guard her child from the 'wee folk'—malevolent fairy creatures thought to steal away children. Larchet structures the song in duple time, alternating between 2/4 and 6/8 via triplet figures that transition to compound time, while the returns to simple time are effected after a *tenuto* or *ritardando*, which has the effect of smoothing out any jolt in the underlying beat. The macaronic refrain, 'A leinbh mo chroidhe, a stórín bán' ('Child of my heart, little fair love'), has a soaring but exquisitely restrained melodic line (see Figure 5.10). Variations in each iteration of verse and refrain give the song an overall modified strophic form.

Fig. 5.10 Larchet, 'A Stóirín Bán', bars 19–28

Larchet uses a number of musical devices in both vocal and piano parts to illustrate Gregory's text: semiquaver movement in the vocal line is suggestive of traditional embellishments; light staccato chords in verse two suggest the roaming of the 'wee folk', while open fifths (D/A and A/E) reflect the open strings of the violin as the fairies are 'tweekin' their fiddle strings', an idea that returns in the final verse as the mother promises to protect her child so that he will 'nae hear the tune from their fiddle strings' (Figure 5.11):

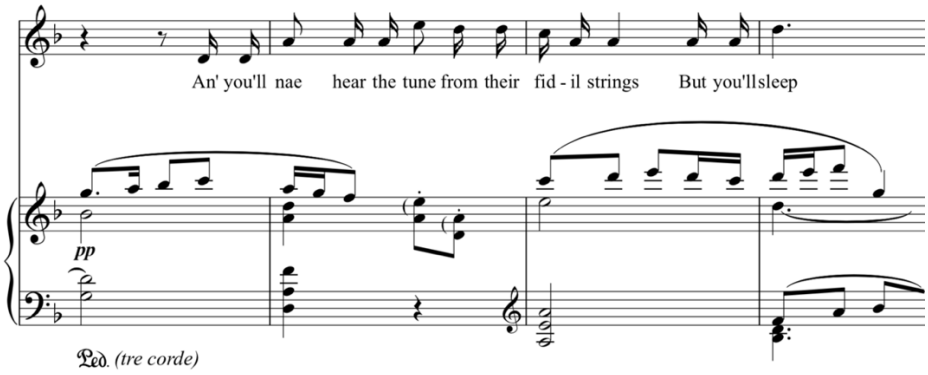

Fig. 5.11 Larchet, 'A Stóirín Bán', bars 80–83

The last verse is marked *quasi recitativo*, interspersed with motifs on the piano drawn from the opening statements. The closing refrain omits the first two phrases, having the effect of tightening the overall structure as the mother draws the child 'close to my heart'. It concludes with a gentle rocking figure, marked *perdendosi*, to syllables typical of Irish hush songs: 'Shoheen, sho lo'.

Larchet would return repeatedly to the work of the revival poets, and to recognisably Irish subject matter. 1922 saw the publication of his arrangement of 'The Bard of Armagh', a traditional song attributed to the seventeenth century Catholic bishop Dr. Patrick O'Donnelly, which was popularised in the mid-nineteenth century as a broadsheet ballad.[61] Larchet's published arrangement is for voice and piano; he also scored the song for voice and orchestra the same year. During this period he also published several Irish-themed pieces for choir, including arrangements of Moore's melodies ('Believe me if all those endearing young charms' (1918) and 'At the mid-hour of night' (1923)), as well as several arrangements of

[61] Michael McRory, 'Life and Times of Doctor Patrick O'Donnelly, 1649–1716: "The Bard of Armagh"', *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, 5 (1969), pp. 3–33.

folksongs in the Irish language, some of which were published by Pigott and the Government Publications Office (*Oifig an tSoláthair*).

5.3.2 Songs for the Stage

Several of Larchet's songs were written within the context of incidental music for plays, including 'The Song of the Faery Child' composed for a 1935 production of Yeats's play *The Land of Heart's Desire*, originally staged in London in 1894.[62] Set in Sligo at the end of the eighteenth century, the one-act drama concerns an encounter between the supernatural and mortal worlds; in this case between an Irish family and a fairy child intent on stealing away the new bride of the son of the house. The bride, weary with the scolds of her mother-in-law and disillusioned by her new captivity, unwittingly seals her own fate as she dreams of escape:

> Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!
> Let me have all the freedom I have lost;
> Work when I will and idle when I will!
> Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
> For I would ride with you upon the wind,
> Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
> And dance upon the mountains like a flame.[63]

A fairy child appears at her summons, heralded by an offstage song, which Larchet has called 'The Song of the Faery Child', although the stage directions assign the song only to 'A Voice'. Welcomed into the family home, the child attempts to lure the bride away from the world of mortals, despite the best interventions of the local priest and terrified family. Through the medium of song and dance the fairy succeeds in seducing the bride who dies in her husband's arms at the denouement of the play. The song is reprised at the end, with another stage direction that states: 'The song is taken up by many voices, who sing loudly, as if in triumph. Some of the voices seem to come from within the house.'[64]

Yeats's early works are often concerned with the liminal space between the natural and the supernatural, and this play illustrates how superstition was seamlessly integrated with Catholic faith. A crucifix provides a powerful symbol at a climatic

[62] W. B. Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1906), introductory note.
[63] Ibid., p.15
[64] Ibid, p. 33

moment in the play—the child shrieks to see it hanging on the wall and demands that it be removed. To placate the upset child, whom the family believes to be 'high-born', the priest removes the crucifix from the room, thus allowing the fairy folk unfettered access to the house and the souls within. This admixture of religious faith with superstitious belief is a recurring theme not just in Yeats's work but in Larchet's also.

For 'The Song of the Faery Child', Larchet uses 12/8 time and an Andante tempo for the setting, nominally in C major but with an opening perfect cadence in the dominant key in the first bar, before transitioning to the tonic via an augmented chord. While the overall scheme stays within related dominant, dominant minor and relative minor keys, it occasionally dips into quite unexpected keys, e.g., a brief moment in D♭ major at the words 'But I heard a reed of Coolany say' which has a momentarily chilling effect (bar 20). Other conventional gestures are used to illustrate the text: a semi-quaver cascade to illustrate the laughing of the wind; and *più mosso* and *accelerando* tempo directions as the fairies dance (Figure 5.12):

Fig. 5.12 Larchet, 'Song of the Faery Child', bars 14–21

While song is successful in its setting, it does not appear to have had a concert life outside of the play—it was not published until 2010 and has been largely neglected by recitalists.[65] Although the 'Faery Child' was originally played by the child actor Dorothy Paget, in the 1935 production the role was played by an adult, Shelah Richards.[66] This explains aspects of the song which would prove a challenge to an inexperienced young singer, such as the range and some unexpected intervals. Its function in the play as an invitation to a hedonistic 'land of heart's desire' perhaps necessitated something of a shallow treatment. The setting, while serving its purpose, lacks the emotional maturity of his other songs.

Bernard Duffy's one-act play *The Spell* (1922) shares a similar theme to *The Land of Heart's Desire* but is given a markedly different treatment.[67] Relying on comedic language and farce, the play includes a full cast of fairy characters, this time bent on luring the protagonist John Heraty away from his nagging wife and shiftless mortal existence. The play was produced by the ILS in London at the Ashburton Club Theatre on 4 April 1924. Larchet composed the incidental music for the play, which comprises five instrumental pieces and two songs: the 'Song of the Bean Sidhe' for contralto, and 'Song of the Lenaun Sidhe' for soprano. The Bean Sidhe, or Banshee, is an Irish fairy woman known for her keening, or crying, which presages the death of a family member. The Lenaun Sidhe is a rather less well-known fairy creature, popularised by Lady Wilde ('Speranza') and W. B. Yeats in the late nineteenth century.[68] Earlier documents suggest that the Lenaun Sidhe might be a male or female fairy, desirous of a mortal lover, although such union invariably spelled trouble for the object of their affections.[69] In Duffy's play, the fairy successfully seduces Heraty while in the company of his affronted wife, providing ample opportunity for comedy, while an unlikely sympathy develops between Heraty's wife and the Bean Sidhe as they share grievances about men's behaviour.

[65] Genet, pp. 112–15. A facsimile of the manuscript is now also available from the Contemporary Music Centre, Dublin.
[66] Schuchard, p. 33. 'The Land of Heart's Desire 1935 (Abbey)', in *Abbey Theatre Archive* <https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/archives/production_detail/2281/> [accessed 30 October 2021]
[67] Bernard Duffy, *The Spell: A Comedy in One Act* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1922).
[68] Lady Jane Wilde ('Speranza'), *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms and Superstitions of Ireland* (Boston: Ticknor, 1887). W. B. Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (London: Walter Scott, 1888).
[69] *Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1854*, 2 (1855), p. 86.

The libretto includes detailed descriptions on the placement and function of the incidental music, which Larchet followed faithfully. A dancing theme, founded on a traditional Irish air, introduces a fairy piper and dancers, who are soon after followed by the Bean Sidhe. The stage directions give the following instructions:

> The weird song of the BEAN SIDHE is heard outside. She sings it through once, and begins the second time. The Fairy Piper starts the dancing tune, and the two airs are running counter to each other. Mrs HERATY grips HERATY by the arm fearfully.[70]

Larchet responded to these directions with a brief piano introduction in 9/8, introducing an unaccompanied and wordless theme for the Bean Sidhe in a minor mode and in 3/4 time. After one iteration of this, the dance tune enters in a 9/8 theme in a major key, as a counterpoint to the minor melody of the Bean Sidhe. The music represents a faithful interpretation of the stage directions.

In the 'Song of the Lenaun Sidhe' (Figure 5.13), Larchet is given a freer hand: Duffy provides lyrics but no further directions on how they might be interpreted. Larchet gives the lyrics a complete song treatment, with piano prelude, interlude and postlude, a modulating middle section and climactic final section as the Lenaun Sidhe entices Heraty with visions of a 'peerless vale', promising that 'I your willing guide will be, if you will only come with me.'

Fig. 5.13 Larchet, 'Song of the Lenaun Sidhe', bars 5–12

[70] Duffy, *The Spell*, p. 13

The incidental music, including the songs, was published by Pigott & Co in Dublin in 1926, but has been largely forgotten since and seems to have had little life outside the play for which it was composed.

A more successful song, also written as part of incidental music for a play, was 'Diarmuid's Lament', for voice and piano with cello obbligato. This was composed for Michael MacLiammóir's *Ford of the Hurdles: a Masque of Dublin* written for the 1929 Dublin Civic Week. The Civic Week was conceived as a festival with the added intention of educating the Free State population on important aspects of Irish heritage.[71] The festival included military tattoos, a river ballroom, a handsomely produced handbook, and musical and artistic events featuring prominent Irish personalities. MacLiammóir's play was a centrepiece of pageantry, featuring loosely connected episodes in Irish history, including the Viking and Norman invasions; the Cromwellian settlement; the trial of Robert Emmet; and, honouring a patriotic moment which must have been all too fresh in the national mind, the 1916 Easter Rising. To accompany MacLiammóir's play, Larchet conducted a nineteen-piece orchestra for five musical interludes, including 'Diarmuid's lament'. The lyrics of the song are taken from an old Irish text, and an accompanying note explains:

> A free translation of a Gaelic soliloquy ascribed to Diarmuid MacMurchadha [Dermot McMurrough], King of Leinster, who had been defeated and driven into exile for the stealing of O Rourke's wife Dervorgilla. In revenge he brought over the Normans whose invasion was the turning point in Irish history.[72]

The 'turning point' referred to above was the Anglo-Norman invasion, and conquest of Ireland by England, beginning more than seven centuries of English occupation. While revisionist historians have offered a more generous interpretation of events, the nationalist narrative of the early twentieth century positioned McMurrough as the traitor who facilitated the invasion and subsequent subjugation of Ireland. Given this narrative, 'Diarmuid's lament' is given a surprisingly sympathetic treatment by Larchet, ascribing to Diarmuid the time-honoured Irish themes of wronged nobility, loss and exile. An extended cello solo introduces the song with a melody similar to

[71] Joan Fitzpatrick Dean, *All Dressed Up: Modern Irish Historical Pageantry* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014), pp 89–138.
[72] John F. Larchet & Micheal Mac Liammoir, 'Diarmuid's Lament' (Dublin: Pigott & Co,1937). Translation note.

an Irish slow air with characteristic ornamentation. The vocal line is largely declamatory, and has the effect of a recitative rising to a climax as McMurrough ponders what his next move should be:

> Oh, Mary! Oh Mary!
> It is a great deed that has been done in Ireland on this day,
> the Kalends of August.
> Diarmuid Ó Donnchadha Mhic Murchadha,
> King of Leinster and of the Danes
> to have been banished by the men of Ireland,
> over the sea eastward.
> Och, och, O Lord, what shall I do?

The cello's 'keening' legato line contrasts with Diarmuid's bitter protestations, and the use of suspensions in the piano and cello parts adds an affecting quality to the lament (Figure 5.14):

Fig. 5.14 Larchet, 'Diarmuid's Lament', bars 13–24

The play, the first to be produced at the newly established Gate Theatre in Dublin, was a triumph, receiving ecstatic reviews from prominent nationalists, including Yeats's muse Maud Gonne, who wrote:

> It is not too much to say that Michael Mac Liammóir's play *The Ford of the Hurdles* is a national achievement. Not since W. B. Yeates' [sic] *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* has any Irish dramatist written so fine a play embodying the spirit of Ireland.[73]

'Diarmuid's Lament' was published by Pigott in 1937, and advertised as 'sung by Mr John McCormack'. It was also recorded on 78rpm for the record label 'His Master's Voice' by the Irish baritone Michael O'Higgins.[74]

Larchet's compositional output continued well into the mid-century, beyond the years considered for most composers in this study. Nevertheless, the majority of his later songs hark back to themes of Irish identity and heritage that were revivified during the period of the Revival and will be discussed briefly here.

5.3.3 Post-Revival Songs

Larchet published 'The Stranger' in 1939, described as 'An Old Gaelic Rune', with 'words from the Ancient Gaelic […] recovered by Kenneth Macleod.[75] The lyrics are a translation of the Scots Gaelic 'Duan na h-aoigheachd' ('Rune of Hospitality') which Macleod had published in 1911. Larchet was a devout Catholic and the Christian text with its particular Gaelic imagery must have appealed to him: 'The Stranger' marks his return to art song for its own sake after a lull of seventeen years. Macleod's translation is given below:

> I saw a stranger yestreen.
> I put food in the eating place,
> Drink in the drinking place,
> And music in the listening place.
> And in the sacred Name of the Triune,
> He blest myself and may house,
> My cattle and my dear ones,
> And the lark sang in her song
> Often goes the Christ in a stranger's guise.[76]

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[73] Ibid., p. 127.
[74] John F. Larchet, 'Diarmuid's lament', Michael O'Higgins and others <https://www.itma.ie/digital-library/sound/cid-230972> [accessed 6 June 2021].
[75] Kenneth Macleod, 'Two Gaelic Runes', *Celtic Review*, 7 (1911), 50–51.
[76] As printed on the 'Stainer & Bell' publication of 1939. This contains some small differences to Macleod's publication of 1911.

The song begins with a piano introduction followed by some *quasi recitative* declamations, and includes some gestures to Gaelic idioms, including the modal flattened 7th, and pentatonic figures (Figure 5.15). The vocal line lacks an obvious melody, relying rather too heavily on scalar passages and some birdsong motifs illustrating the 'listening place' and the singing of the lark.

Fig. 5.15 Larchet, 'The Stranger', bars 21–23

Musically, 'The Stranger' is less successful than some of Larchet's other songs, but it does illustrate his continued interest with Gaelic subject matter, and the wider Gaelic community. In 1939, Larchet also published 'The Thief of the World', this time turning to the poetry of Francis Fahy. 'The Thief of the World' is a light-hearted poem where the 'thief' is a young girl who has stolen the heart of the singer, who vows to have her up in court for the felony. This is the only setting of Fahy's poems by Larchet, which he arranged to an unnamed 'Old Irish Air'.

Larchet turned to more domestic themes and the poet Elizabeth Shane for two of his late songs: 'The Wee Boy in Bed' and 'Wee Hughie'. Born in Belfast in 1877, Shane was a musician, dramatist and poet, who played first violin with the Belfast Philharmonic Orchestra and published three volumes of poetry: *Tales of the Donegal Coast and Islands* (1921); *By Bog and Sea in Donegal* (1923); and *Piper's Tunes (from Down and Antrim)* (1927). 'The Wee Boy in Bed' is taken from her 1923 collection *By Bog and Sea in Donegal*. In 'The Wee Boy in Bed', the narrator reminisces on his childhood home, where his mother and grandmother spun wool and his father worked the loom in the loft overhead. In his recollections, the loom makes a clacking sound which frightens the young boy—he is comforted by his mother who reassures him that 'there's not a hait o'harm in the ould loom… at all, at all'. Larchet captures the fragmented memories and the intimacy of the moment with disjointed

musical phrases acting as a conversation between the piano and voice, suggesting musings that come and go.

'Wee Hughie' was Shane's most popular poem and describes the mixed emotions of a mother sending her youngest off to school on his first day, a topic that has retained its relevance over time. The mother describes her anxiety as her son heads off hand-in-hand with his brothers, looking back to her for reassurance.

Both settings of Shane's poetry are tonal and through-composed and make few challenges of the listener. These rather conventional though polished settings reflect scenes from an innocent rural life that would have chimed in well with the image of Ireland that was promoted by the nascent state. In a different vein, 'The Cormorant' is a setting of Emily Lawless poem, from her collection *With the Wild Geese* published in 1902, a cycle which had also attracted Hamilton Harty.[77] The cormorant, a bird that can swim as well as fly, has been associated with greed and gluttony since Chaucer's fourteenth century 'Parlement of Foules', while Milton's *Paradise Lost* has the Cormorant as a symbol of Satan.[78] Lawless's poem has the cormorant ominously watching over a shipwreck in a storm.[79] Unusually among Larchet's songs, the opening is marked *Allegro con fuoco*, with piano motifs suggesting the tumultuous sea and a dramatic unaccompanied moment: 'Hark! Was that a drowning cry?', followed by a solemn march motif at 'Erin's saints receive his soul!' Larchet omits one of Lawless's five verses, as well as some iterations of the refrain, 'Only the Cormorant, dark and sly, Watches the waves with a sea-green eye.'

Larchet also arranged his settings of both Lawless's and Shane's poems for voice and chamber orchestra, and they mark his last original songs for solo voice. They also evince a marked fidelity to his subject matter and preference for Irish poets, particularly those who had been most active during the years of the Cultural Revival.

The three composers considered here all made a marked contribution to the educational and cultural life of Dublin. Each of them can be also be considered a Revivalist, in the sense that they were active participants in the ardent national project to assert a distinctive Irish identity. This chapter has considered their individual

[77] Harty's tone poem *With the Wild Geese* was inspired by the poems in this collection. Emily Lawless, *With the Wild Geese* (London: Isbister, 1902).
[78] Richard J. King, *The Devil's Cormorant: A Natural History* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013), pp. 50–69.
[79] Lawless, 'The Cormorant' in *With the Wild Geese,* pp. 85–87.

contributions, and also highlights once more the importance of the revival milieu in supporting the work of songwriters. Esposito and Patterson worked together in lobbying for the Feis Ceoil, which in turn inspired Esposito to write his first 'Irish' works. Esposito worked with A. P. Graves, George Sigerson, and T. W. Rolleston, all important personalities within the literary societies, while his collaboration with Douglas Hyde brought him into contact with the ideals of the Gaelic League. Patterson's membership of the Gaelic League led her to work with other language activists such as Thomas O'Neill Russell and Fr Patrick A. Walsh, while Larchet's work for the Abbey Theatre and the NLS placed him at the heart of the literary revival, counting among his close circle literary giants such as Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory. This suggests a symbiotic relationship between Irish musicians and leading litterateurs from language, literary and theatrical fields—a relationship which, as yet, remains largely unconsidered in much of the discourse concerning the period.

6. Song Literature of the Northern Revival

The area around the Glens of Antrim formed one of the last Irish-speaking areas in Ulster up to the early nineteenth century. As suggested by P. J. Mathews in 2005, the area has a valid claim to be considered 'an alternative cradle of the Revival'.[1] Historian Eamon Phoenix has pointed out that prior to the partition of the island, the level of interest in the Irish language among Ulster Protestants was much greater than might be considered today.[2] In the 1790s, the United Irishmen had published the first ever Irish language magazine, *Bolg an tSolair,* and the Ulster Gaelic Society of the 1830s had been active in the collection of Irish manuscripts and recording songs and folktales in the oral tradition. This led to an upsurge of interest in the language and associated Gaelic culture resulting in considerable support for the Gaelic League from both unionist and nationalist communities when the Belfast branch was founded in 1895. This chapter considers the milieu that gathered around cultural activities during the Revival, with a particular focus on the collecting, arranging and illustrating of folk songs, and the original art songs that were created from these collaborations.

6.1 F. J. Bigger and the Ardrigh Coterie

In addition to the more formal societies which proliferated during the time of the Revival (discussed in Chapter 3), other less formal gatherings coalesced around the homes of influential individuals. In Ulster, the Irish-Irelander Francis Joseph Bigger (1863–1926) opened his home in Belfast to a talented coterie of litterateurs, poets, musicians, politicians and revolutionists. Bigger's wide range of interests encompassed history, archaeology, folklore, the natural sciences and the revival of the Irish language. He was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1894 and his work with the Gaelic League, where he was a member of the *Coiste Gnótha*

[1] P. J. Mathews, 'Alternative Cradle of the Revival', *Irish Times*, 23 July 2005, p. 112.
[2] *Feis na nGleann: A Century of Gaelic Culture in the Antrim Glens*, ed. by Eamon Phoenix, Pádraig Ó Cléireachcháin, Eileen McAuley and Nuala McSparran (Belfast: Stair Uladh, 2005), introduction.

(Executive Committee) brought him into close contact with leading Gaelic scholars including Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill. He wrote in excess of 400 articles for newspapers and antiquarian journals including the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, the *JIFSS* and the *Irish Book Lover*. He also organised a harp festival in Belfast in 1903, with an accompanying book and exhibition, recalling the festival of 1792 by featuring seven harpers playing on new revival harps by the Belfast harp-maker, James McFall.[3] Ardrigh, Bigger's large house in Belfast, became a gathering spot for poets, musicians, artists and activists across a spectrum of artistic and cultural endeavour.

Among Bigger's coterie who met at Ardrigh for *ceilidhs*, poetry readings and evenings around the piano were the young music scholar Herbert Hughes, the poet Padraic Colum, and three members of the Campbell family: the poet Joseph Campbell; his brother John, an artist; and sister Josephine, a well-known actress.[4] Inspired by Yeats's 'Twilight' school of literature, they acquired the nickname of the 'Firelight' school. This group, encouraged and financially supported by Bigger, were founding members of the Ulster Literary Theatre in 1904, launching a quarterly periodical *Ulad* (Ulster) the same year. *Ulad* was destined to be short-lived, ceasing after just four issues due to lack of capital, but it was highly acclaimed and included contributions from many of the period's leading reformers, writers and intellectuals, including James Connolly, Roger Casement, Pádraic Colum, George Russell and Alice Milligan.

Bigger was also the driving force behind the founding of the *Feis na nGleann* in 1904, a festival which celebrated the Irish language, culture, crafts, games, and, somewhat unusually, local industries. Including the work of local industries had been Bigger's suggestion, and this became the largest section of the 1904 feis with forty-six competitions, including spinning, weaving, woodcarving and furniture-making, toy-making, shoemaking, metal working and painting. These categories made up for almost half of the participants; the other categories were for Gaelic, dancing, literature and music. Historian Jack Magee comments that the list of principal judges recorded in Bigger's hand-written notes 'read like pages from the history of Ireland

[3] F. J. B., 'Irish Harp Festival in Belfast', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology,* 9 (1903), 141–41.
[4] *Feis na nGleann*, ed. by Eamon Phoenix and others, pp. 65–86.

for the following few decades'.[5] Eoin MacNeill adjudicated over a hundred entries for the Gaelic-speaking prize, while the literary competitions were judged by writer and nationalist Bulmer Hobson, Ulster Literary Theatre playwright David Parkhill, Stephen Gwynn, and Joseph Campbell. The music adjudicators included the Belfast piper Richard Lewis O'Mealy, Herbert Hughes and William Reynolds, who later became music critic of the *Belfast Evening Telegraph.* Roger Casement served as umpire at the hurling match that concluded the festival.

Joseph Campbell's papers include an affectionate recollection of meeting the poet Padraic Colum at the 1904 feis, following which meeting they became life-long friends:

> It was while marking the essays of schoolchildren that I met Colum. I was sitting apart, under the green hill of Luirgeadan, … when I saw what I mistook for a '*leaprachán*' running at half-trot in my direction. He was hatless, his mop of mahogany-red hair fluttering in the breeze like a chrysanthemum...[6]

Colum provided Campbell with important introductions to the intellectuals of the NLS in Dublin, where, on Gwynn's advice, Campbell also contacted Arthur Griffith, editor of the *United Irishman*, who published Campbell's early prose articles, poems and legends. Both poets would later collaborate with Herbert Hughes: Campbell was an important collaborator in setting the lyrics of folk song arrangements, and Hughes set nine of Padraic Colum's poems in his collection *Songs of Connacht.* Colum's poems were also set by Hamilton Harty, Carl Hardebeck, and Arnold Bax.

6.2 Herbert Hughes

In 1901, Herbert Hughes entered the Royal College of Music in London where he studied with Charles Wood, Herbert Sharpe and Charles Villiers Stanford, and accompanied singers under the tuition of Gustave Garcia.[7] Wood may have

[5] Jack Magee, 'Brothers in Arts: Joseph and John Campbell and the first Glens Feis', in *Feis na nGleann*, ed. by Phoenix and others, pp. 78–86 (p. 83).
[6] Norah Saunders and A. A. Kelly, *Joseph Campbell, Poet & Nationalist 1879–1944: A Critical Biography* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988), p. 21.
[7] Some recent sources give 1901 as the date of Hughes graduation, but this is contradicted by multiple other sources that claim Hughes was still a student at the RCM at the time of collecting materials for *Songs of Uladh*. Magee, 'Brothers in Arts', p. 82. Joseph Ryan, 'Herbert Hughes' in Grove Music Online <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43083>. 'Herbert Hughes', *The Musical Times*, 78, (1937), p. 464.

encouraged his interest in folk song: in 1904, both musicians became founder members of the IFSS. However, the seminal influence on Hughes's later direction was his introduction to Bigger and the Ardrigh coterie. Hughes's daughter Angela also recounts anecdotes of the family's gatherings with the Campbells, at whose house they met to talk, read poetry or sing around the piano.[8]

Hughes was recruited by Bigger to assist in the collection of the folksongs of the northwest region, and in 1903, Bigger organised an expedition to Donegal to research and document the Gaelic culture of the region. Of particular interest to the collectors were the unrecorded airs and folksongs, Hughes noting in *Songs of Uladh* (the publication that followed the trip) that Petrie's collection had contained few airs from this region, and those that had been included were 'not at all familiar in the North.'[9] On returning to Belfast, Hughes suggested to Joseph Campbell that they collaborate to create arrangements of the songs with new English lyrics in sympathy with the collected airs. An account in a biography of the poet describes Hughes and Campbell working together at the piano at Loretto Cottage, the Campbells' Belfast home, where Hughes repeatedly played the airs to Campbell as he worked on the lyrics.[10] In 1904, they published *Songs of Uladh*, financed by Bigger and with illustrations by John Campbell. The songbook itself reflected Bigger's support of local Irish crafts and industries, with an introductory note proudly proclaiming:

> These old airs were collected in Ulster, the words written and the illustrations drawn in the same Province by three Ulster youths. The printing has been done in Belfast, and all the blocks made there. The paper was made at Ballyclare, in the County of Antrim. The work is, therefore, essentially a home product.[11]

The book was a high-quality production and was clearly a labour of love as well as an expression of patriotism for its creators: Joseph Campbell explicitly invoked the old Gaelic writers who concluded their books with: 'Do scríobh mé an leabhar so do cum onóra na h-Éireann' ('I wrote this book for the honour of Ireland'). As was fashionable with many revivalists, Hughes used a Gaelic pseudonym to publish the book, Padraig Mac Aodh O'Neill, while Joseph and John Campbell used the Irish

[8] Angela Hughes, p. 7–8.
[9] Padraig Mac Aodh O'Neill and Seosamh MacCathmhaoil, *Songs of Uladh* (Belfast: William Mullan, 1904), preface. 'Uladh' is the Gaelic name for Ulster, the north-eastern province of Ireland comprising the nine counties of Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan, Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone.
[10] Saunders and Kelly, p. 24.
[11] *Songs of Uladh*, introductory note.

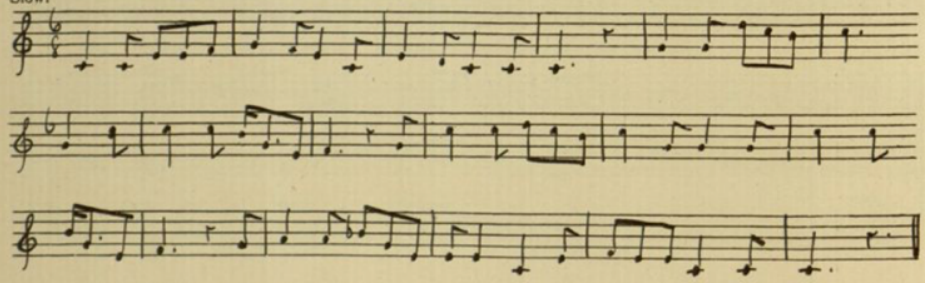
version of their names, Seosamh and Seaghan MacCathmhaoil respectively. A note by Joseph Campbell apologises (but offers no explanation) for being unable to write the songs 'in the traditional language: "An Gaedhelig breagh, blasta, binn"' ('The fine, delicious, sweet Gaelic'). As he had not travelled to Donegal with Hughes, and Hughes had little Irish, this may simply have been a result of a failure to collect the original words. Extensive background information on the songs was provided, intending to bring the singer, 'into sympathetic touch with the soil and its breakers'. In other notes, Hughes described collecting airs which were whistled to him or played on the 'fidil' (fiddle) or were sung to alternative ballads in English, which are named, but not documented, excepting one or two examples where a verse or a chorus is noted. Campbell provided new lyrics for the remainder: fifteen songs that he considered indigenous to the area and three further songs described as 'Anglo-Irish ballads'. Additionally, the book contains several marches, reels, jigs and cotillons, including 'The March of the Clan Suibhne of Fanad' from whose descendants Hughes claimed to have collected the majority of the airs. Stephen Gwynn, a Protestant nationalist politician and journalist, introduced Hughes to Prionsias Mac Suibhne, a local collector and clansman who provided about half the airs published in the book. Hughes obtained further tunes from other members of the family.

Songs of Uladh begins with a tribute to 'The Clan Suibhne' followed by 'The March of the Clan Suibhne' as transcribed from the playing of Prionnseas mac Suibhne. Throughout the book, the music is notated in hand-written score, with the melody as collected given first, followed, in the case of the songs, by Joseph Campbell's newly composed lyrics, and a hand-written arrangement with accompaniment by Herbert Hughes. The text names the individuals from which the tunes were collected, thereby legitimising the source and the tradition from which the air came. Figure 6.1 shows 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby', the melody of which was 'sung to a ballad now forgotten'. The new lyrics, however, incorporate many folkloric references, with extensive notes giving background to the various fairy-folk that populate the text. On the facing page in the book (Figure 6.2) is Hughes's single-verse arrangement for piano. Hughes added a short prelude incorporating open fifths and a flattened 7th, introducing modal ambiguity from the outset. The open fifths continue throughout the piece in the left hand piano part. The harmonic palette is restrained, relying primarily on a I–IV–I–V7 progression in bars 5–9, with a brief

The Gartan-Mother's-Lullaby

I got this air from Cait ni Dubhthaigh, who sang it to me. She heard it at a fair in Leitir-Canadhnain when she was a child. It was sung to a ballad now forgotten.

Slow.



SLEEP, O babe, for the red-bee hums
The silent twilight's fall:
Aoibheall from the Grey Rock comes
To wrap the world in thrall.
A leanbhan O, my child, my joy,
My love and heart's-desire,
The crickets sing you lullaby
Beside the dying fire.

Dusk is drawn, and the Green Man's Thorn
Is wreathed in rings of fog:
Siabhra sails his boat till morn
Upon the Starry Bog.
A leanbhan O, the paly moon
Hath brimmed her cusp in dew,
And weeps to hear the sad sleep-tune
I sing, O love, to you.

Faintly sweet doth the chapel bell
Ring o'er the valley dim:
Tearmann's peasant-voices swell
In fragrant evening hymn.
A leanbhan O, the low bell rings
My little lamb to rest
And angel-dreams, till morning sings
Its music in your breast.

Sleep, O babe, for the red-bee hums
The silent twilight's fall
Aoibheall from the Grey Rock comes
To wrap the world in thrall.
A leanbhan O, my child, my joy,
My love and heart's-desire,
The crickets sing you lullaby
Beside the dying fire.

AOIBHEALL OF CARRAIG-LIATH—
Commonly known as "Aoibhinn the Beautiful"—is queen of the northern Fairies, as Cliodhna of Tonn-Cliodhna is queen of the southern. For further information on this interesting lady see Douglas Hyde's *Literary History of Ireland*, also Dr. Joyce's *Irish Names of Places*.

THE GREEN MAN—
Fear-Glas—is own brother to the Scottish *Bodach-Glas*, or Fetch. They say if you see him in the morning, "no ill follows"; but if at night, death or some other terrible misfortune will surely overtake you. He is sometimes called *Fear-Liath*, or the Grey Man. There is a curious volcanic fissure in the cliff-face near Beann-mor (Fair Head) in the Co. Aondruim. It is called *Cosan-fhir-liath, i.e.*, the Grey Man's Path; and the fisher-people dwelling about those coasts tell some wonderful stories of the Genius that is supposed to make it his highway to the sea in his daily journeys from Cuil-na-locha inland. Mrs. S. C. Hall has recorded a typical one. She writes:—

"The Grey Man's Path most riveted our attention. 'Did you ever see the Grey Man?' we inquired of a boatman. 'God forbid! it's not that sort I'd be liking to see. The likes of him only come to the place for trouble. I heard say, before the great ship was wrecked off Port-na-Spania, he was known to have decoyed the vessel in, and that when he 'ticed it on the rocks he flitted away to his own berth up there and clapped his hands, and the echo of that clap pitched yon rock out to sea from the headland, as you would pitch a marble.'

"'And was he never seen since?'

"'It was a year or two before the troubles that my father, dodging about in his boat, thinking to run to Baile-Mairge—for it was winter time—saw it between him and the setting sun, like a wreath of smoke passing over the water. As it drew near the coast it grew into the shape of a giant, folded in his cloak from head to foot. Then it went up the cliff, and stopped where that fallen pillar rests. Above the path, there, it made a pause, and turning round, spread its arms forward either for a blessing or a curse. Too well was it proved to be for a curse,' added the boatman; and then he went on to tell of the ruin of the neighbouring colliery by the fall of part of the cliff above its works. 'And who knows,' says he, in conclusion, 'what might happen if the Grey Man came to pay us another visit?'"

The *Fear-Liath* is cousin-once-removed to that gruesome joker *Fear-Dearg*, and some distant relation of *Fear-Gorta*, the Man of Hunger, or Famine Spirit—

"The Brown Man o' the Moor, that stays
Beneath the heather-bell."

Fig. 6.1 Facsimile of 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby' from *Songs of Uladh*, p. 34
Image courtesy of Digital Library at Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

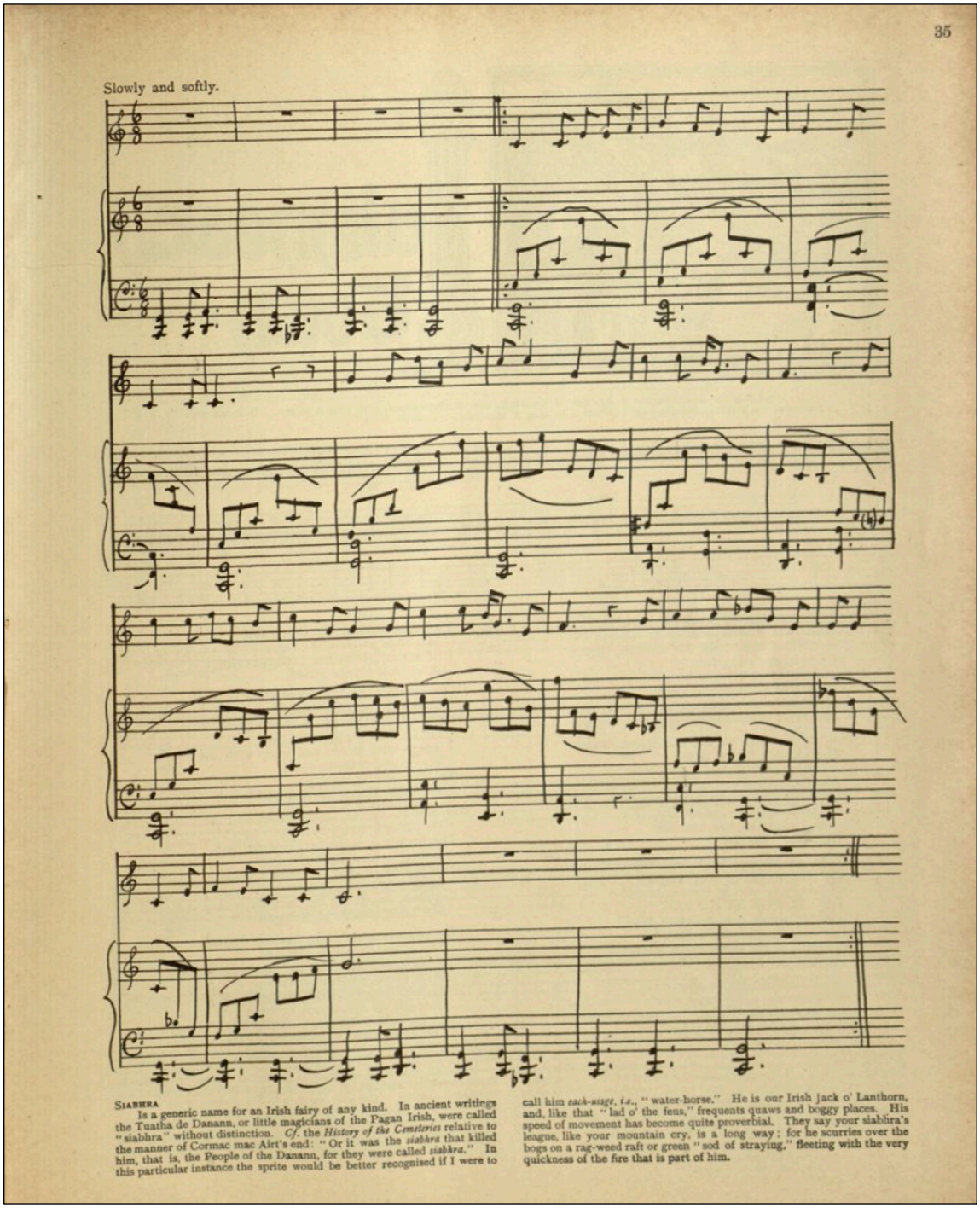


Fig. 6.2 Facsimile of 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby' from *Songs of Uladh*, p. 35
Image courtesy of Digital Library at Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

reference to the dominant and subdominant keys before returning to C and the open fifths in the conclusion. This pairing of the collected melody with an arrangement suited for performance with piano represents an innovative approach designed to maximise the appeal and usefulness of the songbook. With this approach, the authors provided an 'authentic' version complete with background information, and an arrangement of the air with new English lyrics designed to appeal to a broad audience.

A number of the songs first paired with Campbell's lyrics and published in *Songs of Uladh* retain their popularity over a century later, the best-known of which include 'My Lagan Love', 'The Blue Hills of Antrim', 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby' and 'The Ninepenny Fidil'. In this new setting, they attracted the attention of another young composer from Ulster—Hamilton Harty published his own arrangements of three of the songs taken from *Songs of Uladh* the following year, in a collection entitled *Three Traditional Ulster Airs*. Harty's publication credits Seosamh MacCathmhaoil as the lyricist, with a footnote acknowledging 'The tunes of these Songs are taken from Herbert Hughes's collection of Ulster Airs.' Seeing his discoveries successfully exploited by Harty, Hughes must have felt some chagrin, much as Edward Bunting had with Thomas Moore. Encouraged by Bigger, Hughes sued (unsuccessfully) for breach of copyright; however, as folksong has no copyright, the case was dismissed.[12]

Separately, Chappell published 'The Ninepenny Fidil' in 1904 in a considerably extended arrangement by Hughes, and made it available in three different keys, a testament to its expected popularity and appeal to different voice ranges. With this piece, Hughes made his first appearance at a Chappell ballad concert in Queen's Hall, London the same year. This was followed by publication of 'The Stuttering Lovers' and 'The Maid of the Sweet Brown Knowe', also made available in several keys. Like 'The Ninepenny Fidil', these songs are strophic settings of folk melodies, with English-language lyrics describing light-hearted romantic encounters in rustic settings.

Around this time, Hughes became involved with the separatist 'Dungannon Clubs'. The clubs were founded in Belfast in 1905 by two others of Bigger's circle: the activist Denis McCullough, who was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB); and Bulmer Hobson, who was a founder of the Ulster Literary

[12] Angela Hughes, p. 10.

Theatre in addition to his IRB activities. The clubs pursued nonsectarian, republican and separatist goals, claiming in their manifesto that 'England governs this country against the wishes of its people', and calling on 'the utmost opposition from the people' against the 'immoral and indefensible' occupation.[13] The clubs had social and cultural aims in addition to their radical political objectives, and Hobson described the movement as 'semi-literary, semi-political and patriotic.'[14] In 1907, the clubs were subsumed into Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin movement. Hughes began attending their meetings and was instrumental in setting up the London branch of the Society, Dungannon Club No.4.[15] As outlined below, Hughes's involvement with the clubs would cost him an opportunity to work with one of the leading lights of the Literary Revival at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

Yeats referred to meeting Hughes in a letter to Lady Gregory in 1905, when he described the composer as 'the Irish musician Synge is always speaking of.'[16] Yeats was somewhat disparaging of the younger poets in his circle, and in a letter to Katharine Tynan wrote:

> I have plans for improving our new poets myself. I want to get them to write songs to be sung between the acts. Herbert Hughes will set them and we have a fine singer in Sara Allgood. I hope to begin with two groups of songs—one selected from the *Rushlight* man [Joseph Campbell], Colum, and so on, and one chosen from Johnson, you and myself. I will get them sung so as to make the words as expressive as possible.[17]

According to Hughes's daughter Angela, Yeats liked her father personally 'if not his republican leanings' and thought his contacts might be useful to the theatre.[18] Writing to Lady Gregory later in 1905, Yeats even suggested that 'it might be of great advantage to leave our music wholly to him. He would take pride in it and as he cares for very little except Folk songs would make it as Irish as possible.'[19] There is evidence of some collaboration between the playwright and the composer: in his

[13] Bulmer Hobson, 'To the Whole People of Ireland: The Manifesto of the Dungannon Club Belfast', August 1905. Dublin, NLI, Bulmer Hobson Papers, 1905–1968, MS 13,166/4.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 11.
[16] Yeats to Lady Gregory, 14 March 1905, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats,* ed. by John Kelly and others, 5 vols (Oxford: OUP,1986–2018), IV, p. 56.
[17] Yeats to Katharine Tynan, 1 September 1906. *Collected Letters,* IV ed. by Kelly and others, pp. 486–90 (p. 490).
[18] Angela Hughes, p. 12.
[19] Yeats to Lady Gregory, 11 November 1905. *Collected Letters,* IV ed. by John Kelly and others, pp. 221–22.

notes to a revised version of *On Baile's Strand* (one of a cycle of plays on the Cuchulain legend), Yeats wrote:

> Mr. Herbert Hughes has written the music for the Fool's song in the opening dialogue, and another friend a little tune for the three women. These songs, like all other songs in our plays, are sung so as to preserve as far as possible the intonation and speed of ordinary passionate speech, for nothing can justify the degradation of an element of life even in the service of an art.[20]

Despite this early collaboration, the connection was not pursued. Angela Hughes claims that the theatre's patron Annie Horniman did not approve of Hughes's music or his nationalism, and the theatre was too dependent on her patronage to ignore her. He remained an occasional contributor to the theatre, providing incidental music for the 1908 play *The Absentee* by W. W. Keene and A. P. Graves, and songs for the Belfast writer James Bernard Fagan's play *An Adventure with Pepys*, produced for the London stage in 1926.[21] He also wrote the music for Seán O'Casey's play *Within the Gates*, which premiered in the Royalty Theatre, London in 1934.[22]

6.2.1 Career in London

Hughes settled in London, where he pursued a career as composer, collector, music publisher, and critic. He joined the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* as a music critic in 1911, a position which brought him into contact with many eminent musicians and required frequent international travel. He also contributed to *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Saturday Review* (where he was music editor from 1931–32) and the Irish newspaper *The Nationalist.* His home in Chelsea, London, became a gathering place for artists, musicians, and writers, reminiscent of the gatherings his mentor Bigger had instigated in Belfast. One such visitor, the writer and nationalist Denis Ireland, recalled meeting Hughes at one such gathering:

> Herbert Hughes turned out to be exactly what I had imagined a composer and arranger of Irish airs ought to be—a twinkling little button of a man, a sort of cross between Franz Schubert disguised in an Irish tweed suit

[20] W. B. Yeats, *Poems, 1899–1905* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1906), p. 278.
[21] W. W. Keene & Alfred Perceval Graves, *The Absentee: An Irish Play in 2 Acts* (London: Women's Printing Society, [1908]). J. B. Fagan, *"And so to Bed" (An adventure with Pepys)* (London: Samuel French, 1926).
[22] Seán O'Casey, *Within the Gates* (London: Macmillan, 1933).

> and a slightly Hibernicised Mr. Pickwick, with, incidentally, the most musical speaking voice I have ever heard.[23]

During the first world war, Hughes joined the Artists' Rifles in the British Army Reserve, completing his officer's training at TCD prior to serving on the intelligence staff in the Middle East.[24] Such a move suggests Hughes had distanced himself from more radical politics by this point, and he had also ceased active participation in the IFSS, concentrating his musical efforts on arrangements of Irish songs and some original song. The writer and folk music scholar John Paddy Browne claims that Hughes

> was under no illusion […] that folksong could be returned to the lips of the social class who once sang it by enforcing a middle- or upper-class scholastic revival of it upon them. Hughes planned for the day when, popularized through attractive performances by concert artists, folksong would be given a fresh currency, a new lease on life—not *in* a revived ethnic tradition, but as a *new* tradition in which the tunes, albeit with occasional new or edited words, would come again into popular use.[25]

Such ideas were out of sympathy with the aims of the IFSS, and Hughes contributed little to its journal after the initial issues.

In 1909, Boosey published what was to be the first of four volumes of *Irish Country Songs*; collections of Irish airs edited and arranged by Hughes and generally considered to be Hughes's most significant contribution to Irish music.[26] Hughes quickly established himself with the publishing house which issued many of the songs from the volume in single sheet copies, as well as additional arrangements of texts by Thomas Moore ('When he who adores thee', 'Has sorrow thy young days shaded', 'At the mid hour of night', and others) and Oliver St John Gogarty ('My love is Dark' and 'Gaze on me, though you gaze in scorn').

Between 1920 and 1922, Hughes published a series of songs under the title *Historical Songs and Ballads of Ireland*, an eclectic collection of nationalist songs, including sentimental and humourous songs by William Shield, Samuel Lover and William Allingham, rebel songs from 1798 ('General Munroe'), and new arrangements of perenial favourites from Moore's melodies ('Oft in the Stilly Night',

[23] Denis Ireland, 'When Herbert Hughes "got back his sight"', *Belfast Telegraph*, 19 October 1957, p. 4.
[24] Angela Hughes, p. 14.
[25] John Paddy Browne, 'Herbert Hughes (1882–1937), His Irish Country Songs', *Eire-Ireland* 18 (1982), 103–112, (p. 109).
[26] Hilary Bracefield, 'Herbert Hughes', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 505–05. Joseph J. Ryan, 'Herbert Hughes', *Grove Music Online,* <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43083>

'She is far from the Land', 'Silent, O Moyle', and others). Fellow music critic Ernest Newman wrote an introduction for the series noting its catholicity of choice, and claiming that 'With a fine impartiality, [Hughes] is both green and orange'.[27] The songs chimed well with the demand for drawing room ballads (a genre that remained popular), and newly emerging recording opportunities. John McCormack, a frequent visitor to the Hughes's home in Chelsea, was a regular advocate for his songs. In 1924, with Fritz Kreisler on violin and Edwin Schneider on piano, McCormack recorded Hughes's setting of Moore's 'I saw from the beach', released on 78 phonograph. This was paired with Larchet's 'Padraic the Fiddiler'. Irish baritone James McCafferty also recorded a number of his songs with Hughes at the piano: these include 'The Spanish Lady' and 'A Ballynure Ballad'.[28]

Hughes's compositions and arrangements secured him further contracts, with publishing houses including Enoch and Sons, J. B. Cramer, Augener, and Metzler including his works in their catalogues. But his relationship with Boosey was to be the most significant, and he later took on the role of musical advisor to the house.[29] It was his job at *The Daily Telegraph,* however, that afforded him financial stability, and when he lost that position in 1932, he was suddenly thrown into difficult circumstances. Forced to let the house in Chelsea, he took the family to Kerry where he set about collecting more music. He published a number of collections around this time, the first of which was *Old Irish Melodies*, a selection of melodies from the Bunting manuscripts with accompaniments by Hughes and lyrics by the English poet Harold Boulton.

Old Irish Melodies has never received the attention that *Irish Country Songs* did, but the combination of Bunting's melodies and lyrics in the romantic national tradition (for example, 'Grania's lament for Dermot', 'The Forlorn Queen') and Hughes's sensitive arrangements have ensured that some of the songs remain in active concert repertory. In 1933, Hughes published *The Kilmacrenan Edition*, instrumental music for violin or cello and piano, the title a reference to the area where he had first collected tunes with F. J. Bigger. Two further volumes of *Irish Country*

[27] Herbert Hughes, *Historical Songs and Ballads* (London: Metzler, 1922), introductory note by Ernest Newman.
[28] Herbert Hughes, *The Spanish Lady, A Ballynure Ballad*, James McCafferty (His Master's Voice, B3446–7, 1930).
[29] Roy Johnston, 'Herbert Hughes', in *DIB* < https://dib-cambridge-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=CC84131C2A9C4577C9E08F2D09136F3F> [accessed 18 March 2021]

Songs would follow in 1935 and 1936 respectively. In early 1937, he was appointed editor of the new Boosey & Hawkes *Gazette*, following the merger of rival companies Boosey & Co. and Hawkes & Son in 1930. The new position saw him commuting to London by train from Brighton, where the family had taken a flat, and Hughes set about designing the *Gazette* with enthusiasm, clearly enjoying the new challenge.[30] Such pleasure was to be short-lived, however. Hughes contracted laryngitis leading to pneumonia; he died on May 1st, 1937, at the relatively young age of fifty-five.

6.2.2 Irish Country Songs

For the first volume of *Irish Country Songs*, Hughes used a variety of sources for lyrics: Padraic Colum's 'She moved thro' the Fair' and Yeats's 'Down by the Sally Gardens' would be particularly successful settings, and were performed and recorded by artists including John McCormack, Harry Plunket Greene and Kathleen Ferrier. Douglas Hyde's translation of *'*An Searc 'gá Dhiúltughadh' from *Love Songs of Connacht* appears as 'My Love, oh she is my love', while 'I wish I had the Shepherd's Lamb' ('As truagh gan peata'n mhaoir agum') was taken from the Petrie collection, with an additional verse added by P. W. Joyce. Hughes notes that these were the only two songs translated from the original Gaelic. The volume also includes a setting of Moore's 'When thro' life unblest we rove' and several settings of Joseph Campbell's poems, including 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby' which had first appeared in *Songs of Uladh*.

Several of the songs are noted as 'Old Ballads' or sometimes as 'fragments'. In the preface, Hughes explains that he avoided editing the rather fragmentary ballads where possible, believing them better in their unpolished state than if he were to attempt to find rhymes for unrhymed verses, or to translate 'some impudent thought into reputable language'. He admits to some re-structuring of verses where a song seemed unnecessarily long or where lines were missing. Others are left as simple fragments. 'You couldn't stop a lover' is only eight bars long, with an additional eight bars of piano introduction; 'B for Barney', a Belfast street song, is similarly brief.

In the introduction to the volume, Hughes noted that 'Musical art is gradually releasing itself from the tyranny of the tempered scale', and expressed his admiration

[30] Herbert Hughes to Suzanne Hughes, 12 January 1937, quoted in Angela Hughes, p. 160.

for the work of Claude Debussy, and support for the idea of returning to the 'freedom of primitive scales'. He also noted the existence of folk tunes with 'intervals less than a semitone' that he found impossible to notate, and hence arranged only melodies that approximated to the modern tempered scale, explaining that:

> I have avoided identifying the harmonic treatment with any formal system of alleged modes, for I feel that to do so is to pin one down to a period, to a date almost. The accompaniments are intended to represent improvisations rather than a defined and permanent harmonic code; each was written thus as it appealed to me at one particular moment.[31]

Nonetheless, several of the songs demonstrate an undeniable modal quality, such as 'She moved thro' the fair' (See Figure 6.3 and 6.4), ostensibly in A♭, but with a repeated final on E♭ suggesting a Mixolydian mode. Hughes's harmonies avoid establishing a recognisable major or minor tonic but emphasise the mode with a persistent B♭–E♭ motif in the bass line. Chord sequences moving in parallel motion are reminiscent of Debussy, while evanescent ideas in the piano (for example, in bar 29) also evoke impressionistic techniques.

Fig. 6.3 Hughes, 'She moved thro' the fair', bars 24–29

The final bars end on an open 5th of E♭ over A♭, inverting the modal tonic and hence de-stabilising it, with a lingering D♭ held over from bar 43, retaining the characteristic

[31] Hughes, *Irish Country Songs* I (1909), preface.

Mixolydian end of the melody. While Hughes never set the final verse of Colum's poem (which made the death of the young woman more explicit), the suggestion of the ghost slipping away can be found in these delicate final bars.

Fig. 6.4 Hughes, 'She moved thro' the fair', bars 40–45

A second volume of *Irish Country Songs* was published in 1914, primarily from the northern counties of Tyrone, Derry, Armagh, and Donegal. Hughes had learned some of the tunes from his nurse, Ellen Boylan, a source that Hughes acknowledged in the earlier volume and in *Songs of Uladh*. For Volume II, however, he freely acknowledged that at least half the songs had been published before, and that the words of most 'are to be found on broadsheets'. Hughes justified the publication claiming that the majority of the songs would be unknown outside the small circle who knew Irish music. All the songs are published with piano accompaniments, which occasionally are almost operatic in scale. For example, 'Cruckhaun Finn' begins with a muscular 39-bar piano prelude, utilising a wide range, dramatic dynamics and accents, tremulo figures, tempo changes, running semiquavers and chromaticisms (Figure 6.5):

Fig. 6.5 Hughes, 'Cruckhaun Finn', bars 1–6

This presents a rather stark contrast to the simple and plaintive melody it introduces (Figures 6.6). While the piece is nominally in E♭ major, the folksong itself suggests a gapped scale based on the Dorian mode, although Hughes avoids definitively establishing a tonic. The first verse, with words by Colum, is accompanied by an unsettling persistent syncopation, while the text describes a lover leaving his beloved, possibly forever. Further dramatic flourishes occur in later verses and in another extended interlude before the final verse, the words of which are given as 'a fragment of a traditional ballad'. The piece ends ambiguously on a dominant chord.

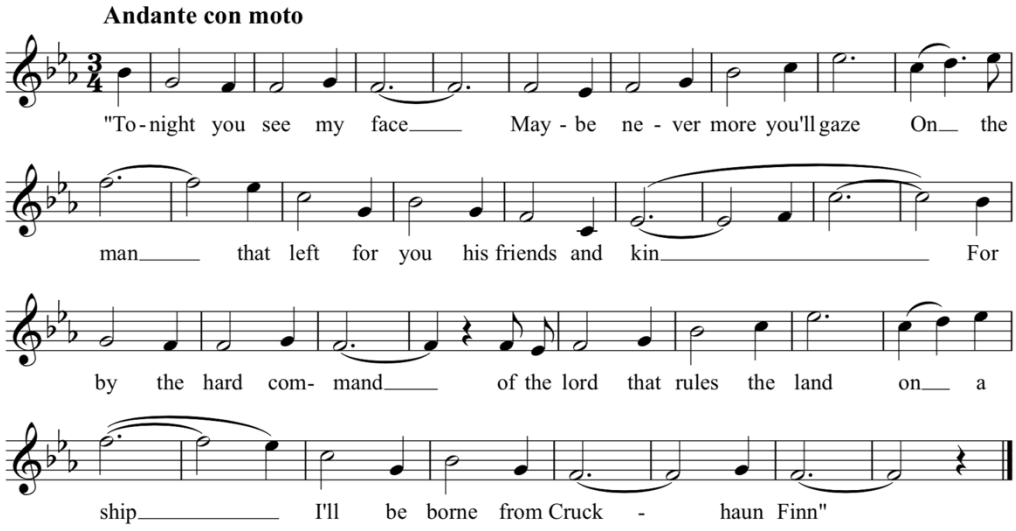


Fig. 6.6 Melody of 'Cruckhaun Finn' extracted from Hughes's arrangement

Hughes is rarely as heavy-handed in his accompaniments as in 'Cruckhaun Finn', although other examples making virtuosic demands on the accompanist can be found. 'The Cork Leg', an arrangement of a humorous broadsheet ballad dating back to at least the early nineteenth century, has a fast, rhythmical accompaniment with demi-semiquaver chromatic runs requiring considerable pianistic skill—with an eye to the amateur musician, however, Hughes provides a simplified 'ossia' in the right hand piano part as an alternative. More typical of his style is his sympathetic treatment of melodies such as 'I will walk with my love', a fragment from Co. Dublin, to which Hughes supplies a simple chordal accompaniment, reflecting motifs from the vocal line and using changing time signatures suggestive of the freer rhythms of the original folk song. The more virtuosic arrangements, however, while they do rather overpower the melodies they accompany, demonstrate considerable facility and show Hughes's experimentation with different styles.

Such were the popularity of the songs, and the success of their pairing with English lyrics, that some would re-enter the oral tradition in later years. When Hughes produced the fourth volume of *Irish Country Songs* in 1936, he described how, during the preceding collecting trip in Kerry, he had met a young singer in Cahirciveen who had sung a number of songs to him. The young man had 'no technical knowledge of music, but always listened when he could to other singers on the radio'.[32] Among the

[32] Hughes, *Irish Country Songs*, IV (1936), introductory notes.

songs he presented was ‘Down by the Sally Gardens’, a text by Yeats which Hughes had set to the tune of ‘The Maids of Mourne Shore’ in 1909. Hughes quotes both his own setting (Figure 6.7) and his transcription of the singer’s interpretation, which had been subtly adjusted (Figure 6.8).

Fig. 6.7 Melody of ‘Down by the Sally Gardens’, Hughes’s setting, 1909

Fig. 6.8 Variant of ‘Down by the Sally Gardens’ as sung by traditional singer, c. 1936.

In Figure 6.8, the singer has freed up the metre (denoted in Hughes’s transcription by the insertion of 5/4 bars and triplet figures), added ornamentation to the melodic line, and with a mobile 7th note suggesting a transient modal switch between Ionian and Mixolydian modes, particularly in the third phrase where the interpretation is at its most varied. Hughes notes that the singer’s recollection of Yeats’s verses was ‘almost without fault’, clearly indicating that it was from Hughes’s setting (and the new medium of radio) that the song had been learned rather than through the traditional oral medium. This new path had not halted the traditional processes of variation and invention, and Hughes seemed pleased and a little flattered to have his setting offered back to him in this unexpected way.

It was not the only song by Hughes to be rehabilitated back into the oral tradition, and the new words were as likely to be altered as the notes to which they were fitted. In the decades that followed, 'She Moved Through the Fair', one of Hughes's most popular and most performed arrangements, underwent similar processes of variation. A debate sprang up in the *Irish Times* in March 1970, triggered by a visit by the Royal Shakespeare Company to the Abbey Theatre. The *Irish Times* drama critic Séamus Kelly took exception to a singer who 'sang most agreeably to his own guitar accompaniment, but who should, in Dublin of all places, have taken the trouble to learn the proper words of "She Moved through the Fair"'.[33] Martin Best, the singer in question, replied quoting several different recordings he had researched in which melody and ornamentation had differed as much as the words. He argued that this was 'surely in keeping with the oral tradition' and noted that the version in Hughes's arrangement was itself adapted from an old ballad.[34] Kelly's retort came through his column 'An Irishman's Diary', where he named Colum as the adaptor and claimed him as 'one of Ireland's greatest living poets', also reproducing Colum's lyrics in full, against which Best's substitutions were deemed 'a lot of pop gobblydegook'.

The exchange elicited further responses from readers offering other versions of the words, none definitively able to prove that their version existed before Colum's. Colum himself had the last word on the subject on the 22nd of April. Then eighty-eight years old and living in the United States, the poet definitively claimed to be the author, and not the adaptor of the ballad. His description of the collecting of the song bears repeating here, as it also sheds light on the process of collaboration:

> Forty or fifty years ago [in actuality, more than sixty] Herbert Hughes and myself made a walking tour through part of Donegal. Herbert had a fiddle, and after we were invited to sit by the fire in one of the cottages, he would play something which would lead to someone in the house remarking, "I have a song like that", or "Uncle knows that song". Among songs that were sung to us, this one, to a really beautiful air, ended:
>
> I dreamt it last night that my young love came in,
> So softly she entered her feet made no din.
> She came close beside me, and this she did say,
> "It will not be long, love, till our wedding day."
>
> It may have been that it was "my dead love" and that "she came close beside me." The rest of the verses were clumsy, and I don't know that either of us wrote them down. But, as was usual with us after a collection

[33] *Irish Times*, 18 March 1970, p. 10.
[34] *Irish Times*, 24 March 1970, p. 9.

> of songs, Herbert Hughes sat down where there was a piano and played over what we had been gifted with, while I tried to make verses that would fit the music. "I dreamt it last night that my young love (or dead love) came" seemed to me what I should work towards. I sent him the verses I had written to London. [...] But a few days later I realised that I had not put into what I had written the obvious fact that the young woman who appeared had died before the marriage—so I wrote another verse and sent it to Herbert. But by this time the music and the earlier verses I had sent were in the hands of the printer.[35]

Colum quoted the additional verse he had inserted, followed by the final (traditional) verse which he had included in the song. The word 'din' had been commented on by the readership; Colum justified its inclusion with a remark which seems oblivious to irony but may be deliberately provocative: 'I didn't like the word "din" in this verse, but who am I to change a chosen word in an authentically traditional song?'[36] In fact, he had admitted to wholesale change of all the remaining verses, deeming them 'clumsy'. His claims, while open to challenge on grounds of both the veracity of his memory and a potential vested interest in claiming authorship, nonetheless do lend credence to existence of an earlier ballad, largely discarded by Hughes and Colum, but which clearly influenced Colum's composition. Versions presented by other correspondants suggest that Colum's ballad had in turn been subsumed into the oral tradition, resulting in multiple versions which freely mixed his original verses with older lyrics from the oral tradition.

At times heated and occasionally humorous, the debate demonstrates that the collection, arrangement and publication of new English versions of traditional songs did not stop the processes of variation that are more typically found in the oral tradition. It also shows the extent to which Colum's and Hughes's setting of 'She moved through the Fair' had been assimilated as a symbol of national identity, a testament to the popularity of the song and the sense of pride and ownership extended to it.

[35] *Irish Times*, 22 April 1970, p. 11.
[36] Ibid.

6.2.3 Original Art Songs

Hughes's folksong arrangements became his major contribution to Irish song, overshadowing his comparatively few original contributions. In 1913, Boosey published *Songs from Connacht: Nine Poems of Padraic Colum set to music by Herbert Hughes*. This would be Hughes's only original collection of songs in an Irish idiom, and of these, only 'O Men from the Fields' is performed with any regularity today. Colum had already attracted attention as a playwright: his play *The Saxon Shillin'*—the title a term of contempt for those who enlisted in the British Army—was a propagandist success and had won a *Cumann na nGaedeal* prize. This was followed by *Broken Soil*, which was produced by the Irish National Dramatic Company in 1903, and *The Land* in 1905. Several of his poems were published in the *United Irishman* and attracted the attention of Yeats, who mentored the younger poet. In 1907, Colum published his first book of poetry, *Wild Earth*, dedicated to Æ, and it was from this volume that most of the songs in Hughes's *Songs of Connacht* are taken.[37] Colum's biographer, Zack Bowen, said of his poetry:

> His language is unpretentious and his verse forms are predominantly lyrical and rhyming with heavily accentuated iambs and tripping anapests, the sort of poems that on first reading tend to inspire song rather than thought.[38]

It was this poetry that inspired Hughes to write his only original song collection, and all but one of the poems in the collection are taken from *Wild Earth*. Although not designated a song cycle, the songs could be performed in sequence and are unified by location and themes of rural country life.

The collection opens with 'Glen Nefin' ('Glen Nevin' in Colum's poetry) and locates the poem in the glen below Connaught's second-highest mountain peak, thus giving the song collection its title. The song is reminiscent of Stanford's setting of Moira O'Neill's 'Lookin' Back'—rolling arpeggios in the piano accompaniment depict seascapes, while the lyrics describe how the ocean divides the narrator from his beloved. Written only a few years after Stanford's *An Irish Idyll*, Hughes's modulations and chromaticisms are noticeably more adventurous. The second poem, 'A Day's End' is a study in loneliness, with a refrain of 'Empty days, and I alive',

[37] Padraic Colum, *Wild Earth* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1907).
[38] Zack Bowen, *Padraic Colum: A Biographical-Critical Introduction* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), p. 25.

which Hughes bases on a B minor triad, the sparse harmonies and steady crotchet beat suggesting the relentless ticking of a clock (Figure 6.9):

Fig. 6.9 Hughes, 'A Day's End', opening bars

The monotony is disturbed at the end of the second verse with a descending whole-tone set accompanied by parallel octaves and fifths, that is answered by a minor pentatonic phrase centred on B in the right hand piano part (Figure 6.10). This leads to a sudden outburst of passion, which Hughes colours with modulatory semiquaver passages and more dramatic dynamics, before returning to the steady crotchets as the refrain returns with final resignation:

> Sleep that is as far as prayer
> (Empty days, and I alive)
> Oh, but take me from the night!
> (Ah, tomorrow I will strive.)

Fig. 6.10 Hughes, 'A Day's End', bars 20–23

The third song, 'The Terrible Robber Men' is a jaunty, humorous piece, followed by 'The Good Men of Eirinn', a song extolling the qualities of Irish men who are true to their loves. 'The Moon Cradle' is a miniature setting of Colum's four-line poem in just 13 bars. 'The City Clocks' has a much more urban feel, with dissonant chord clusters over an E♭/B♭ pedal, depicting the asynchronous chiming of different clocks. Falling and rising diatonic figures in the right hand piano part over the persistent E♭/B♭ ostinato add to the sense of aimlessness in the lyrics (Figure 6.11):

> The city clocks point out the hours,
> They look like moons on the darken'd towers.
> Always I say when I hear their toll
> "Let you pray for your own soul."

Fig. 6.11 Hughes, 'The City Clocks', opening bars

'I heard in the Night the Pigeons' (Colum gives the poem the title 'No Child') also demonstrates Hughes's ability to use pianistic techniques in a Schubertian imitation of natural sounds. Set in common time and the key of E♭, Hughes uses semitonal G♭/G♮ dissonances and semiquaver arpeggios to suggest the sounds of roosting pigeons. Short motifs in a high register interrupt the restless piano movements at the lyrics 'The wild pigeon's stir was tender/Like a child's hand at the breast.' Zack Bowen claims 'No Child' represents one of Colum's most successful poems where he uses a single image to extend an analogy to human behaviour—in this case, the pigeon's stirring about its nest distressing the childless woman who listens.[39] Hughes's sensitivity to the subject and the lyrics are carried through to the following song 'O Men from the Fields' (Colum's 'A Cradle Song'). The lyrics describe a mother with a child in her arms, which can be interpreted a number of ways: depictions of the men coming to visit the child and Mary's 'mantle of blue' recall the stable in Bethlehem, but it could also be an Irish mother invoking the Virgin

[39] Bowen, p. 34–35.

to take care of her child while he sleeps. Other more ominous interpretations are possible: it is not clear if the child is sleeping, or has died, and the men are coming to pay their respects as the mother releases her child to the protection of the Virgin. This ambiguity haunts the song and Hughes's setting meets the challenge, beginning in the 6/8 rhythm typical of cradle songs, and the key of B♭ minor. Semitonal dissonances on unaccented notes and cross-rhythms in the opening bars suggest unease from the beginning (Figure 6.12):

Fig. 6.12 Hughes, 'O Men from the Fields', opening bars

'From reek of the smoke and cold of the floor' is dramatised with a *più animando* leading to a dramatic climax at the 'peering of things across the half door' (Figure 6.13), as the song modulates to the subdominant minor. Two short sequential phrases are followed by a more extended phrase leading to the remote key of G minor at the climax of the song.

Fig. 6.13 Hughes, 'O Men from the Fields', bars 29–37

In this passage, Hughes also uses cross-rhythms in the piano part with tuplets against triplets increasing the rhythmic complexity as the song approaches its emotional climax. A short piano interlude then returns to the original key and a recapitulation of the opening material. This song perhaps demonstrates Hughes's compositional abilities at their finest, and is his best-known and most recorded original song. The collection concludes with a simple but effective setting of 'A Rann of Exile', the poem referring to the sense of loss felt by an emigrant who left during the Famine years and the yearning for the hearths of Connacht.

6.2.4 The Joyce Book

One final project bears mention here: Hughes's role in the preparation of a homage to James Joyce who, along with Padraic Colum, was a close friend. In *Our Friend James Joyce*, Colum recalls 'halycon days and ambrosial nights' spent in Paris with Joyce and Hughes as they planned approaching the leading musicians in Europe to make settings of Joyce's *Pomes Penyeach*.[40] Conceived as a testimonial to Joyce, it was intended that the composers would donate their work and that all proceeds would go to Joyce. The book, which made its formal appearance on February 2nd, 1933 (Joyce's 51st birthday) was a limited edition and featured musical settings by E. J. Moeran, Arnold Bax and Hughes, as well as by avant-garde composers such as George Antheil and Roger Sessions. Joyce wrote to Hughes on the 19th of February: 'I got the O.U.P. book at last… You have certainly made a fine thing of it and I feel greatly honoured.'[41] Commercially, however, it was not a success, with Joyce complaining to his son that 'the proceeds have been *netissimo,* that is, a net nothing'.[42]

Figure 6.14 shows the opening bars of 'She weeps over Rahoon', in which Hughes sounds an echo of the Revival through musical means: an Irish traditional-style motif sounds over a very restrained accompaniment suggesting F Mixolydian mode, while the melody enters in F Dorian mode.

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[40] Mary and Padraic Colum, *Our Friend James Joyce* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 223–25.
[41] Joyce to Hughes, 19 February 1933, copy in the possession of H. C. Crackanthorpe, quoted in David Crackanthorpe, 'To Herbert Hughes of Belfast from James Joyce of Dublin', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 17 (1980), 125–40 (p. 135).
[42] *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Richard Ellmann and others, 3 vols (London: Faber and Faber, 1957–66), III (1966), p. 338.

Fig. 6.14 Hughes, 'She Weeps Over Rahoon', opening bars

Elements of tonal ambiguity continue in the middle verse (bars 26–40) where the Dorian melody is layered over shifting A♭/A♮ polarities, and time signatures alternate between 5/4, 3/4 and 4/4, reminiscent of Hardebeck's treatment of rhythmically free folk melodies (see Chapter 8). The song returns to a variation of the restrained opening accompaniment for the final verse. With this impressionistic treatment of identifiably Irish elements, Hughes hints at his potential to meet the criteria of a hypothetical Irish school of composition as envisaged by Esposito, Harty and others.[43] He was a composer steeped in Irish idioms, whose regrettably small output of original song suggested that he was capable of re-fashioning those idioms within a twentieth century context and musical language.

[43] See pp. 114–15 and p. 202.

6.3 Charlotte Milligan Fox

Charlotte Milligan Fox has been introduced in Chapter 3 in connection with her role founding the IFSS with Alfred Perceval Graves and Herbert Hughes. She was also a song collector and composer in her own right, and many of her songs show a strong revival connection. She is particularly credited with the revival of interest in the harp as a national instrument following her discovery of the Bunting manuscripts.[44]

Born on St Patrick's Day (17 March) 1864 in the northern county of Tyrone, Charlotte belonged to a family of staunch unionists, although her sister, the poet Alice Milligan, later devoted herself to the republican cause, and their younger brother Ernest Milligan described himself as an 'ardent Nationalist' in later life.[45] Their father, Seaton Milligan, was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and an associate of F. J. Bigger and his Ardrigh coterie. Their mother, Charlotte Elizabeth Milligan, was an accomplished musician and four of her children, including Charlotte, attended European conservatories.[46] Charlotte initially studied classical music and piano at the musical Conservatoire in Frankfurt for two years, before studying at the Royal College of Music in London for another year and completing her education at the Conservatoire in Milan.[47]

Many of Fox's projects were family collaborations. Her sisters Alice and Edith joined her on collecting trips in Antrim and Tyrone and regularly contributed lyrics for songs that she collected. Her brother Ernest also wrote lyrics for the songs, while Edith, Evelyn and Kathleen sang them at various public events.[48] Charlotte, in turn, provided live Irish music for Alice's lectures and 'magic lantern' shows (stories accompanied by projected images), and also wrote music for her play, *The Last Feast of the Fianna*, which was performed by the Irish Literary Theatre in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin in 1900.[49]

She married in 1892 and settled in London, confining her interests in Irish nationalism to the cultural sphere. She joined the ILS in London, and when the Folk Song Society was formed under the auspices of the Literary Society in 1898, she was

[44] Sara Lanier, 'Milligan Fox, Charlotte', in *CITM*, p. 455–55.
[45] Ernest Milligan, 'I first met Connolly…', *Irish Freedom,* June 1943, p. 8.
[46] Fox, *Annals*, xiv.
[47] Ibid., xv.
[48] Fionnuala Carson Williams, 'Fox, Charlotte Olivia (née Milligan)', in *DIB* <https://dib-cambridge-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/quicksearch.do> [accessed 7 June 2021]
[49] Morris, p. 244 and p. 259.

an early member, publishing her first musical arrangements of folk songs the same year. She also began publishing prose articles on Irish music, including articles for Standish O'Grady's *All Ireland Review*. On the formation of the IFSS, Charlotte and Alice joined the publications committee (Charlotte serving as editor and honorary secretary of the Society) and published musical scores and articles about the songs they collected in the *JIFSS*. Her arrangements were also published separately by publishers including Boosey, Chappell, Cranmer and others.

Donal O'Sullivan, who succeeded Fox as editor of the Journal in 1919, claimed that 'under Mrs. Fox's editorship, the publications of the Irish Folk Song Society fell far below the standard set by those of the parent [Folk Song] Society.'[50] Tom Munnelly would concur:

> From its beginnings the JIFSS may be considered a ragbag or a treasure trove, depending on one's point of view. For much of its life it lacked the comparative sophistication of its sister journal, the *Journal of the Folk Song Society.* This air of amateurishness is however ultimately endearing and makes re-reading of these journals a pleasant experience because of their very unpredictability. The contributions range from learned essays to single tunes which have the appearance of being scribbled in haste and presented in the same manner. There is a liberal sprinkling of folk songs in English notably, in the earlier volumes, from Mrs Milligan Fox and Honoria Galwey.[51]

More generous evaluations acknowledge that the journal contained 'an important corpus of traditional song', and that Fox's work 'especially through the agency of the Irish Folk Song Society, is still widely regarded'.[52] In a recent scholarly reprint of *The Annals of the Irish Harpers*, the editor Sara C. Lanier concluded that O'Sullivan, in criticising Fox's work, had indulged in

> a common arrogance of attitude of the professional academic, that of using the criticism of work, often of equal if not greater merit, undertaken by the amateur, who by being outside the profession has no recognised right to reply, in order to further his own career and reputation.[53]

This is a stinging criticism, but follows a careful comparison of Fox's work on the Bunting manuscripts with a later edit by O'Sullivan, which found that O'Sullivan's work showed a greater degree of carelessness and caprice. O'Sullivan continued to

[50] Donal O'Sullivan, 'The Irish Folk Song Society', in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* ed. by Aloys Fleischmann (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), p. 295.
[51] Munnelly, *Collected Essays*, p. 355.
[52] Adeleh Davis, 'Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society (JIFSS)'. Jennifer O'Connor, 'Fox, Charlotte Milligan', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 406–07 (p. 407).
[53] Sara C. Lanier, 'Donal O'Sullivan and Charlotte Milligan Fox's versions of *The Memoirs of Arthur O'Neill*', appendix in Fox, *Annals,* pp. 319–22 (p. 322).

edit the Journal until 1939, devoting the final six volumes exclusively to his academic work on the Bunting manuscripts. Publication was discontinued at the outbreak of the second world war, although, as Munnelly also pointed out, 'any project (however worthy) which took over a publication for a period of fourteen years was bound to lead to a loss of subscribers with other interests.'[54] In fact, neither the IFSS nor its journal survived the second world war.

In 1906, Fox collaborated with other Ardrigh acquaintances when she published *Four Irish Songs* with lyrics by Alice and Edith and featuring black and white illustrations by John Campbell (Seaghán Mac Cathmhaoil) and bound in 'Belfast Linen'.[55] Short notes introduce each song detailing its provenance, including the original Gaelic poem for 'The Connaught Caoine', with words by Tadhg Ó Donnchadha, translated by Alice. The collection was dedicated to members of the IFSS and featured three folk song arrangements and an original song by Fox, 'Mayo Love Song'. A second collection published the same year featured the poetry of Ethna Carbery, the pseudonym of Anna Johnston, who, with Alice, had co-edited the nationalist journal *The Shan Van Vocht*. Carbery's poetry collection, *The Four Winds of Eirinn*, published posthumously in 1902 and featuring poems from *The Shan Van Vocht* had proved very popular, running to nine editions in its first year.[56] *Songs from 'The Four Winds of Eirinn'* was sold as a set of six separate octavos (five folk song arrangements and one original song), unusually featuring colour prints by Campbell, with card covers tied with silk ribbon. The art historian Paul Larmour notes that this song collection represents a comparatively rare example of 'art printing' in Ireland at the turn of the century.[57] An illustration from the set is shown in Figure 6.15. The set of songs, evidently intended as an elegant tribute to a popular poet and close friend of the family, can be seen as an exemplar of revival work, highlighting the work of a contemporary musician, poet and artist, while disseminating arrangements of Irish melodies, and referencing Irish lore.

[54] Munnelly, *Collected Essays*, p. 355.
[55] 'Review', *JIFSS*, 5 (1907), 38–38.
[56] Paul Larmour, 'John Campbell (1883–1962): An Artist of the Irish Revival', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 14 (1998), 62–73 (p. 66).
[57] Ibid.

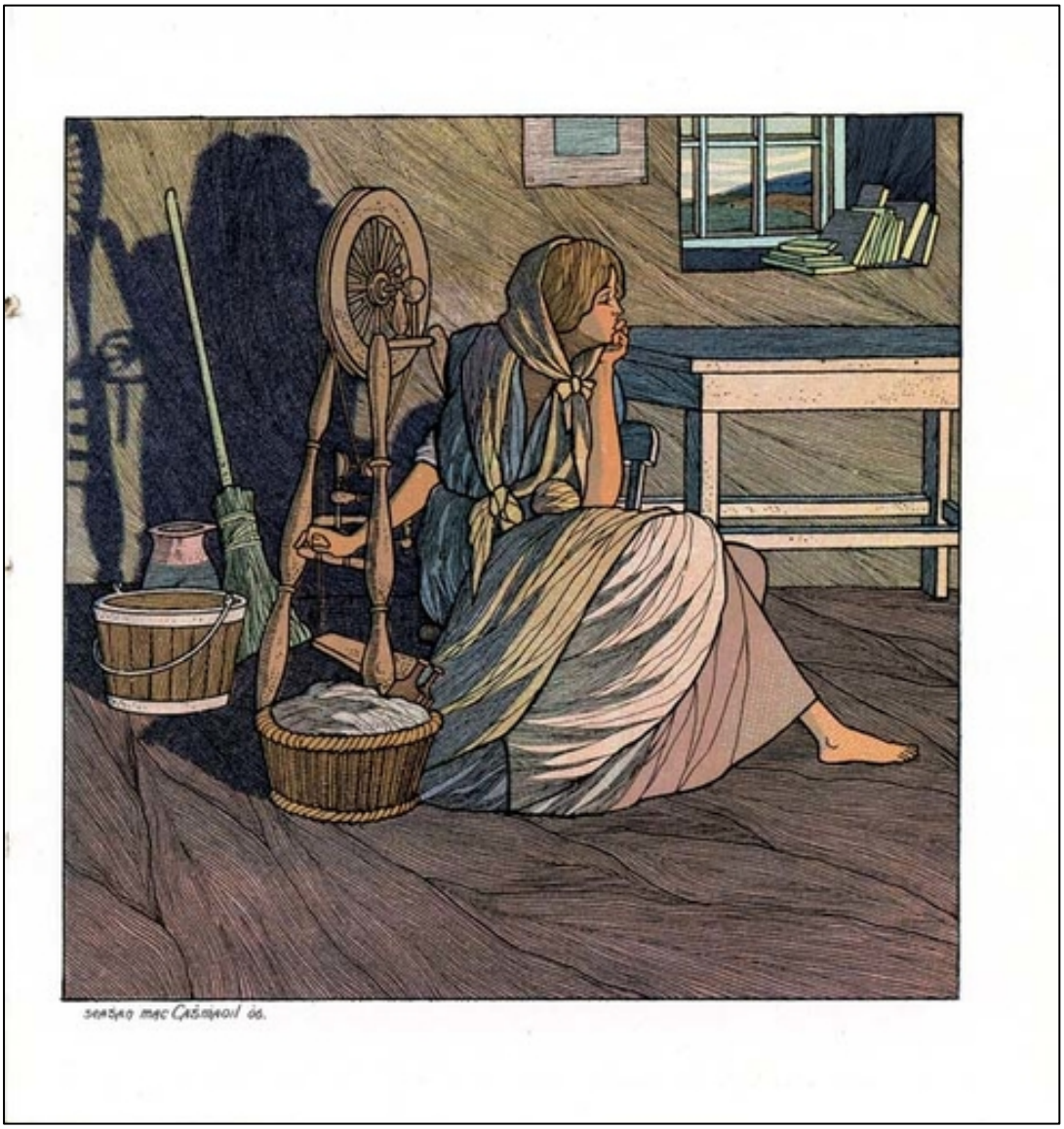

Fig. 6.15 Campbell, 'Thinkin' Long' illustration from *Songs from "The Four Winds of Eirinn"* Image courtesy of the ITMA.

Fox's original songs in these collections are unambitious in scope and in the style of the folk songs she collected. 'Beannacht Leat', the final song in the *Four Winds* collection, is essentially a dirge featuring a slow march in D minor. Syllabic word-setting and pauses at phrase endings deliberately evoke hymnody, appropriately enough in the context, but scarcely memorable as an original piece of composition (see Figure 6.16):

Fig. 6.16 Fox, 'Beannacht Leat', bars 1–6

Some time around 1906, a chance event at a music shop in Battersea, London, led Fox to the discovery of the Bunting manuscripts when a shop assistant referred her to Bunting's grandson, Dr Louis MacRory, who was in possession of Bunting's unpublished manuscripts. Fox detailed her meeting with MacRory in her subsequent publication the *Annals of the Irish Harpers*.[58] Having satisfied himself of her credentials, MacRory made the collection available to her and referred her to other family members for further manuscripts. Fox found herself in possession of a collection that included Bunting's musical notebooks, letters, the journal of Patrick Lynch and his transcriptions of the Irish lyrics of many of the collected airs. Fox began to publish some of her findings in the *JIFSS* from volume IV onwards, initially publishing Bunting's *Prospectus of a General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. [59] Volume VI of the journal contains airs and ballads selected from the manuscripts with both Irish and English words, some taken from the manuscripts and some translated by Alice.[60] This marked the first attempt to re-unite Bunting's melodies with their original Gaelic lyrics (see also Chapter 2).

The two more significant works inspired by discovery of these manuscripts were Fox's *Songs of the Irish Harpers*, and the *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, which were published in 1910 and 1911 respectively. The *Annals* is a prose work, including a memoir of Edward Bunting, contemporary documents relating to the harp festival of 1792, memoirs of the harpist Arthur O'Neill, and the diary and letters of Patrick Lynch. *Songs of the Irish Harpers* contains thirteen songs arranged for voice and harp or piano. In the preface to the collection, Fox stated her hope that the songs would assist with the revival of interest in the harp as an ideal accompaniment for the voice. Five previously unpublished melodies from the Bunting manuscripts were included in the collection, along with airs drawn from Petrie and other sources, including an original song 'Sorrow of Sorrows' (Figure 6.17). This was prefaced by a note explaining that it was composed 'by the Editor in imitation of the old Irish School, after a long and prolonged study of the method of Irish composition and the formation

[58] Fox, *Annals,* preface.
[59] Edward Bunting, 'Prospectus of a General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland', repr. in *JIFSS*, 4 (1906), 7–18.
[60] Alice Milligan, 'Song words for Irish Airs', *JIFSS,* 6 (1908), 7–14. Alice Milligan and C. Milligan Fox, 'Specimens of Melodies with words (Irish and English) from the Bunting MSS', *JIFSS,* 6 (1908), 6–28.

of the Irish Scale.'[61] The words, by Alice, were likewise 'inspired by the Study of Gaelic Poetry'.

Fig. 6.17 Fox, 'Sorrow of Sorrows', bars 1–5

The melody here is based on the Aeolian mode and makes extensive use of melismatic word-setting. The harmony is modal throughout, avoiding use of the sharpened 7th or any use of modulation, although a single B♭ in the song's penultimate bar is momentarily suggestive of the Phrygian scale. Arpeggiated chords in the accompaniment illustrate Fox's preference for the harp.

On the relatively rare occasions that Fox published her own song compositions, she closely followed the style of Irish folk songs. These original songs were somewhat diffidently offered—for example, a single original song in a collection of folk songs—while the composer was at pains to point out their indebtedness to the folk song heritage. This tells us something of the expectations of her intended

[61] Ibid., p. 25.

audience, but also supports A. P. Graves's claim in her obituary in 1916, that 'the promotion of our native music […] became such a passion for her that she spared nothing for it—time, money, health, and life itself.'[62] It was the collection and dissemination of existing folk songs that was her primary interest, and in this capacity she made a number of important contributions.

On a trip to North America in 1911 to promote Irish folk music, she established a New York branch of the IFSS, and discovered William Elliot Hudson's manuscript copies of over 1,000 Irish folk songs taken down in the early nineteenth century.[63] She later published excerpts from this collection in the *JIFSS.*[64] Her final collecting trip was in 1912, to Waterford, accompanied by Alice and Edith. She was encouraged by Cecil Sharp to obtain phonograph recordings and set out with 'a fine Edison phonograph and a plentiful supply of blank cylinders', collecting English and Gaelic folk songs and some instrumental pieces.[65] The following year, her health began to fail and she died on the 25 March 1916, just weeks before the Easter Rebellion broke out in Dublin.

This chapter has examined the vibrancy of musical activities within the context of the northern revival, and again highlights the importance of the milieu in which the composers and poets worked and formed alliances. The coterie that gathered around F. J. Bigger had connections to Gaelic scholars such as Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill, as well as a wide circle of litterateurs, politicians, and other cultural activists from the worlds of theatre, performance, and fine arts. Herbert Hughes's studies with Charles Wood and Stanford gave him access to the Irish musical community in London, and he also worked with Charlotte Milligan Fox in the founding of the IFSS. His circle included poets such as Padraic Colum and Joseph Campbell, as well as the singer John McCormack whose recordings provided welcome exposure to Hughes's song arrangements. Colum's success as a poet attracted other composers to his texts. As will be shown in later chapters, his poetry was also set by Hamilton Harty, Arnold Bax, and Carl Hardebeck, who would doubtless have been aware of Hughes's settings. Fox's arrangements were also

[62] Alfred Perceval Graves, 'Mrs C. Milligan Fox', *JIFSS*, 16 (1918), xi–xii (p. xi).
[63] Fox, *Annals*, xxii.
[64] C. Milligan Fox, 'Concerning the William Elliott Hudson Collection of Irish Folk Songs', *JIFSS*, 10 (1912), 5–9; 'Eleven Irish Folk Songs from the Hudson Collection', *JIFSS,* 10 (1912), 21–25.
[65] C. Milligan Fox, 'Song Collecting in Co. Waterford', *JIFSS,* 12 (1912), 9–13 (p. 11).

widely circulated through her various publications and her editorship of the *JIFSS*; she was also a member of the Irish Literary Society; and with her siblings (not least the writer and activist Alice Milligan) was well-connected to the theatrical and literary movements within the larger Revival. Thus, we have evidence of a tightly networked group who supported and influenced each other in the production, performance and publication of Irish song literature.

Fox and Hughes were two of a number of Irish diasporic composers from the northern counties who left the country to pursue their careers in England. To this group can be added Charles Wood, Alicia Needham and Hamilton Harty. The following chapter examines the interactions between this group of composers and the revival movement and considers how this impacted their Irish songs.

7. The Diaspora: Irish Composers Abroad

Stanford's career trajectory, moving to the heart of the Empire at a young age, was a time-honoured path for aspiring composers and musicians who sought an education or a career in music that Ireland could not offer them. While this removed them from the immediate influence of nationalist movements at home, London itself was a centre of revival activity among the Irish diaspora there, as has been shown in Chapter 3. The patriotic enthusiasm for Ireland among the privileged communities they inhabited, however, was primarily a unionist rather than a separatist interpretation: celebrating markers of Irish distinction while supporting its position as a nation within the Empire. It was a position that became increasingly untenable in the early years of the new century.

7.1 Charles Wood

Charles Wood (1866–1926) was born in Armagh, Co. Down, and received his early music education at the choir school of Armagh Cathedral, where his father was lay vicar and registrar of the diocese.[1] In 1883, he was among the first intake of students at the recently inaugurated Royal College of Music (RCM), where he was awarded the Morley Open Scholarship for composition. At the RCM, he studied composition with Stanford and Hubert Parry, as well as horn, piano, and organ. He was retained as teacher of harmony and counterpoint on completion of his studies there. He completed his MusD at Cambridge in 1894 and remained a member of the teaching staff at both Cambridge and the RCM. He married in 1898 and was furnished with college accommodation at Cambridge where he lived for the rest of his life. His biographer, Ian Copley, writes that Wood's life followed a very regular pattern of teaching, examining, composing when time permitted, and occasionally conducting.[2]

[1] Jeremy Dibble, 'Wood, Charles' in *EMIR*, II, pp. 1070–72.
[2] Ian Copley, *The Music of Charles Wood – a critical study*, 2nd edn (London: Thames Publishing, 1994), p. 16.

In 1924, he succeeded Stanford as Professor at Cambridge, and was elected President of the Royal Music Association. However, ill-health meant he held the professorship for only two years, and he died from cancer in 1926.

He is remembered primarily for his Anglican church music, including numerous settings of the evening canticles, anthems, and settings of the communion service.[3] He wrote several cantatas including a student work, *Spring's Summons* (1885), with words from A. P. Graves's *Songs of Killarney*. He also wrote a piano concerto and symphonic variations on the Irish air 'Patrick Sarsfield' (1899), as well as chamber music and choral works. Andrew Johnstone, writing in the *DIB*, describes Wood as a minor figure in the late romantic school of British composers headed by Parry, Stanford and Elgar, but notes that Wood escaped the strong influence of Brahms and Wagner on that school, largely through his fascination with characteristics of Calvinist, Scots and Presbyterian tunes and their modal characteristics.[4]

Some of his compositions, particularly his songs, show Irish influence. He published five volumes of song arrangements, although some of his arrangements of folk songs are known to have been lost.[5] He wrote about fifty original songs to texts by various poets, including Christina Rosetti, Walter Scott, Alfred Tennyson, as well as the Irish poets Thomas Moore, A. P. Graves, J. J. Callanan and T. W. Rolleston. He was a founder member and vice-president of the IFSS, although his role seems to have been largely an honorary one—he does not seem to have been involved in active collection, nor did he contribute to the Society's journal. His songs and arrangements were performed at the Society's concerts, for example in a concert in June 1913, the object of which was stated as being 'to show how folk songs collected by members of the Society can be treated by well-known composers'.[6] The concert included arrangements by Stanford, Wood, and Harty, as well as some unaccompanied pieces.

The influence of Stanford can be seen in his Irish songs, both in his choice of projects and collaborators as well as in musical style. Stanford may have introduced him to A. P. Graves with whom Wood collaborated on *Irish Folk-Songs*, a volume of

[3] Jeremy Dibble, 'Wood, Charles' in *Grove Music Online* <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.30536>
[4] Andrew Johnston, 'Wood, Charles', in *DIB* <https://dib-cambridge-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/quicksearch.do> [accessed 13 April 2021]
[5] Copley, p. 111.
[6] C. M. Fox, 'Irish Folk Song Concert', *JIFSS*, 14 (1914), 22–25 (p. 22).

twenty-five folk-song arrangements published in 1897. Wood worked with Graves on two further volumes entitled *Irish Countryside Songs*, first published in 1914 with a second volume published posthumously in 1927. A third volume was published the following year with words by P. J. McCall. Figure 7.1 below shows an excerpt from 'The Enchanted Valley', included in the first volume of *Irish Countryside Songs*:

Fig. 7.1 Wood, 'The Enchanted Valley, bars 3–10

The arrangement shows some of the harmonic austerity that characterised Wood's church music. Wood's modal harmonies do not detract from the fine melody which is in F Aeolian mode. The accompaniment is primarily chordal, with the head of melody being treated as a motif, imitated in the piano part in bars 4 and 6.

Wood also collaborated with Padraic Gregory on what was to have been a series of *Anglo-Irish Folk-songs*, eventually brought out in 1931 after Wood's death. (Carl Hardebeck replaced him as music arranger for the second volume). The words are 'collected and edited' by Padraic Gregory, using fragments of folk rhymes and the Ulster dialect that characterise much of Gregory's poetry. The arrangement of the melodies and the use of English lyrics conform to the style that Stanford had successfully popularised.

Few of Wood's songs were published during his lifetime, but in 1927, several posthumous collections were published. His setting of Thomas Moore's *At the mid hour of night* dates from his college years, and was allegedly said to have been his favourite song setting.[7] The opening bars of the accompaniment (Figure 7.2) recalls Schubert's *Du bist die Ruh*, before building through an *agitato* section to a passionate climax, and returning to the tranquility of the opening. This was published in 1927 in a collection *Five Songs for High* Voice, along with settings of Tennyson and Rosetti.

Fig. 7.2 Wood, 'At the mid hour of night', opening bars

In the same year, a second collection was published, *Ten songs for low voice*, that included four settings of Moira O'Neill texts: 'Denny's daughter', 'The Sailor Man', 'Birds', and 'At Sea', all taken from her collection *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*. Several of these were also set by Stanford around the same time (Stanford's collection *Six Songs from the Glens of Antrim* was published in 1920) and are stylistically similar. For example, 'At Sea', which deals with the theme of exile, opens with atmospheric arpeggiated chords in the left hand piano part, a typical device used by both Stanford and Harty when depicting the sea. This is followed by a folksong-like melody over a restless accompaniment (Figure 7.3) that remains almost completely diatonic throughout the song, excepting a brief modulatory section in the third stanza:

[7] Copley, p. 100.

Fig. 7.3 Wood, 'At Sea' bars 10–15

The collection also includes a setting of 'The Dead at Clonmacnoise', from the Irish poem by 14th-century poet Aongus Ó Giolláin, translated by T. W. Rolleston. The poem commemorates the pagan kings and princes of Ireland buried at Clonmacnoise—a site which later became a monastic settlement of international importance. Rolleston's source was likely George Petrie's *Christian Inscriptions in the the Irish Language*, which includes the poem in Gaelic and English along with extensive notes about the monastery and the dead buried there.[8] Wood responds to the imagery of mourning with a funereal march in 4/4, unusually set in a major key. The verses are set semi-strophically, leading to a considerable climax.

This celebration of the ancient past was a strong revival theme, yet Wood's interactions with the revival movement seem almost incidental, rather than indicative of any personal involvement with the movement or indeed with the political and cultural changes which were convulsing his native country. He responded to the popularity of contemporary and historical Irish poets, and his Irish songs show the influence of Stanford. He also collaborated with writers such as Rolleston, Graves, and Gregory who were active in revival circles. The English composer Arthur Bliss, who studied with Wood at Cambridge, described him as 'a gifted musician whose complete lack of ambition prevented his own music from gaining much of a hearing.'[9] While some of his songs were performed at concerts organised by the literary and folk song societies, comparatively few of them were published in his lifetime, and he cannot be said to have made any decisive contribution to revival activities. Yet he wrote several fine songs to Irish texts, some of which are receiving belated recognition through the activities of the Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer

[8] George Petrie, *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language* (Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1872), pp. 1–8.
[9] Arthur Bliss, *As I Remember* (London: Faber, 1970), p. 26.

School established in his birthplace of Armagh, Co. Down, and the recently inaugurated Charles Wood International Song Competition, which promotes his songs.[10]

7.2 Alicia Adelaide Needham

Alicia Adelaide Needham (1863–1945) was one of the most prolific song writers of the revival period. Different sources give various estimates of the number of her published works, ranging from 'about 400 songs' (*DIB*); 'a few piano pieces and over 600 songs' (*Oxford Music Online*); to 'over 700 works, mainly songs and song-cycles' (*EMIR*)[11]. While a reliable catalogue of her complete works is not available at the time of writing, the British Library holds about 200 of her published works, many of which are songs written to Irish texts or on Irish subjects.

Born Alicia Adelaide Montgomery in Oldcastle, Co. Meath, Needham claimed to be descended from a Scottish Protestant family that settled in Ireland during the Ulster Plantation in the early seventeenth Century.[12] The family moved to Downpatrick when Needham was two, and her writings recount a quiet but idyllic childhood under the shadow of the Mourne mountains. Needham describes the deep impression the landscape made upon her, but otherwise found her home as 'a little too quiet'. The annual encampment of the Royal South Down Militia provided a welcome diversion and Needham credits it with inspiring a lifelong love for the army. Her compositions would later include many patriotic and military songs.

She attended boarding school at Victoria College, Londonderry, before entering the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with the Irish pianist and composer Arthur O'Leary. She graduated in 1887 and successfully passed her licentiate exam in 1889. In 1893, she obtained an Associateship of the Royal College of Music in London.

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[10] The Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School <https://www.charleswoodsummerschool.org> [accessed 21 April 2021]

[11] Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'Needham, Alicia Adelaide', in *DIB*, <https://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a6144#> [accessed 16 June 2021]. Sophie Fuller and R. Gardner, 'Needham, [née Montgomery], Alicia Adelaide', *Oxford Music Online* <https://doiorg.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.54056>. Jennifer O'Connor and Axel Klein, 'Needham, Alicia Adelaide [née Montgomery]', in *EMIR*, II, pp. 731–32.

[12] Needham, *A Daughter of Music*, p. 3.

She married the London-based physician and keen amateur musician, Joseph Needham in 1892. Her diaries in the Needham collection suggest they had a difficult relationship, but he encouraged and supported his wife's further study and career. Her husband was also responsible for her getting her first songs published and seems to have looked after her business affairs throughout her career. In 1906, she wrote:

> To a woman marriage sometimes means the closing down of a professional career, but in my case it was the very reverse, for having come across some of my youthful compositions, among which was the "Irish lullaby", written two years before my marriage, my husband encouraged me in every way to persevere with them, and, selecting about eight songs, eventually had them published.[13]

Novello, Ewer and Company published four of her songs in an octavo edition in 1895, including 'Irish Lullaby' with words by Francis Fahy and 'Pastheen Fion' by Samuel Ferguson. The inclusion of two songs with lyrics by Irish poets are among the first original songs with an intentionally Irish theme to be published during the revival period. The songs were favourably reviewed in *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular,* which commented on the 'eminently singable and tuneful melody' of the 'Irish Lullaby' and noted that 'Pastheen Fion' was 'appropriately charged with genuine Irish sentiment.'[14] The review augured well for a popular reception of the songs, and Needham seems to have been inordinately successful in this. Other of her songs were quickly taken up: Boosey published 'The Queen of Connemara', 'The Donovans', 'The Exile's Return' and others in 1896, and brought out *An Album of Twelve Hush Songs* in 1897, including settings of texts by George Sigerson and Francis Fahy.

She was invited to perform at her first ballad concert in Queen's Hall London on the 25th of January 1896, and her songs began to be performed by the leading singers of the day, including Irish baritones Denis O'Sullivan and Harry Plunket Greene, and tenors John McCormack and Joseph O'Mara. Figure 7.4 shows the cover page of one of her earliest and most commercially successful songs 'Husheen', published originally in *An Album of Hush Songs* in 1897. The song was recorded by the British contralto Clara Butt in 1915, and again in 1930.[15] There are some interesting points to note: The endorsement by Clara Butt (for whom Elgar wrote his

[13] Alicia Adelaide Needham, 'In the days of my youth', *M.A.P.*, 24 March 1906. MS Needham A.98.
[14] 'Reviews', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 36 (1895), p. 314.
[15] Needham, Alicia, *Husheen,* Dame Clara Butt (Nimbus, 7912, 2003) and (Columbia, DX 729, 1930).

Sea Pictures) is a typical marketing strategy of the period. The availability of the song in different keys is testament to its popularity, and the 'orchestral accompaniment in B♭' (the contralto key) suggests that Butt may have sung this at her major concerts.

The words are by the founder of the Southwark Literary Society, Francis A. Fahy. Subscription receipts in the Needham archive bear testimony to Needham's membership of the ILS from at least 1894, and this membership would have brought her into regular contact with Ireland's literary and revival figures, including Fahy, Hyde, Katharine Tynan and A. P. Graves, each of whom she would collaborate with in later song settings.[16] The influence of the language movement can be seen in the

Fig. 7.4 Facsimile of Needham, 'Husheen' cover page

[16] MS Needham, A.601

inclusion of a macaronic refrain in the English text (‘Hush go ciúin, go ló’), as well as a completely separate set of Gaelic words printed alongside.

The excerpt below is taken from ‘Our Little Sons’, composed by Needham in 1900, the year her only son was born, with text by Tynan. The poem reflects Tynan’s thoughts on a mother’s experience of war: the ‘little truce of God’ granted while their sons are small, and the reality of the suffering of other mothers whose sons are ‘broken and marr’d’. The ‘shells and guns’ referred to in the song probably refers to the second Anglo-Boer war that was being fought in the British colonies in South Africa at the time.

Fig. 7.5 Needham, ‘Our Little Sons’, bars 5–12

Needham’s treatment is typical of the early twentieth-century ballad genre. A four-bar piano prelude introduces the melody, which is then taken up by the singer. The accompaniment shows sensitivity to the vocal line, with subtle doubling of the melody, occasional ornamentation in between vocal phrases, and careful judgement of dynamics so as not to overwhelm the vocal part, particularly when in a low tessitura (bars 11 and 12). The tonal language is in the late Romantic style, making use of diminished chords, sevenths and ninths but avoiding any dramatic modulations. The song would have been accessible to amateur performers while the

subject matter had a contemporary relevance and poignancy which would have appealed to Boosey's market.

The Boer war presented a rallying moment for Irish nationalists, who identified with the Boers in their struggle against their colonisers. Prominent members of the Literary movement who were pro-Boer included Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, George Moore, Yeats and Maud Gonne, whose husband John MacBride raised the Irish Transvaal Brigade to fight against the British. Where Needham stood on the issue is intriguing. In another song from the same year, 'By Order of the Queen', Needham added a dedication to 'The Irish Regiments at the Front, South Africa, 1900'. The song was inspired by a royal order in March of 1900 which stated that

> Her Majesty the Queen is pleased to order that in future all ranks in Her Majesty's Irish Regiments shall wear, as a distinction, a spring of Shamrock in their head-dress on St Patrick's Day, to commemorate the gallantry of her Irish Soldiers during the recent battles in South Africa.[17]

The poem in this case was written by Isabel Sulivan, and Needham's choosing to set it to the 1798 tune 'The Wearing of the Green' has a certain irony. The tune was associated with an earlier royal decree which forbade 'the wearing of green', the chosen colour of the revolutionary society of United Irishmen of 1798. The best-known lyrics, which proclaim that 'they are hanging men and women for the wearing of the green', were written Dion Boucicault for his play *Arragh na Pogue* in 1864.[18]

Needham, however, was an enthusiastic supporter of the military and regarded the military leaders Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener (who led the British forces during the second Anglo-Boer war) as heroes. She gave concerts at the Wellington Barracks near Buckingham Palace and was pleased when Lord Roberts wrote to her from the troop ship 'Donattar Castle' expressing admiration for her song 'Who carries the Gun?'.[19] Dedicated to Field-marshal Viscount Wolseley, the Anglo-Irish Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, Boosey published the song in 1897. The lyrics came from four verses of Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Ballad of the Ranks', a poem paying tribute to soldiers from London, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Needham paid her own tribute by inserting the tunes of four regimental marches from each of the

[17] 'Saint Patrick's Day and the Sprig of Shamrock', *The Royal Irish Regiment* <https://www.royalirish.com /events/saint-patrick's-day-and-the-sprig-of-shamrock> [accessed 16 June 2021]
[18] Dion Boucicault, *Arragh na Pogue, or The Wicklow Wedding* (London: [n. pub.], 1864).
[19] Needham, *A daughter of music*, p. 41.

referenced nations as piano interludes: 'The British Grenadiers', 'Highland Laddie', 'Men of Harlech' and 'St Patrick's Day', finishing with 'The Girl I left behind me'.

Needham's songs and music were often created as a response to political and social stimuli of her time. She had a particular success in 1902 when she won the Earl of Mar's £100 prize for the best composition in honour of the coronation of Edward VII. A choral arrangement of her entry, 'The Seventh English Edward' was performed at the Coronation concert by the Royal Choral Society accompanied by the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards, conducted by Frederick Bridge.[20] Later, Needham was to regret that she had not conducted the item herself, as she 'could easily have done it'.[21]

She became involved with the women's suffragette movement, participating in marches and writing *Four Songs for Women Suffragists* in 1908. Her autobiography suggests she kept a circumspect distance from the more violent elements of the movement:

> At the time, the Suffragettes were struggling for their rights here. I was of course in the forefront of the battle, and although I would have been far too nervous to smash any windows, or chain myself to railings as some bold spirits did, still I marched in the processions and wrote four march songs for them. As my husband was one of the Metropolitan Police Surgeons, we were both very kind to the Police, so I did not at all like the idea of embarrassing myself or them by any outrageous displays. A good many of us worked quietly for the Cause, which was at last won![22]

As tensions rose in Europe during the early part of the century, Needham became a committed recruiter for the Army and Navy, writing an *Army and Navy Song Cycle* in 1912, and organising patriotic concerts intended to support the recruitment drive. She describes organising recruiting concerts in the newly built Palladium in London, (a venue which had an original seating capacity of nearly 3,500):

> I took an engagement at the Palladium for my "Star" quartette, which included Thorpe Bates in the Army and Navy Song Cycle, and we sang for a fortnight to packed houses. The stage was decorated with British and Colonial flags, and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. […] Afterwards, for six weeks, I went round the suburbs with a smaller quartette and hoped I did some good, and much recruiting![23]

[20] Souvenir programme of the Grand Coronation Concert, Royal Albert Hall, 11 June 1902, The Musician's Company archive <http://www.wcomarchive.org.uk/---coronation-march> [accessed 24 January 2019]
[21] Needham, *A daughter of music*, p. 38.
[22] Ibid., p. 32.
[23] Ibid., p. 42.

She joined the Red Cross in 1915 as a searcher for the missing and wounded, working at the First and Third London General Hospitals, and was later included in the roll of honour at St James's Palace for her work.[24] In 1915, the war afforded another opportunity when she was invited to conduct the band of the Irish Guards performing her piece 'St Patrick was a Gentleman' at the Albert Hall, becoming the first woman to conduct there. She was invited back the following year, and later also conducted the Scots Guards' band and choir in the final pice of her *Army and Navy Song Cycle*.[25]

After an illness, her husband died in 1920, and the event resulted in a major change in her financial circumstances. Forced to sell the family home, she moved into a flat, and seems to have stopped composing around this time. Her autobiography details subsequent travels around Europe, but the memoir comes to an abrupt end in 1926, after which date little is known of her.

7.2.1 Needham's Irish and 'Celtic' identity.

In her autobiography, Needham gives an early mention of the inherent differences between the sectarian communities of her childhood home in Downpatrick. The preparations for the opposing parades of the 12th of July and St Patrick's Day are given particular attention:

> On the 12th July we children would gather all the orange lilies and shove them through this gate on grateful perspiring participants in the procession. We were not at all bigoted either, and we also would search in the fields to do the same with shamrock for the St. Patrick's Day people. […] Later in life, I loved the little shamrock best, and indeed always thought the orange lily an ugly flower […] orange was never a favourite of mine![26]

This is a somewhat provocative assertion of preference, given the powerful symbolism of the shamrock and the colour orange for, respectively, Catholic and Protestant communities in the northern counties. While Needham's social circles seem to have been strongly Anglo-Irish (in both her autobiography and the dedications on her song sheets, she was always keen to be associated with titled peers and other public figures), certain of her songs at times suggest contradictory loyalties. Although she lived most of her adult life in London, she followed the changes to the

[24] Geoghegan, 'Needham, Alicia Adelaide', in *DIB*.
[25] Needham, *A daughter of music*, p. 63.
[26] Ibid., pp. 10–11.

social and political landscape in Ireland and was an active participant in several of the revival societies both in Ireland and in London. She converted to Catholicism later in life, and in her publications and promotional material, the shamrock often features prominently.[27]

Needham, like other Irish composers, entered the compositional competitions of the Feis Ceoil and succeeded in winning prizes in six consecutive years, including prizes for arrangements of Irish airs ('Since Caelia's my Foe' and 'The Girl I left behind me') and original songs ('Glenara' and 'The Brow of Nefin'). 'The Brow of Nefin' or 'Mala Néifin' in its original Irish, is one of the poems collected and published by Douglas Hyde in his 1893 publication, *Love Songs of Connacht* (See Chapter 3). While Needham's melody could easily be mistaken for an Irish folk song, it was in fact the prize-winning song in the 'Original Air' category of the Feis Ceoil festival of 1900. It was published with both the English metrical translation provided by Hyde, and the original Irish words from the collection (see Figure 7.6).

The song has an overall ternary form, with a short piano prelude introducing an entirely diatonic melody in A♭ major. The accompaniment begins with simple dyads in intervals of a 10th, before gradually introducing a richer texture as the song proceeds, although the movement remains homophonic with some melodic doubling. The contrasting middle section is in the tonic minor (notated enharmonically as G♯ minor), and the final verse is essentially a 'da capo'. The simple setting works well with Hyde's translation and the folksong-like contours of the melody, and again would have been accessible to amateur players.

The popularity of her songs brought other opportunities, including a request from Edith Oldham, one of the main organisers of the Feis Ceoil, for previously published songs with Irish words that might be used as set pieces for the Feis competitions.[28] Few of her songs seem to have met this requirement, however. Although Needham would also set Hyde's poem 'Ringleted Youth of My Love' from the same collection, under the title 'Connaught Love Song', it was not published with Irish words, although the cover proudly announced its Irish credentials with

[27] Therese McIntyre, 'Who fears to sing of 1916? A Search for the Songs of the Rising: Alicia Adelaide Needham', *The 1916 Song Project* conference, Athboy, Co. Meath, 2016 <www.the1916songproject.com> [accessed 7 January 2019]
[28] Edith Oldham to Needham, 6 March 1902, MS Needham A.538–96

illustrated shamrocks and celtic knots, and drew attention to the Irish ballad translated by Doctor Douglas Hyde.

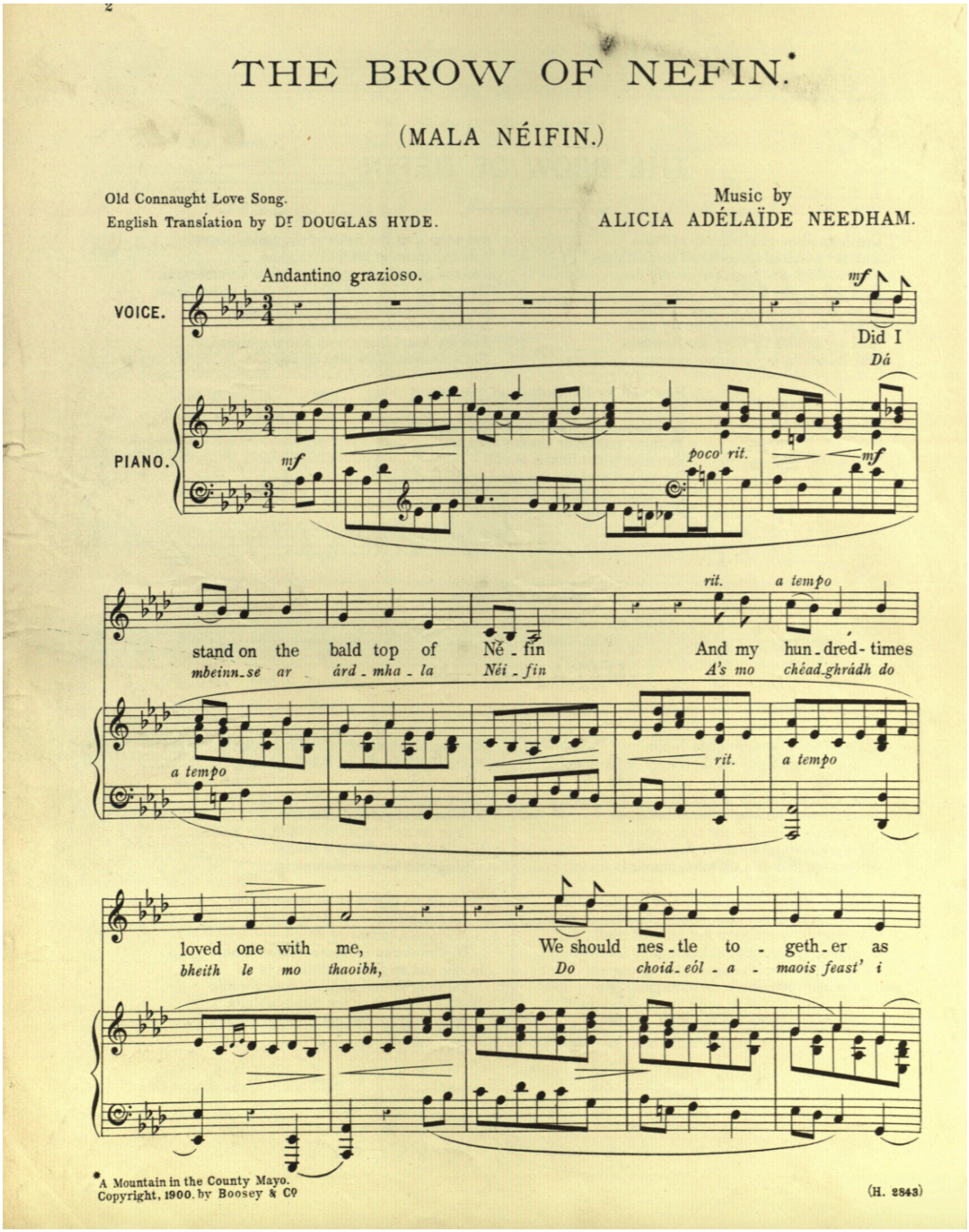

Fig. 7.6 Facsimile of Needham, 'The Brow of Nefin', p. 2

Many of Needham's songs are in this ballad vein, but the Irish theme is consistent throughout her song compositions, and she regularly used the poetry of Irish writers known to her through the Literary Society. Her songs comprise lullabies and children's songs, patriotic songs, folk song arrangements, dialect songs, and sacred songs. Although her songs seem to have disappeared from the repertoire shortly after her husband's death, she was a popular and esteemed musician in her lifetime. She was honoured at the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales by being crowned 'Bardess of Wales', with the title 'Harp of Ireland', and in 1906 became the first woman 'Day president' of the Eisteddfod, a distinction typically acknowledging the work of leading artists and public figures of the day.

One final intriguing artefact deserves mention: in an undated journal, likely written in August 1927, she drafted a letter to Eamonn de Valera expressing a willingness to join Fianna Fáil to help the 'poor people' of Ireland, whose distress she had encountered on a recent six-month lecture tour of the country, after a fourteen-year absence.[29] She offered as credentials her experience as a public speaker, her name as a household word, and claimed she was the only woman composer that Ireland could produce, and that Ireland would not produce another like her. She suggested that the National University of Ireland would want to give her an Honorary doctorate and that perhaps he could hasten this for her. Declaring herself ready to serve her country, she claimed she had no fear of consequences. The letter may never have been sent, but it is an extraordinary and rather poignant insight into her state of mind before she disappeared entirely from history's view. She died in London in 1945 after an illness.

[29] MS Needham A.453

7.3 Hamilton Harty

Born in Hillsborough, Co. Down, Hamilton Harty (1879–1941) was the son of an Anglican organist, and his early education consisted of a mix of home-schooling and self-study. He never attended university and had little formal instrumental teaching beyond that given by his father, and yet he was to become one of the most highly-regarded accompanists, conductors and composers in England. When TCD conferred on him an honorary doctoral degree in 1925, the *Manchester Guardian* inaccurately reported that Harty had 'received his early training in Dublin', although this confusion possibly related to his association with Michele Esposito.[30] Harty described Esposito as 'the presiding genius of all that there is of music in Ireland', and although he never received formal lessons from him, he was to become a lifelong friend and mentor.[31]

Harty began his musical career when he was appointed as organist in Lisburn, County Antrim, at the age of fourteen, and later at the church of St Barnabas in Belfast. At seventeen, he moved to Bray, near Dublin, where he took up an appointment as organist and choirmaster. Harty soon found himself in demand as an accompanist to choral societies and to vocal and instrumental soloists, including international soloists visiting Ireland. One such was William Henry Squire, a well-known British cellist who described Harty as a brilliant pianist and a 'very gifted musician indeed'.[32] Squire later assisted Harty with getting his initial engagements when he moved to London.

Like other aspiring composers, Harty entered pieces in Feis Ceoil competitions and won some early commendations and prizes. A considerable lure of the Feis Ceoil composition prizes was the opportunity for the winning works to be given a concert performance. Harty admitted, 'It was more the certainty of a good performance than the actual prize that appealed to me and to others, I suppose, who competed for these prizes.'[33] In 1904, he won the prize for a symphony based on Irish folk melodies.[34]

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[30] *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 June 1925, p. 12.
[31] H. C. Colles, 'Hamilton Harty', *Musical Times*, 61 (1920), 227–30 (p. 228). Jan Smaczny, 'Harty, [Sir] [Herbert] Hamilton', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 472–75 (p. 472).
[32] Harty Collection MS 14/6/21. Scripts of programmes as recorded by the BBC, 1951–79.
[33] Harty, *Early Memories*, pp. 28–29.
[34] The inspiration to inaugurate an award for the incorporation of Irish folksong into a symphony apparently came, not from a nationalist impulse, but from the example of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony and its use of African-American melodies, which had been performed by the Hallé Orchestra in Dublin the previous year. Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*, p. 43.

This gave him his first conducting experience, which was enthusiastically received, and set him on his way towards becoming an orchestral conductor.

In London, Harty's rise to fame as an accompanist was rapid. Shortly after arriving in London, Squire assisted his introduction to the musical scene by bringing him along to accompany him at 'At Homes', private events given at the homes of society patronesses. He also gained employment at regular recital series, including the weekly ballad concerts given by the music publishers Chappell or Boosey at St James's Hall to promote music sales. At these events, he was exposed to a substantial amount of new and established repertoire: Russian songs by Glinka, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov, new English music by Stanford, Vaughan Williams, and Frank Bridge. As his reputation grew, he was called on to accompany international luminaries such as Fritz Kreisler, Harry Plunket Greene, John McCormack and József Szigeti. The accounts given by the musicians who worked with him attest to an accompanist of rare distinction.[35]

It was through his work as an accompanist that Harty met his future wife, Agnes Nicholls in 1902, and they married in 1904. Nicholls was hailed as one of the of the most distinguished Wagnerian sopranos of her day, and during the first decade of the twentieth century, Harty's output as a song-composer reached its most prolific, with many of the songs written specifically with Nicholls's vocal abilities in mind. Her powerful dramatic voice allowed Harty full scope to compose vocal lines that would match the drama he could create on the piano, and she was equally capable of sustaining softer passages. The music critic Samuel Langford made an observation on their partnership that highlights how her voice had influenced his compositions:

> When we hear [Nicholls] sing Mr Harty's songs, with him at the piano, we begin to understand why he writes accompaniments which run like the sea, and how the great gaps which often lie between the towering voice and the swift current of the played notes are meant to be spanned. These songs are not themselves until the right singer and the right player are there.'[36]

As a professional partnership, Harty and Nicholls excelled, and they proved a practical support to each other in their respective careers. When Harty became more established as a conductor, Nicholls performed regularly as a soloist with him, both

[35] József Szigeti, *With Strings Attached: Reminiscences and Reflections* (London: Cassell, 1949), pp. 107–08. Leonard Hirsch, 'Memories of Sir Hamilton', in *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music,* ed. by David Greer (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1978), pp. 67–74 (p. 67).
[36] *Manchester Guardian*, 26 January 1916, p. 12.

in song recitals and in orchestral and choral works. Harty also wrote his *Ode to a Nightingale* (an extended 'scena' for voice and orchestra with obvious Wagnerian aspirations) for Nicholls and dedicated it to her. Their marriage later foundered, although they never divorced or gave any public indication of their separation. Nonetheless, the influence of her voice can be found in many of Harty's songs, which are among the most dramatic in scope of any of the composers surveyed here.

The war years gave Harty an unexpected access to various British orchestras, and he worked with the Hallé orchestra on several occasions, leading to his appointment as permanent conductor in 1920. Harty proved himself an able leader, and it is as a conductor of international standing that he is best remembered. The orchestra thrived under his direction, becoming widely acknowledged as Britain's leading national orchestra, and securing important recording and broadcasting contracts. His reputation as a conductor resulted in invitations to conduct in America, Australia and Russia, although the demands of his conducting career may account for a lower compositional output during these years. Nonetheless, he returned to composition intermittently as time permitted.

7.3.1 Harty and Folk Song

Harty engaged in the debate on the development of a national school of music, advocating as much for English music as for Irish. In a paper delivered in 1928, he set out his thoughts on nationality in music, arguing for a broader interpretation of what this might mean:

> I do not agree with those who are everlastingly crying out that music is a universal language, and that any insistence on nationality is a cramping thing. They probably mean that any school that bases itself too obviously upon the free use of folk song and imitations thereof is bound to be narrow and circumscribed, and as far as it goes that is true. But there is a sense of nationality in music which is impressed by much more subtle means, and which is really a reflection in sound of broad national characteristics. [...] Nobody wants an obvious and continuous use of folk-song tricks which become as boring and annoying as any other mannerism in music.[37]

Many of Harty's songs use Irish texts, but few rely on what he termed 'folk-song tricks'. The vast majority of his songs are original compositions, excluding two small collections of three folk songs, and a further arrangement ('Carnlough Bay', 1921)

[37] Harty, 'The Discouragement of English Music'.

which was never published.[38] Although Harty claimed that he was brought up on classical music and had little exposure to folk music, several of his songs evince a knowledge of, and sympathy with, the *sean-nós* style.[39] Most notable is his arrangement of 'My Lagan Love' from *Three Traditional Ulster Airs* (1905).

Fig. 7.7 Harty, 'My Lagan Love', bars 1–4

Opening with an extravagant flourish outlining the notes of the first phrase of the melody, the accompaniment is reduced to simple arpeggiated chords once the voice enters, adding unobtrusive support to the melodic line (Figure 7.7). Marked *Quasi senza tempo*, Harty also captures the free rhythm of folksong, and the voice part includes ornamentations typical of the traditional style (Figure 7.8):

[38] Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*, pp. 304–06.
[39] Colles, p. 227.

Fig. 7.8 Harty, ‘My Lagan Love’, bars 5–6

Three Traditional Ulster Airs also included ‘The Blue Hills of Antrim’, a song of exile and nostalgia for the hills of home, and ‘Black Sheela of the Silver Eye’, a light-hearted love song. Both songs are strophic, with piano accompaniment providing textural variety between verses. The three songs first appeared in *Songs of Uladh* in 1904, as a collaboration between Herbert Hughes and Joseph Campbell (see Chapter 6).

Harty’s second collection, *Three Irish Folksongs*, was published in 1929. It contains arrangements of three songs taken from P. W. Joyce’s 1873 collection *Ancient Irish Music*: ‘The Lowlands of Holland’, ‘The Fairy King’s Courtship’ and ‘The Game Played in Erin-go-Bragh’. The melodies are given a similar treatment to the first collection, where the accompaniment provides variety to strophic verses. Aside from these two small collections, Harty did not publish folksong arrangements. His original song compositions nevertheless demonstrate a strong Irish identity, largely through the use of texts by Irish poets, and through romantic interpretations of Irish subject matter.

7.3.2 Choice of Poet and Approach to Songwriting

Harty took a keen interest in the Literary Revival and the contents of his library suggest that he was quick to acquire new poetry as it was published. Many of his songs are set to Irish texts by poets including Moira O’Neill, P. W. Joyce, Cathal O’Byrne, Cahir Healy, Emily Lawless, Alice Milligan, W. B. Yeats and W. L. Bultitaft. Harty loved poetry and literature: well-thumbed and annotated poetry books from his private library (now housed in the library of Queen’s University Belfast) attest to his interest. In a radio tribute after his death, his wife recalled: ‘He was a

man of great genius, and I have always felt that if he had not been the great musician he was, he might have been as great a poet or writer.'[40]

Moira O'Neill was a particular favourite—he set eleven of her poems, mostly from the first volume of *Songs from the Glens of Antrim*. Harty maintained relationships with other Irish poets, notably Padraic Colum, whose interest Harty tried to engage for the libretto for an Irish opera he had envisaged. Although they corresponded on a possible collaboration, the opera never came to fruition. Although no evidence suggests that Harty belonged to F. J. Bigger's Ardrigh coterie (see Chapter 6), he knew and collaborated with many of the poets and musicians who did. One such was Cathal O'Byrne, an acclaimed singer, poet, storyteller, Catholic mystic, and later IRA activist, who, despite being a committed republican, was held in affection by many Protestant readers for his humorous column in the pro-union paper *Ireland's Saturday night.*[41] In 1905, he collaborated with the nationalist politician Cahir Healy to produce a collection of poetry entitled *The Lane of the Thrushes,* from which Harty set the title poem. Richard Kirkland, in his biography of Cathal O'Byrne suggests that the collection as a whole 'sought a return to rural Catholic Ulster and did so with the hope that the Gaelic traditions long dormant there could be rekindled.'[42] Harty's setting of 'Lane o' the Thrushes' is almost Schubertian in its rhapsodic piano accompaniment. In the excerpt shown in Figure 7.9, a variety of techniques have been deployed: the accompaniment is pitched high in the treble clef with alternating semiquavers and demisemiquavers leaping in octaves, trills, accents and staccato articulations. O'Byrne was so pleased with Harty's setting that he sent him an autographed copy of the poetry collection with the inscription: 'To Hamilton Harty, in admiration of his exquisite song, "Lane of the Thrushes"'. [43]

[40] Harty Collection, MS 14/6/21
[41] Richard Kirkland, *Cathal O'Byrne and the Northern Revival in Ireland, 1890–1960* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 130–31.
[42] Ibid., p. 64.
[43] Cathal O'Byrne and Cahir Healy, *The Lane of the thrushes: some Ulster love-songs* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Walker, 1905). Personal copy from the library of Hamilton Harty, now held at QUB.

Fig. 7.9 Harty, 'Lane o' the Thrushes', bars 20-26

Harty's accompaniments make full use of the extent of the piano's range and expressive abilities, and his mastery of the instrument is evidenced by the variety of textures and effects demanded. 'Scythe Song' (1910), for example, uses gentle grace note figures that rise and fall to suggest the swaying movement of a scythe cutting through grass (Figure 7.10):

Fig. 7.10 Harty, 'Scythe Song', opening bars

In Harty's songs, the piano part is always on an equal footing with the voice: they are duets with the voice, rather than songs with accompaniment, and in many cases the more interesting part is given to the piano.

Harty's approach to songwriting is essentially late-Romantic in style, and he was passionate about defending a viewpoint that was seen as archaic even in his own time. For Harty, the emotional content of the music was paramount. He set out his criteria by which he believed 'real music must be governed' in his paper 'Modern Composers and Modern Composition', a lecture delivered to the Manchester Organists' Association in 1924. In this paper, he claimed that:

> 1. Music must be beautiful in shape; 2. Melody must be the first reason for its existence; 3. What appeals only to the brain cannot live; 4. It is the emotional quality of music which gives it value, and the nobler the emotion aroused, the greater the music.[44]

His song compositions bear this out. Drama and passion are rarely lacking, and the piano accompaniments in particular evince a depth of feeling that was belied by his softly-spoken persona. Dramatic songs such as 'Sea Wrack' (c. 1901) and 'The Stranger's Grave' (c. 1911) suggest stormy seas and tumultuous thoughts. The title of the song refers to the activity of gathering seaweed, or 'sea wrack', with its onomatopoeic suggestion of a shipwreck. Harty begins with a march in a major key (shown here in the key of B♭), but with a flattened 6th adding some minor modal qualities.

Fig. 7.11 Harty, 'Sea Wrack, opening bars

While the vocal line is largely strophic, the piano accompaniment adds textural interest and drama as the scene unfolds. *Tremulandi* played over an ascending and descending figure suggest the might of the sea starting to surge at the words 'The wrack was strong to cut'. Figure 7.10 shows the dramatic upward sweep to the climactic pause:

[44] Harty Collection, MS 14/5/4/14

Fig. 7.12 Harty, 'Sea Wrack', bars 55–59

'Sea Wrack' was Harty's one of his first published pieces and is still performed widely today. Philip Cranmer wrote that the song 'reeks of Ireland, of the sea, and of tragedy'.[45]

7.3.3 Harty's original song collections

Harty published four collections of original songs to Irish texts at different times in his life: *Six Songs of Ireland* (1908); *Five Irish Sketches for Voice and Piano* (1913); *Antrim and Donegal* (1926); and *Five Irish Poems* (1938). *Six Songs of Ireland* is his most substantial collection and includes settings of two poems from Moira O'Neill's *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*, two from Cahir Healy and Cathal O'Byrne's collection *The Lane of the Thrushes,* and a single setting of a poem by the nationalist poet Lizzie Twigg. The collection was first performed by Harty and Nicholls at the Bechstein Hall in London, in November 1908, and showcases the dramatic power for which

[45] Philip Cranmer, 'Vocal Music', in *Hamilton Harty* ed. by David Greer.

both performers were renowned. In a radio interview, Nicholls claimed that the *Six Songs* were the highlight of their programmes, and one of Harty's biggest successes.[46]

'Lookin' Back', the first song in the collection, uses the dialect speech that Moira O'Neill had popularised in *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*. Essentially an 'exile' piece, the stormy scenes depicted in the poem are matched by Harty's semiquaver runs in the piano accompaniment, alternating with legato sections for the more nostalgic passages. The second song in the collection is a setting of Cahir Healy's poem 'Dreaming', using a question and answer form, where an unnamed person asks a 'man of the meadows' a series of questions. The answers reveal the loss of loved ones and a longing for reunion through death. Although Harty used strophic variation to progress to a climax, the techniques he deployed are more sophisticated and dramatic than those found in his folk song settings. Opening with a sparse texture in the piano and a low tessitura in the vocal line as the questioner asks his first questions, a triplet figure in the left hand piano part is introduced while high descending chords depict 'Wisps o' white dreams, ghosts o' grey shadows'. Denser textures in the accompaniment, cross rhythms, increases in tempo and dynamic intensity lead to the climax of the song where the dreamer imagines his final journey.

'A Lullaby', the third song in the collection with lyrics by Cathal O'Byrne, is one of Harty's most attractive songs, and was later included in several different anthologies.[47] A striking feature is the unwinding melismatic phrases that end each verse (Figure 7.13):

Fig. 7.13 Harty, 'A Lullaby', bars 15–17

[46] Harty Collection MS 14/6/21

[47] *Soprano Songs: Imperial Edition* (London: Boosey, 1904). *A Heritage of 20th Century British Song*, 4 vols ([n.p.]: Boosey & Hawkes, 1984), I.

Jeremy Dibble notes that although lullabies are traditionally a 'benign genre', Harty's setting seems sinister, as expressed in the lower register of the piano in a minor key.[48] This may be an illustration of Harty's knowledge of Irish mythology, where fairies were often both mischievous and malicious. In this lullaby, the mother invokes fairy images, delightfully echoed in Harty's delicate piano accompaniment (Figure 7.14). Harty uses semiquaver ornamentation that follows the contour of the vocal line or works in contrary motion (bars 18–19), and a sparkling scale passage high in the treble range (bar 21).

Fig. 7.14 Harty, 'A Lullaby', bars 18–21

Another Moira O'Neill text follows, 'Grace for Light', describing a domestic scene as a large family crowds into a small house:

> When we were little childer we had a quare wee house,
> Away up in the heather by the head o' Brabla' burn;
> The hares we'd see them scootin', an' we'd hear the crowin' grouse,
> An' when we'd all be in at night ye'd not get room to turn.
> The youngest two She'd put to bed, their faces to the wall,
> An' the lave of us could sit aroun', just anywhere we might;
> Herself 'ud take the rush-dip an' light it for us all,
> An' "*God be thanked!"* she would say,—"*now we have a light.*"[49]

[48] Dibble, *Harty*, p. 63.
[49] O'Neill, *Songs from the Glens of Antrim*, pp. 46–47.

Marked ‘moderato e scherzando’, this piece provides light relief with a simple melody and dance-like accompaniment. The song highlights the reverence shown to religious matters as the family gathers for prayer. Harty uses a recitation on a single note for ‘May the Lamb o’ God lead us all to the Light o’ Heav’n!’, and a brief hymn-like interlude follows before returning to the playful opening as the narrator ponders on times past.

‘Flame in the Skies of Sunset’ is the only poem Harty by the poet Lizzie Twigg. Twigg was an associate of Arthur Griffith, George Russell and Padraic Colum.[50] She regularly contributed to Griffith’s *United Irishman* journal, avoiding nationalist rhetoric in favour of poetry praising the rural beauty of Ireland.[51] ‘Flame in the Skies of Sunset’ was published in a collection of her poetry under a gaelicized version of her name, Elís Ní Chraoibhín, in 1905.[52] Harty’s setting contains impressionistic elements, including fleeting parallel chord movement in chromatic steps (Figure 7.15), changing time signatures, and tonal ambiguity. The expanse of sky is depicted by the solemn tempo setting (*Lento*), and scalar passages rising sequentially in the accompaniment.

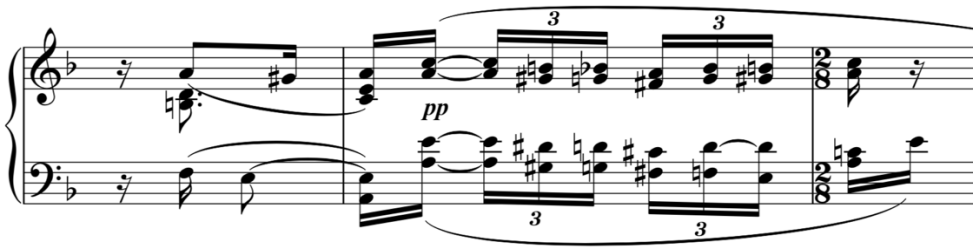

Fig. 7.15 Harty, ‘Flame in the Skies of Sunset’, bars 11–13

The final song of the collection is another of Moira O’Neill’s poems ‘At Sea’, and a return to the Antrim coastline which repeatedly inspired both poet and composer. A driving semiquaver accompaniment and sweeping vocal line brings the collection to a close.

Harty returned to many of the same poets in his later collections and individually published songs. *Five Irish Sketches* was completed in 1911 and published as separate songs by Novello in 1913. ‘The Rachray Man’, with lyrics by

[50] Zack Bowen, ‘Note: Lizzie Twigg: Gone but Not Forgotten’, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 6 (1969), 368–70.
[51] A. J. O’Halloran, ‘A Gifted Poetess Passes Away In Limerick: Late Miss Elizabeth Twigg’, *Limerick Leader*, 14 January 1933, p. 9.
[52] Elís Ní Chraoibhín (Lizzie Twigg), *Songs and Poems* (London: Longmans, 1905).

Moira O'Neill, takes as its subject a young woman who has promised to marry an islandman, and is now regretting her hasty decision. Harty's setting suggests little sympathy for the unhappy protagonist, as the song begins with in a lively 9/8, marked *Molto Vivace quasi Presto*, and the vocal line bears the instruction 'with rueful humour'. Although in a minor key, the song is punctuated by trills and staccato scale passages, suggesting that her plight should not be taken too seriously. A more tranquil section, where she reminisces on another young man she might have had instead, leads to a dramatic climax recalling her to the ills of the island life ahead of her.

'The Stranger's Grave', the second song of the set, is altogether darker in character. The poem, from Emily Lawless's *With the Wild Geese*, gives a voice to an unknown drowned man, buried in a graveyard on Inishmaan dedicated to unbaptised babies. Opening with a solemn funereal figure with changing time signature, a recitative-like incantation sets the scene (Figure 7.16):

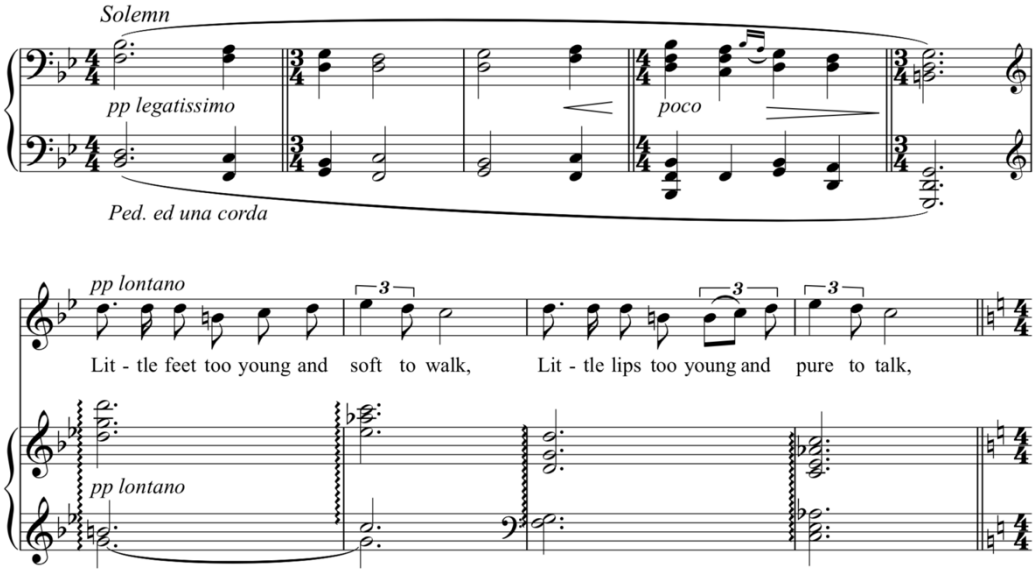

Fig. 7.16 Harty, 'The Stranger's Grave', opening bars

This restrained opening soon gives way to an *agitato* section where, as in many of Harty's sea-themed songs, rolling arpeggios in the piano are used to accompany the passionate outbursts of the unknown drowned man. An interlude briefly recalls the opening section as quieter scenes are unveiled:

> Sometimes a woman comes across the grass,
> Bare-footed, with pit-patt'rings scarcely heard;
> Sometimes the grazing cattle slowly pass,
> Or on my turf sings loud some mating bird.[53]

[53] Lawless, 'The Stranger's Grave', in *With the Wild Geese*, p. 47.

Harty uses transient motifs to depict the ‘pit-patt’ring’ feet and the singing of the birds:

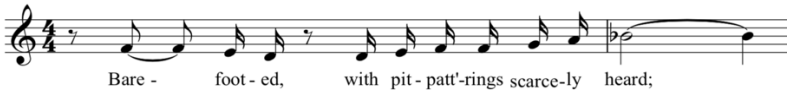

Fig. 7.17 Harty, ‘The Stranger’s Grave, bars 36–37

Fig. 7.18 Harty, ‘The Stranger’s Grave’, bars 41–42

Such devices show the influence that the Romantic composers continued to exert on Harty. The subject matter is dark and tempestuous, ideally suited to Harty’s dramatic flair, and ‘The Stranger’s Grave’ is one of his finest songs.

Five Irish Sketches also contains three songs to texts by Padraic Colum: ‘Across the Door’, ‘Cradle Song’, and ‘A Drover’. There is a level of sophistication in these songs which sets them considerably apart from the popular fare of the ballad concerts. ‘Across the Door’ takes for its setting a country dance, from which a young girl is enticed away to a romantic encounter. Harty opens the dance scene with open fifths (a common device suggesting the tuning of fiddles) in the major key of C, before a modulatory passage explores distant keys (F♯), making use of descending parallel seventh chords to depict the ‘strange’ meadows and cloud-strewn sky of Colum’s poetry. The text and music combine to suggest sexual awakening, concluding with ‘His kiss on my mouth’, which Harty sets in a low tessitura. ‘Cradle Song’ is set as a simple melody in 3/8 with an accompaniment featuring a hypnotic ostinato figure which is subtly varied throughout the song.

‘A Drover’ is a meditation on the burdens and responsibilities of various occupations, as a drover muses on his life driving cattle, and compares it to farmers concerned with ‘crops and care’, and soldiers who must blindly follow their captain’s orders. Harty’s setting demands much more of the performers than many of the drawing room ballads popular at the time and he clearly intended it for professionals or perhaps advanced amateurs. It is set in 9/8, one of his preferred time signatures, and has an extended prelude which makes use of some folk song elements, such as the repeated tonic and harp-like arpeggios. The tonal centre oscillates between C

minor and F major, with occasional sudden shifts to unrelated keys. Harty explores a variety of different textures to illustrate the changing moods of the poem, including cross-rhythms, unison octaves in the accompaniment, and a wide range of dynamics, ending unexpectedly in E major as the drover comes to a reconcilation with his lot.

Harty published a number of single song titles in the years following this collection, including 'A Rann of Wandering' by Colum and 'The Wake Feast' by Alice Milligan, both of which were published in 1914. There is then a hiatus in his published songs coinciding with his enlisting to the British army during the years of the First World War, and the subsequent rise of his conducting career. He published two further collections after the war, *Antrim and Donegal* in 1925, and *Five Irish Poems* in 1938, which represents his last songs. Although set later than the Revival, these songs also used revival texts and will be discussed briefly below.

7.3.4 Late Songs

Antrim and Donegal consists of four songs: two texts by Moira O'Neill followed by two by Elizabeth Shane. 'The Two Houses' concerns the dilemma of the emigrant, torn between two countries. Harty set the text as an extended work of some 127 bars, including a twenty-bar postlude. The song opens in A minor, using a 3/4 time signature in the vocal line while the accompaniment is essentially in 9/8, a device Harty used frequently in his vocal works. A contrasting middle section begins at the text 'I dreamt of gentle Ireland' with a sudden clarity of texture as the piano and voice come into rhythmic alignment in 3/4. The final verse returns to A minor and the cross-rhythms of the opening sections.

'The Little Son' provides a gentle contrast to the vigour of the opening piece. The poem concerns a mother awaiting the birth of her son and imagining the life they will have together. The song has a lyrical melody with an unobtrusive accompaniment and makes some effective use of the flattened 7th. In similar vein, 'Hush Song' is a lullaby set in 6/8, opening with a flourish of descending semiquavers reminiscent of his arrangement of 'My Lagan Love'. A *berceuse* rhythm accompanies throughout. The final song of the set, 'Herrin's in the Bay' is in a lively 12/8 (with frequent use of tuplets in the vocal line, mirroring the cross-rhythms of the opening piece). After the text 'Fillin' the bay where the stones are laid for wrack', Harty

inserts a quote from his 'Sea Wrack' ('The wrack was dark and shiny') into the piano part. The four songs function well as a short song cycle, with a consistent theme of the sea and a strong rhythmic cohesion.

His final Irish collection was *Five Irish Poems,* which opens with 'A Mayo Love Song' by Alice Milligan. This is a declamatory song with elements of recitative in the vocal line and a rhapsodic arpeggiated accompaniment. Dibble suggests that the text, concerning the hopeless separation of lovers, had a deeply personal resonance for Harty who had a late and ultimately doomed romance with a married young woman. [54] The passionate despair of the song is contrasted with his setting of the hymn-like 'At Easter' by Helen Lanyon, a minor British poet who had published a volume of poetry on the beauty of the Antrim Glens. The setting is in a church at Easter, as Spring is awakening outside with its coincident promises of resurrection and renewal. Harty opens with an organ-like prelude in a minor key and illustrates the interior of the church with simple chords and a vocal recitative for 'Hushed is the priest's low monotone'. This is contrasted with a soaring vocal line representing the rapture of a bird singing outside. 'The Sailor Man' is a humorous patter song, returning to the dialect text of Moira O'Neill. 'Denny's Daughter, also by Moira O'Neill, deals again with the theme of love and loss, and references Irish idioms with an opening prelude in unison octaves that suggest traditional ornamentation. The final song of the set is Harty's only setting of a Yeats poem, 'The Fiddler of Dooney'. This rounds out the set with a boisterous jig in a strophic variation form, with a brilliant piano accompaniment that makes considerable demands of the accompanist.

Harty's Irish songs are among the most musically sophisticated of those discussed here, yet they are always tonal and his melodic lines are consistently graceful and lyrical. Like Stanford, with whom he is often compared, he clung to a late Romantic idiom but created an original Irish soundscape without over-reliance on obvious folk song quotation. As a self-confessed Briton and unionist sympathiser, Harty may seem an unlikely exemplar of a musician responding to the cultural nationalism of Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century. An article in the *Musical Times* on his appointment to the Hallé in 1920 was at pains to point out that 'Hamilton Harty is Irish to the core, but is not a musical nationalist'.[55] At the time the article

[54] Dibble, *Hamilton Harty,* p. 268.
[55] Colles, p. 227.

was published, Ireland was engaged in the War of Independence with Britain, so any suggestion of nationalist leanings might have been equated with separatist sympathies, which was certainly untrue of Harty. For Harty, being Irish and being British were not mutually exclusive, and even after the partition of the country in 1922, he was careful to maintain equally cordial relations with colleagues on both sides of the border. He maintained loyal friendships with Michele Esposito, John McCormack, Padraic Colum and John Larchet, and his poetry collections in his personal library reveal an enduring connection to both the literature and the landscape of his birthplace.

The three composers discussed in this chapter exemplify the complexities of identity inherent in the diasporic community as they negotiated British and Irish allegiances. While they moved to England to take advantage of the music education that was available there (Wood, Needham), or to secure better career opportunities (Harty), all of them maintained contact in some form with their Irish heritage. Wood collaborated with cultural activists including Padraic Gregory, Rolleston and Fox, and performed at concerts organised by the IFSS where his arrangements were showcased as exemplars of how folksongs could be assimilated into concert repertoire. He was clearly influenced by his teacher, Stanford, and several of his Irish songs were set to texts and poets favoured by Stanford, such as A. P. Graves and Moira O'Neill. Needham's membership of the ILS brought her into contact with writers such as Francis Fahy, Douglas Hyde, and the ubiquitous Graves. She also benefited from opportunities provided by the Feis Ceoil, and by contacts with leading singers such as John McCormack and Harry Plunket Greene who performed and endorsed her work. Harty had a keen interest in the Literary Revival, setting the poetry of O'Neill, P. W. Joyce, Alice Milligan, and others. He also maintained relations with the Feis Ceoil as an accompanist, composer, conductor, and adjudicator, and his lifelong mentor was Esposito, himself based in Dublin and involved in revival activities. This underscores the importance of the revival movement even for those who had forged their careers away from Ireland, and whose cultural and national identity did not conform to narrow or binary stereotypes.

8. External Perspectives

Irish poetry of the revival period also served as inspiration to many English composers throughout the twentieth century. Peter Warlock's *The Curlew* is a setting of four of Yeats's poems, with an instrumental interlude, composed for singer, cor anglais and string quartet; Frank Bridge set songs with lyrics by Joyce, Yeats, Padraic Colum, and James Stephens; and Ivor Gurney set several by Yeats and Joseph Campbell. E. J. Moeran had close ties to Ireland—his father was Irish and he had a particular attachment to Kenmare, county Kerry, where he died and is now buried.[56] His Irish songs include *Seven Poems of James Joyce* (1929), *Six Poems of Seumas O'Sullivan* (1944), and a collection of folk song arrangements, *Songs from County Kerry* (1950). As all his Irish songs were composed after the Revival, his work falls outside the scope of this study, but arguably demonstrates the ongoing influence of Irish writers and Irish themes into the twentieth century.

This chapter considers the work of two composers who, in remarkably different ways, expressed a close affinity to Ireland and took an active part in the revival movement. In this discussion, Carl Hardebeck can be seen as a composer who developed a passion for the songs and performance practice of the oral tradition, and subsumed his own compositional voice in the service of this music. Conversely, Arnold Bax was a composer who immersed himself in the Celtic Twilight world and took Irish song in a modernising direction.

[56] Geoffrey Self, *The Music of E. J. Moeran* (London: Toccato, 1986).

8.1 Carl Hardebeck

Carl Hardebeck (1869–1945) was an immigrant musician who made a substantial contribution to Irish music during the revival years and after. What is known of his life is primarily documented in a series of essays written in *The Capuchin Annual* in 1943 which was compiled as a testimonial and fundraiser for the composer and scholar who found himself in financial difficulties in his old age.[57] Reminiscences and tributes to Hardebeck were collected from colleagues and musicians including musicologist and composer Aloys Fleischmann, broadcaster and conductor Michael A. Bowles, and the composers John F. Larchet and Frederick May. Further memorial pieces on Hardebeck were published in the same annual in 1948 and 1965, by associates including his one-time secretary, Seán Neeson, and the Irish scholar and collector Seán O'Boyle.[58] The following account is largely drawn from these sources, cross-referenced where possible against newspaper and other records of the time.

Hardebeck's father was a German businessman who had settled in London and his mother was of Welsh descent. Blind from a very young age and showing early promise as a musician, the young Hardebeck was sent to the Royal Normal College for the Blind in Norwood, London, when he was ten years old.[59] The college was a progressive teacher-training college, where Hardebeck claimed that he became familiar with classical music 'from Elizabethan madrigals to the music of Liszt'.[60] He was also schooled in the use of Braille, including its system for the notation and reading of music, and achieved diplomas in organ, piano and music teaching. His father secured an income for him through an investment fund but encouraged him to work towards his own independence. In 1893, Hardebeck left England to set up a music warehouse partnership in Belfast, but this business failed three years later.[61] Instead, Hardebeck turned to teaching and playing the organ, and in 1904 was appointed organist to St Peter's Pro-Cathedral on the Falls Road, in a nationalist area of Belfast in 1904.

[57] 'Hardebeck', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 220–38.
[58] Seán O'Boyle, 'Hardebeck', *The Capuchin Annual* (1948), 80–87. Seán Neeson, 'Carl Gilbert Hardebeck', *The Capuchin Annual* (1965), 273–79.
[59] O'Boyle, p. 80.
[60] Carl Gilbert Hardebeck, 'Fifty Years at Work', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 220–21 (p. 220). O'Boyle, p. 81.
[61] Neeson, p. 275.

In 1897, when the inaugural Feis Ceoil created opportunities for composers writing in Ireland, Hardebeck submitted the anthem 'God of my Salvation' for contralto and chorus as an entry for the composition prize for Best Anthem, winning first place.[62] Hardebeck travelled to the festival in Dublin to hear his work performed. There he was exposed to the work of other Irish composers, what he termed 'the real Irish music—arrangements by Esposito, Dr. [James] Culwick and others, the songs of Stanford and Graves—and the beauty and plaintiveness of it enthralled me.'[63] He began to study the collections of Bunting, Petrie and P. W. Joyce, as well as the Anglo-Irish poets Mangan, Ferguson and Sigerson. He continued to compose for Feis Ceoil competitions, and between 1897 and 1908 won multiple prizes for categories including arrangements of Irish airs, part songs, solo organ, original song and a Cantata for solo, chorus and orchestra entitled *The Red Hand of Ulster*.[64] In 1903 he won the 'Original Prize Song' award with 'The Piper of Donacloney' which had a text by Edith Wheeler, née Milligan, a sister of Charlotte Milligan Fox. This was an attractive but unambitious song in the popular ballad format of the time. It was followed in 1904 with another award for 'Deirdre's Lament', which is markedly different in style and demonstrates his increasing awareness of the oral tradition of Irish music. About this time he also wrote one of his most popular songs, to a text by Moira O'Neill, 'The Song of Glen Dun', from her poetry collection *Songs of the Glens of Antrim.* However, his original songs represent only a small fraction of his output. His arrangements of airs and the particular attention he gave to their modal forms, Gaelic poetry and details of ornamentation represent his principal contribution to Irish song literature.

Shortly after his first Feis Ceoil experience, Hardebeck also became involved in the language revival movement, and took Irish classes with native speakers Tadhg Mac an Bháird and Sean Ó Catháin, studying O'Growney's popular *Simple Lessons in Irish* and James Clarence Mangan's *Poets and Poetry of Munster*.[65] Such was his enthusiasm with the language that he insisted his choirboys at St Peter's learn the language and held Saturday morning classes for them with another native speaker,

[62] Joseph Ryan, 'Hardebeck, Carl Gilbert', in *EMIR*, I, pp. 462–63.
[63] Hardebeck, 'Fifty years at work', p. 220.
[64] O'Boyle, p. 82.
[65] Eugene O'Growney, *Simple Lessons in Irish; giving the pronunciation of each word* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker, 1902). James Clarence Mangan, *The Poets and Poetry of Munster: A Selection of Irish Songs by the Poets of the Last Century*, (Dublin: John O'Daly, 1850).

Tomás Ó Suilleabhán.[66] He took a music room on the Falls road where he held gatherings of folk song enthusiasts on Saturday evenings. In his home on the Limestone Road he entertained major figures of the Revival including Bigger, Fox and Patrick Pearse. Pearse was of particular assistance to him, liaising with the Gaelic League printers to help get six of his Gaelic song arrangements published between 1902 and 1903.[67] These were published as a set under the title *Ceatha Ceóil* and included arrangements of 'Siubhail a Ghrádh', 'An Draighneán Donn', 'Róisín Dubh', 'Róis Gheal Dubh', 'An Chúilfhionn' and 'Péarla an Bhrollaigh Bháin'. His approach to these songs was that favoured by many collectors schooled in the European art tradition: the melodies were fitted into a regular metre, stripped of ornamentations, and any diatonic anomalies resulting from modal scales were adjusted and harmonised chromatically. An example of this approach can be seen in Figure 8.1, 'Siubhail a Ghrádh', below:

Fig. 8.1 Hardebeck, 'Siubhail a Ghrádh', bars 1–9

Here, Hardebeck used the harmonic minor key of A for a modal (Aeolian) melody, raising the penultimate note to function as a leading note resolving to the tonic of A. He introduced secondary dominants and other chromatic elements for the middle section that in the original melody touches on Ionian mode and included a surfeit of

[66] Neeson, p. 276.
[67] Hardebeck to Pearse, 1902–03. NLI, Pearse Papers 1870–1932, MS 21, 046/047/053.

explicit dynamic markings. This heavy approach was not in keeping with the traditional melody, and later, he confessed to Seán Neeson that these early arrangements were 'an example […] of how not to do it'.[68] As his familiarity with oral performance traditions increased, Hardebeck rejected this approach in favour of modal harmonies, more flexible rhythmic motion, and inclusion of traditional embellishments.

His first exposure to the oral tradition was at a Gaelic League concert in Belfast in 1900, when he heard Mairtín O'Conlon from Clare performing unaccompanied Gaelic songs:

> It was so delightful and I was so enchanted by the flow, the rhythm, the rise and fall of melody and above all the simplicity and character of this music that I decided to leave and and follow it. I went to the Donegal Gaeltacht. There I collected all the songs I could. I gathered them eagerly and studied them minutely.[69]

There is an echo of Bunting's reaction to the Belfast Harp Festival here, and O'Conlon's singing seems to have had a similar transformative effect on Hardebeck. Hardebeck invited O'Conlon to sing for Arthur de Meulemeester, a Belgian organist who had also settled in Belfast, and with whom he had studied plainchant and modal harmony. Hardebeck claimed that both he and Meulemeester were struck by the music's similarity to twelfth century Flemish music.[70] His subsequent studies and analyses convinced him of Irish song's modal heritage, and he became increasingly critical of earlier arrangements which forced the melodies into major or minor scales. Fleischmann considered him a pioneer in this respect:

> Earlier arrangers had either been entirely ignorant of the modal system, regarding any characteristic progressions which arose from it as some sort of primitive aberration, or else they cloaked them to the best of their ability under a barrage of spurious modulations, in conformity with Victorian ideas of tonality. Hardebeck understood the modes; his treatment of them is almost exclusively diatonic, and as a result always sound.[71]

While modes had fallen into disuse in art music by the seventeenth century (with the obvious exception of the Ionian and Aeolian modes which were adapted to the major/minor system of functional harmony), they were a continued feature of folk

[68] Neeson, p. 277.
[69] Hardebeck, p. 220.
[70] Neeson, p. 277.
[71] Aloys Fleischmann, 'Hardebeck—4', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 226–28 (p. 227).

music. Much Irish traditional music can be mapped to four modes, equivalent to the Ionian, Dorian, Mixolydian and Aeolian ecclesiastical modes.[72] Mode switching is also a feature of Irish traditional music, for example a piece that switches between Dorian and Aeolian modes will retain a minor quality with a 'mobile' note – the 6th can be raised or lowered to effect the 'switch' while the finalis remains unchanged. A similar switch can be effected between Mixolydian and Ionian modes by raising or lowering the 7th note of the scale. This requires a flexible and open approach to harmonisation, as demonstrated in Hardebeck's arrangement of 'Slieve Gallon Braes', arranged by Hardebeck (Figure 8.2).

Here, the traditional melody is in the Mixolydian mode, with a finalis on C, and the characteristic semitone between the 6th and 7th degrees of the scale. However, this air slips in and out of Ionian mode through the introduction of B♮ at certain points in the melody, eg, bars 6 and 7. Hardebeck's accompaniment is largely restrained to the use of sustained diatonic chords (at times arrestingly discordant) which support the melody without competing with it. Modal switches in the melody are reflected in the accompanying chords. The effect is not dissimilar to accompaniments for recitative passages in Baroque music and is well-suited to the declamatory style of the song. This example also demonstrates Hardebeck's more refined approach to rhythm, with a similar flexibility shown in the changing time signatures and liberal use of pauses at the ends of phrases, while a note at the end of the page emphasises the arranger's efforts to transcribe the traditional method of singing as closely as possible.

[72] Máire Ní Chathasaigh, 'modes', in *CITM*, pp. 457–59. Adrian Scahill 'Modes in Irish traditional music', in *EMIR*, II, pp. 672–73. Breandán Breathnach, pp. 8–15; Joseph J. Ryan, 'Assertions of Distinction: The Modal Debate in Irish Music', in *Irish Musical Studies 2: Music and the Church*, ed. by Gerard Gillen & Harry White, pp. 62-77.

Fig. 8.2 Facsimile of Hardebeck 'Slieve Gallon Braes', p. 3

Also of interest are the Gaelic words: in a reversal of the Anglo-Irish translations of the nineteenth century collections, it is the English words that are traditional, and new lyrics have been added by the Irish poet, academic and Gaelic League member Tadhg Ó Donnchadhadh, who wrote under the pseudonym 'Tórna'. This, and the use of the Gaelic script, which would have driven up the cost of production considerably, are testament to the desire to promote the Irish language and culture that permeated the revival period.

'Slieve Gallon Braes' is included in Hardebeck's collection *Seóda Ceóil / Gems of Melody*, which was published in three volumes from 1908. This collection demonstrates Hardebeck's more refined approach to the notation and accompaniment of traditional song. The first volume also includes several of his Feis Ceoil prizewinning entries: 'The Unspoken Farewell / An Slán ná Dubhpthar'; 'My Lost Love / Máire' and 'Nualldhubhadh Dhéirdre / Deirdre's lament'. The latter song is based on the Deirdre legend using the original Gaelic words published by Theophilus O'Flanagan, with an English translation by Hardebeck himself.[73] Although the song is the only original work included in the self-styled 'Collection of Traditional Irish Melodies', it is almost indistinguishable in style from the rest of the compilation. Hardebeck stays close to the Gaelic idiom, using fluid melismatic ornamentation, with shifting modal tonality ([A♭–E♭–B♭] – [Cm–Gm–Cm]) in the arpeggiated chords of the accompaniment:

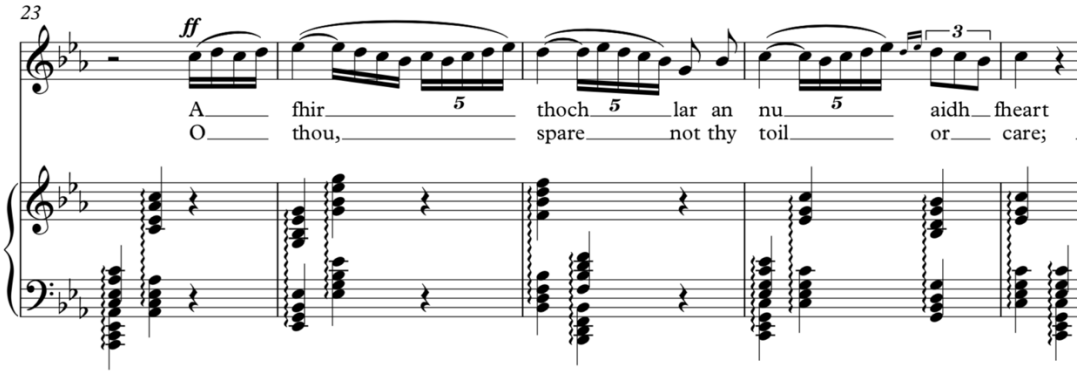

Fig. 8.3 Hardebeck, 'Nualldhubhadh Dhéirdre', bars 23–27

[73] O'Flanagan, 'Deirdri', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin*.

Michael Bowles claimed that Hardebeck was the first to publish Irish songs ‘with the natural turns and graces accurately written’, an example of which can be seen in his notation of ‘An londubh ‘gus an chéirseach’ below:[74]

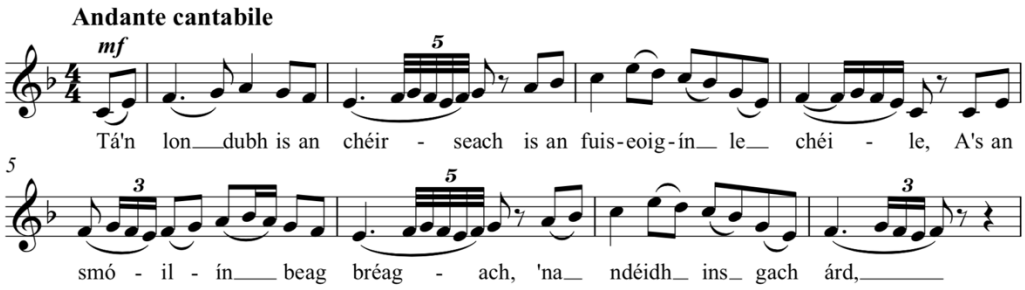

Fig. 8.4 Hardebeck, ‘An londubh ’gus an chéirseach’, bars 2–10

These details had rarely been notated with such accuracy and are all the more extraordinary considering Hardebeck’s method of notation, which, in addition to the normal challenges of transcription, were captured on a Braille board. Seán O’Boyle recalled Hardebeck’s own description of the challenges he faced:

> You will have to write as fast as you can to keep up with even the slowest singing pace. You will write a rough draft of the music consisting of long and short notes. Where the music is different for each verse, take a note of the difference and write out the verse. If you can write the words below the notes, so much the better. If not, get the words afterwards. Without the words you have only lost time, taking down a skeleton of the tune. Take words and notes and examine the phrases with relation to the notes belonging to them. Having found that your notes are only a very poor sketch, rewrite them, taking care that the rhythm fits the words to the smallest particle. Write the rhythm in phrases with a double bar after each phrase. Then, as the public demands a bar-line, insert it according to the assonantal stresses of the poetry.[75]

These are the challenges that any song collector faced, although as discussed in Chapter 2, many of the nineteenth-century collectors did not collect the Gaelic words, or worked with another Gaelic speaker who collected these separately. Hardebeck collected both. His account of the process also alludes to his more mature approach to phrasing, with barlines only inserted as a concession to public taste, and at the service of the stresses of the poetry, rather than as a metrical imposition on the airs. Hardebeck had made a detailed study of the use of stress and assonance in Gaelic

[74] Michael A. Bowles, ‘Hardebeck—2’, *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 224–225 (p. 225).
[75] Quoted in O’Boyle, p. 84. O’Boyle does not give details of his source, which may be a paraphrase based on his own recollections.

poetry and was convinced that without an understanding of the phonetic principles of Irish poetry, musicians would not be in a position to properly understand Irish music.[76] When he provided English translations to Irish words, he followed the accentuation syllable for syllable as far as he could, in order to familiarise non-Irish speakers with the rhythms of Irish poetry. His arrangement of 'Éire', an overtly nationalistic song taken down from Máighréad Ní Annagáin, includes his own metrical translation and a footnote drawing attention to the Gaelic syllabic accents as essential to the music.[77]

O'Boyle describes the additional complexities of using the Braille system to encode the songs in the following description of the composer at work:

> No sooner did he hear a new air than out would come his note-book—that sheet of cardboard on which, using a stylus, he pierced through a dotted brass frame the various combinations of six raised dots, that godsend to the blind, which is called the Braille system. It was fascinating to note the speed and accuracy of his work. Finished almost as soon as the performer, Hardebeck would then ask for a repeat *da capo*, to check for mistakes; but these were few, for he had a remarkably sensitive ear.[78]

Some idea of the challenges facing him can be understood from the diagram below, taken from W. H. Illingworth's *History of the Education of the Blind*, which shows how notes are encoded according to pitch and duration:[79]

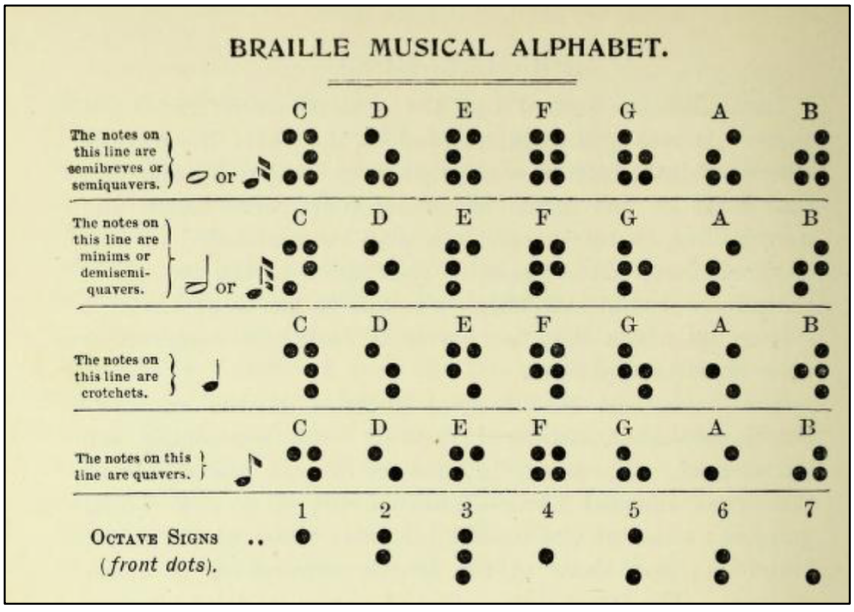

Fig. 8.5 Facsimile of Illingworth, *History of the Education of the Blind*, p. 48

[76] Hardebeck, *Seóda Ceóil,* III, p. 3.
[77] Ibid., p. 4.
[78] Neeson, p. 274.
[79] W. H. Illingworth, *History of the Education of the Blind* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1910), p. 48.

These notes are used in combination with other symbols denoting intervals, accidentals, rests and dynamics, and add a significant degree of complexity to the process. In addition to transcribing the airs, Hardebeck used Braille for the Gaelic words, and developed a system which adapted Braille to the Irish language.[80] Given Hardebeck's own description of the complexities of capturing music, and his known attention to details of ornamentation, stresses and the notation of the Gaelic words, Neeson's account that he finished 'almost as soon as the performer' is perhaps a generous exaggeration.

Several of Hardebeck's peers commented on his devotion to settings of existing airs, perhaps at the expense of his own original voice. The composer Frederick May claimed that:

> By studying Hardebeck's settings we can discover for ourselves the chief qualities a man must bring to his task: love of the air in question and also of the musical background of which it forms a part; and the most complete and absolute self-abnegation.[81]

Hardebeck possessed these qualities, but Fleischmann claimed that he lacked compositional creativity:

> To devote oneself to the task of preserving and reshaping a corpus of traditional music means, as a rule, to sacrifice one's creative personality, and Hardebeck, like Herbert Hughes, did not develop his own muse sufficiently to rank as a composer on independent ground.[82]

Fleischmann sees this as an unavoidable sacrifice. Pragmatically, a musician who made his living by a combination of teaching, composing, collecting, performing and accompanying necessarily had to make choices about which work would be prioritised. Fleischmann nonetheless admired Hardebeck's work and further claimed that Hardebeck found a simpler approach to the setting of folk tunes than those employed by earlier musicians, asserting that his arrangements did not 'fall between the two stools of art and folk music—they are pure folk music, which has merely borrowed some of the resources of art music for adornment, emphasis and colour'.[83]

Political events were to have a major effect on Hardebeck, and he became increasingly sympathetic to the nationalist cause. O'Boyle relates Hardebeck's

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[80] Ibid. Hardebeck later served on the Gaelic Braille Type Commission, established by the Irish Association for the Blind, to systematise Gaelic Braille signs. Ilka Stäglin and Pat Farrell, 'UIB – Irish Braille in Progress', *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5241/6-ICEB-04>
[81] Frederick May, 'Hardebeck—6', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 229–30, (p. 229).
[82] Fleischmann, p. 227.
[83] Ibid.

reaction to the Easter Rising of 1916, as on the Sunday after Easter, the day after Pearse surrendered to the British Forces,

> the Low Sunday congregation in St. Peter's, Belfast, heard, as they made their way out, the organ, unliturgically but exultantly, pealing forth *The Soldier's Song*. It must have been about this time that Hardebeck formulated his own particular creed: "I believe in God, Beethoven, and Patrick Pearse!"[84]

In 1919, he collaborated with lyricist Fr Charles O'Neill to publish an arrangement of 'The Foggy Dew', a folk song collected by Fox and previously set to lyrics by Wheeler in *Songs of the Irish Harpers*.[85] The Fox/Wheeler version achieved a certain amount of popularity and was recorded in 1913 by John McCormack. While this earlier version was a simple love song, O'Neill re-set it as a commemoration of 1916, using the pseudonym 'Iascaire' ('Fisherman'):[86]

> As down the glen one Easter morn to a City fair rode I
> There armed lines of marching men in squadrons passed me by
> No pipes did hum, nor battle drum did sound its dread tattoo
> But the Angelus bell o'er the Liffey's swell rang out in the foggy dew.

Hardebeck's arrangement is modal, beginning with chords mimicking the Angelus bells, followed by an increase in pace and descending chords which sets the tune as a brisk march. The song quickly became popular and was adopted as a marching song by the Belfast IRA, in part due to the singing of Seamus O'Doherty, who introduced the song to audiences in Belfast as well as in the United States, when he accompanied Eamon De Valera on a fundraising trip in 1921.[87]

The first world war had a catastrophic effect on the investments Hardebeck's father had made on his behalf, and thereafter he frequently found himself in financially reduced circumstances.[88] In 1919, he was offered a dual post in Cork: initially as headmaster of the Municipal School of Music as part of a scheme that was also to include a newly-created Chair of Irish Music at UCC. The newly-created posts were warmly supported by the Cork Corporation, which was anxious to have Irish music included in the syllabus and to reduce dependency on English examining bodies.[89] Aware of Hardebeck's passion for the Irish language and music, the

[84] O'Boyle, p. 85.
[85] Fox, *Songs of the Irish Harpers*, pp. 37–40.
[86] Eugene Dunphy, 'A hundred years in the Foggy Dew', *History Ireland*, 27 (2019), 32–35 (p. 33).
[87] Dunphy, p. 34.
[88] O'Boyle, p. 85.
[89] J. J. O'Connor, 'Hardebeck—11', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 236–38 (p. 236).

Technical Committee drafted a programme of work around him that included publication of Irish music, the drafting of an examination syllabus, public lectures and recitals and the introduction of a diploma or certificate in Irish music to be embodied in the University courses.

However, the appointments proved controversial, and for Hardebeck repeatedly problematic. On arriving in Cork to take up the appointment, he was surprised to be met by 'half a dozen policemen'.[90] According to O'Boyle, Hardebeck had been unaware that his entire journey had been escorted by two plain-clothes detectives, due to concerns about unrest as a result of the appointment of a 'German'.[91] This gives some indication of the atmosphere in Ireland in the aftermath of the first world war and at a time of increasing Anglo-Irish hostilities. The post of Chair of Irish Music at the university had been created by the Lord Mayor Tomás MacCurtain and his colleague (and successor) Terence MacSwiney.[92] Both of these lost their lives during the Irish War of Independence the following year. The city of Cork became an epicentre of violence between British and Republican forces during the period of the war, witnessing assassinations and counter-assassinations, and escalating to the burning of the city in an infamous incident in late 1920.[93] Some of these political events had a directly negative effect on Hardebeck's financial affairs. His university appointment was held up in part due to the internment of Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, registrar of the university and known Sinn Féin sympathiser.[94] The establishment of the Chair of Irish Music in the university was delayed until 1922 when Hardebeck became the first appointee.[95] A Dáil Grant awarded for the publication of Irish music by Michael Collins (then Minister for Finance in the Provisional Government) was severely reduced when Ireland descended into civil war.[96] Hardebeck describes how he had printed at his own expense 'three books of pianoforte music, four songs, and some hymns', but due to difficulties in getting the works printed 'many of my efforts were unfruitful as far as the public were concerned.'[97] Discouraged by the failure of the Cork scheme, Hardebeck returned to Belfast in 1923.

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[90] Hardebeck, 'Fifty years at work', p. 221.
[91] O'Boyle, p. 85.
[92] Neeson, p. 231.
[93] Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine*, pp. 411–20.
[94] Ibid. 'Technical Instruction: Cork Committee', *Evening Echo*, 11 April 1922, p. 4. 'Technical Instruction: Meeting of the Borough Committee', *Evening Echo*, 11 October 1921, p. 3.
[95] Susan O'Regan, 'University College Cork', in *EMIR*, II, pp. 1022–23 (p. 1022).
[96] O'Connor, p. 238.
[97] Hardebeck, 'Fifty years at work', p. 221.

Like other nationalists in the now-partitioned North, Hardebeck found himself isolated in a changed Belfast. During this period he began to write a book on Irish music in conjunction with the Gaelic League, however, this was never published.[98] Convinced by his supporters that he would find better work in Dublin, he moved to Mountjoy Square in 1932, where he continued working on transcriptions and arrangements as well as choral works for An Gúm, the publisher for the Department of Education of the Irish Free State. He brought out three further songbooks under the title *Fuinn Fiadha Fuinidh*, under the official Government publications imprint, Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais. These contain entirely Gaelic lyrics, without English translations, and demonstrate his mature approach to Irish song (for an example, see Figure 8.3).

Hardebeck also worked on a volume of *Anglo-Irish Folk Songs*, the second volume of folk songs collected and edited by the northern poet and playwright Padraic Gregory. Gregory had already published an initial volume with the composer Charles Wood, although this did not publish until after Wood's death in 1926. Wood's arrangements are what might be expected of a composer best known for his Anglican church music: the arrangements are written in the European style, with prominent but not obtrusive accompaniments providing variety and interest over multiple verses. There is a marked difference in the approach taken by Hardebeck in the second volume. The piano has a much more muted role, in many places reduced to punctuating chords, with short bridge passages linking verses. Footnotes draw the performer's attention to the modal scales and warn against inserting spurious chromatic notes, for example, the rather stern instruction: 'The indication "Ray mode" here means the scale from D to D all natural; the accompaniment has been written with this in mind so B flat is not to be substituted for B natural', or 'The raised sixth and seventh note of the artificial minor mode scale have no place in Irish music and have been carefully avoided in the accompaniment and must not be inserted.'[99] Changing time signatures are also introduced, including 'Ramble Away', with a time-signature oscillating between 6/8 and 7/8 on alternate bars; and 'It's nae the Could Wind', which features a more flexible metre marked by bars in 3/4 and 4/4. Thus, even though this was a project where Hardebeck had less ownership, he still asserted

[98] O'Boyle, p. 86.
[99] *Anglo Irish Folk Songs*, ed. by Padraic Gregory with settings by Charles Wood and Carl Hardebeck, 2 vols (London: Stainer & Bell, 1931 and 1936), II (1936), 16–19.

his artistic interpretation on the song arrangements, evidently with Gregory's agreement.

However, such projects did not of themselves provide a living, and in his later years, Hardebeck confided to Seán Neeson that his 'one fear', was that like many other blind men, 'I may have to go on the streets.'[100] In 1943, the Capuchin Fathers set up a 'Hardebeck Testimonial Committee' and invited contributions towards establishing a pension for him.[101] He died two years later in February 1945.

In an *Irish Times* article written in 1978, Michael Bowles compared Hardebeck's contribution to that of Bunting and Petrie, and concludes that Hardebeck was uniquely placed to be an 'Irish' musician, highlighting his technical abilities as a musician, his understanding of Irish idioms and, crucially, his knowledge of the Irish language and its inherent rhythms.[102] This was a somewhat atavistic perspective of Irish music, and it was typical of a mid-century viewpoint that 'Irish' music equated to music from the past, perhaps reinterpreted for modern audiences. Hardebeck had a deep love for both the Irish language and Irish music, and he remained closer to the oral tradition than any other composer considered here. Yet, as with Charlotte Millington Fox and Herbert Hughes, this commitment to Ireland's musical heritage may have stifled his own compositional voice.

[100] Neeson, p. 273.
[101] Fr Senan Moynihan, 'Hardebeck—12', *The Capuchin Annual* (1943), 236.
[102] Michael Bowles, 'Carl Hardebeck did much for music in Ireland', *Irish Times*, 24 October 1978, p. 14.

8.2 Arnold Bax

The composer Arnold Bax (1883–1953) is best known as one of the leading British composers in the interwar period. He was knighted in 1937 and appointed a 'Master of the King's Musick' in 1942, achievements that would seem to make him an unlikely subject for this study. While Bax's substantial ouevre consists largely of orchestral and other instrumental works, he also wrote a number of Irish-influenced songs during the revival period. After being introduced to Yeats's *The Wanderings of Oisín* as a young student in 1902, he became fascinated by Ireland and Irish culture, beginning a passionate relationship with the country and its Celtic Twilight milieu. In his autobiography, *Farewell, My Youth*, he described the impact of reading Yeats's work as a revelation of his own inner Celtic nature.[103] The musicologist Fabian Huss has noted the defining role of literature and a preoccupation with mythology in Bax's relationship with Ireland from the very outset—in time this would express itself both in the short works of literature he contributed to the Revival as well as his musical works.[104]

Shortly after his introduction to Yeats's work, he visited Ireland for the first time and his account of that trip reveals the beginnings of a transformative influence on his future writings and compositions:

> I went to Ireland as a boy of nineteen in great spiritual excitement and once there my existence was at first so unrelated to material actualities that I find it difficult to remember it in any clarity. I do not think I saw men and women passing me on the roads as real figures of flesh and blood; I looked through them back to their archetypes, and even Dublin itself seemed peopled by gods and heroic shapes from the dim past.[105]

Séamus de Barra suggests that Ireland provided Bax with 'an enchanted place to which he could flee whenever life in England seemed too oppressively ordinary', and that his contact with the country had a profound impact on his imaginative development.[106] However, de Barra contends that Bax's Ireland was a 'curious compound in which a little reality was blended with much imagination', and that the

[103] Arnold Bax, *Farewell, My Youth and other writings*, ed. by Lewis Foreman (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), p. 39.
[104] Fabian Gregor Huss, 'The "Irish Music" of Arnold Bax and E. J. Moeran', in *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond'*, ed. by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), pp. 69–82 (p. 71).
[105] Ibid., p. 44.
[106] Séamus de Barra, 'Into the Twilight: Arnold Bax and Ireland', *Journal of Music* (2004) <https://journalofmusic.com/focus/twilight-arnold-bax-and-ireland> [accessed 7 August 2020]

composer's strong responses to the country, which fired his creativity, belied the reality of Irish life—a reality which Bax did not share.

Born in Streatham, London in 1883, Bax belonged to a privileged surburban class, and as an adult was possessed of a private income which gave him enviable freedom in pursuing his creative muse.[107] In 1898, he began attending the Hampstead Conservatoire, moving to the Royal Academy of Music from 1900–05, where he studied composition with Frederick Corder and piano with Tobias Mattay. During his college years, Bax continued to make visits to Donegal and Connemara, and returned repeatedly to Glencolumcille in Donegal, which became his 'spiritual haven for the next thirty years and the fountainhead of much of his music', according to Foreman.[108] Bax's reaction to Ireland was visceral—Foreman claimed that 'he experienced a fierce exultation in the primitive and untamed which was later to be reflected in his music.'[109] In his autobiography, Bax wrote that he

> worked very hard at the Irish language and steeped myself in its history and saga, folk-tale and fairy-lore […] Under this domination, my musical style became strengthened and purged of many alien elements. In part at least I rid myself of the sway of Wagner and Strauss and began to write Irishly, using figures and melodies of a definitely Celtic curve, an idiom which in the end was so much second nature to me that many works of mine have been called Irish or Celtic when I supposed them to be purely personal to the British composer, Arnold Bax.[110]

He began to write poems and short stories influenced by Yeats, Synge and George Russell, and his instrumental compositions also began to show the influence of Ireland. Between 1905 and 1910, he wrote several Irish pieces for orchestra, and some sketches for an abandoned opera based on the popular Deirdre myth. An early setting of 'The Fiddler of Dooney' may have fallen foul of Yeats's censor. Unpublished in its original form, Bax substituted his own words and re-titled the song 'The Enchanted Fiddle', which was later included in an *Album of Seven Songs*.

Bax also set 'The Fairies' by the Donegal poet William Allingham. This is an attractive piece with a sparkling piano accompaniment, incorporating witty ragtime gestures to suggest the fairies' dancing (Figure 8.6).

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[107] Lewis Foreman, 'Bax, Sir Arnold Edward Trevor', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30645>
[108] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* p. 29.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Bax, *Farewell my Youth,* p. 41.

Fig. 8.6 Bax, 'The Fairies', bars 3–7

A more solemn section reveals the dignity of the 'old king' sitting on the high hilltop and a change of mood in the middle section describes how 'They stole little Bridget / For seven years long'. Bax captures the dread of the child's abduction with an *allargando* leading into a harmonically simplified section, with a pentatonic melody over a low accompaniment based on a descending major scale:

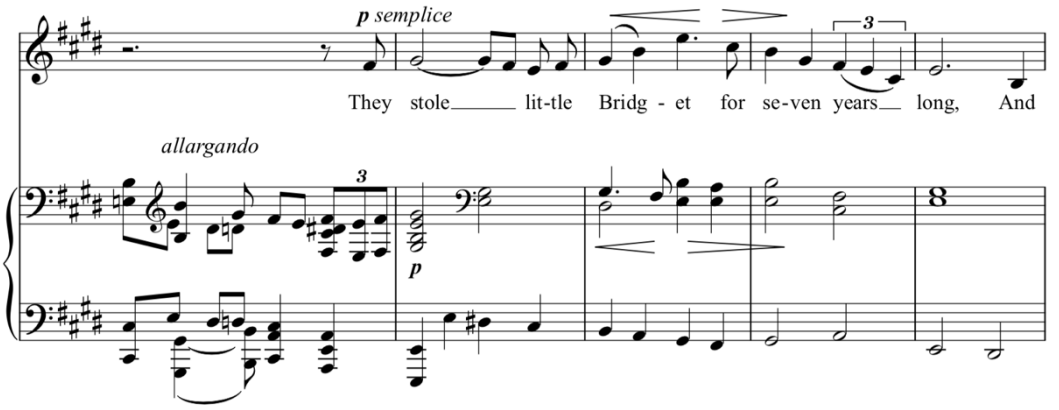

Fig. 8.7 Bax, 'The Fairies', bars 66–70

The song was premiered in 1908, when it was performed by the Wagnerian soprano Luisa Sobrino with her husband Carlos Sobrino on piano. The Sobrinos became

Bax's in-laws when he married their daughter Elsita in 1911. The couple spent their honeymoon in Ireland, and moved to Ireland later in the year, settling down in the affluent suburb of Rathgar where they lived until 1914. Bax further demonstrated his affection for the country in the names he chose for their two children: Dermot, (a moniker which he had adopted himself as a pseudonym for his Irish writings) and Maeve.

Bax's brother Clifford introduced him to George Russell who in turn provided Bax with an entrée to Dublin's literary elite. By now an established revival figure, Russell in his youth had been influenced, like Yeats, by Standish O'Grady's *History of Ireland,* and became particularly absorbed by the mystical character of Cúchulainn.[111] His play *Deirdre* had been produced alongside Yeats's *Kathleen ni Houlihan* in 1902, and he had published several books of spiritual poetry.[112] An other-worldly poet who was profoundly influenced by the occult and the practice of theosophy, Russell had an equally pragmatic side and a talent for organisation. This led to his appointment as assistant secretary of Horace Plunkett's Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, a co-operative movement which Russell believed might help unify Irish people of different creeds.[113]

The romantic and impressionable Bax was immediately drawn to Russell, who lived nearby in Rathgar Avenue. Bax regularly attended his salon on Sunday evenings which attracted literati including George Moore and James Joyce. Following Russell's example, Bax set up his own salon in Bushy Park Road on Wednesday evenings, and through these circles came into contact with luminaries including the writer James Stephens, Padraic and Mary Colum, Patrick Pearse, the poet Seumas O'Sullivan and dramatist Lennox Robinson. In his autobiography, Bax wrote:

> I should think that more than half of those long-silenced discussions must have been concerned with Ireland from some aspect or other, for, as in in Russia and Poland, the shadow of the nation broods over all gatherings of Irish folk, and the voice of the dark land beyond the window-panes mingles sooner or later in every conversation.[114]

[111] Nicholas Allen, 'Russell, George William ('Æ')', in *DIB* < http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7836> [accessed 13 August 2020]
[112] A. E. [pseud. George William Russell], *Homeward: Songs by the Way* (Dublin: C. Whaley, 1894); *The Earth Breath and Other Poems* (London: John Lane, 1897); *The Divine Vision and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1904).
[113] Allen, 'Russell, George William (Æ)'.
[114] Bax, *Farewell My Youth*, p. 88.

His literary writings under the pseudonym 'Dermot O'Byrne' were widely disseminated within this circle, although he kept his dual occupations as writer and composer strictly separate. In his forward to *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, a survey edited by Aloys Fleischmann in 1952, Bax claimed that 'In my early Dublin days I moved in an almost wholly literary circle. There was no talk of music whatever; indeed A.E. never tired of relating in after time how I had lived in the city for two or three winters before he discovered that I was a musician at all.'[115] Harry White has interpreted Bax's reticence on revealing his musical proficiency as evidence that he 'perceived its irrelevance to the programme of cultural reanimation so brilliantly sponsored by Yeats and his associates.'[116] The explanation Bax himself gave in a letter to Philip Heseltine (better known as the composer Peter Warlock) is rather more prosaic:

> Please keep Dermot O'Byrne severely in the background. The musical side of me does not want to have anything to do with him in public as the ordinary mug seems to hold the fantastic and quite ineradicable opinion that it is impossible to express oneself successfully in two different mediums. Of course he may be right, but at present I am not convinced.[117]

Bax set few Irish texts during the period he lived in Ireland, although he wrote a number of works for voice and orchestra, including an orchestration of his 'Celtic Lullaby' from *A Celtic Song Cycle.* Many of his orchestral and instrumental works of this period demonstrate his deep affection for the country, most particularly *The Garden of Fand,* a tone poem inspired by the mythical goddess Fand, wife of the sea god Manannan Mac Lir and lover of the Celtic hero Cúchulainn. This work has been regarded as the apogee of Bax's response to revival Ireland, and it demonstrates his commitment to responding in an original way rather than by folk song inclusion and quotation. Joseph Ryan has referred to the work as 'the surpassing achievement of this early commitment to Ireland and her people'; Foreman has referred to it as the 'climax of Bax's development, celebrating his musical maturity'; and Harry White noted that the work 're-integrates the idea of Ireland into the fabric of British music'.[118] With these and other instrumental works, Bax has some justification in his

[115] Arnold Bax, 'Foreward', in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, ed. by Aloys Fleischmann (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), iv.
[116] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 122.
[117] Bax to Heseltine, quoted in Foreman, p. 138.
[118] Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, p. 50. Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, p. 118. White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 123.

claim to have been the first 'to translate the hidden Ireland into musical terms.'[119] As instrumental works however, they lie outside the scope of this study, but they have been analysed elsewhere by the writers mentioned above and others.[120]

In 1910, he set 'To Éire' by the poet and journalist James H. Cousins, who was one of Russell's literary circle. The song was not published until a later 1919 collection, the *Album of Seven Songs*, which also includes settings of Fiona Macleod, Chaucer, and Bax's re-worked 'The Enchanted Fiddle'. 'To Éire' is a particularly successful setting of Cousin's tribute to Ireland, which avoids sentimentality while evoking an atmosphere of sorrow and yearning. In the poem, 'Éire' is personified as a 'daughter of divine unrest', while the first two verses must have struck a personal chord for Bax, who may have seen himself as a sailor who 'learned to love thy hidden name'. The second verse directs a particular rebuke at those who appropriated Ireland's songs:

> To Thee, beloved! of old there came
> The sailors of a thousand ships,
> Who learned to love thy hidden name,
> And love the music of thy lips.
>
> And some, who thought to build thy pyre,
> And on its ruin rear a throne,
> Have loved to sit around thy fire
> And count thy saddest songs their own.[121]

Bax cannot be accused of appropriating Ireland's songs, as here and elsewhere he eschewed any repurposing of existing melodies and responded to the text with original composition. Graceful melodic lines curve through each of the verses (e.g., Figure 8.8), and the delicate piano accompaniment is suggestive of Irish ornamentation (Figure 8.9).

Fig. 8.8 Bax, 'To Éire', bars 5–9

[119] Quoted in White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 118.
[120] Edwin Evans, 'Arnold Bax', *The Musical Quarterly,* 9 (1923), 167–80. Fabian Gregor Huss, 'The "Irish Music" of Arnold Bax and E. J. Moeran', in *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond'*, ed. by Fitzgerald and O'Flynn, pp. 69–81. Aidan J. Thomson, 'Bax and the "Celtic North"', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland, 9 (2012–13),* 51–87.
[121] James H. Cousins, *Collected Poems (1894–1940)* (Madras: Kalâkshetra, 1940), p. 10.

Fig. 8.9 Bax, 'To Éire', bars 25–27

In 1914, Bax and his family left Dublin and returned to London, where he remained for much of the war as a non-combatant due to a heart condition and 'nervous temperament'.[122] He produced a remarkable amount of music during the war years, primarily of an orchestral nature, but the 1916 rebellion in particular inspired a number of musical and literary works. His literary circle in Dublin had introduced him to many republicans, including Patrick Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh. The Easter Rising and subsequent executions were consequently a tremendous shock to him, and he memorialised the event initially in a pamphlet of verse by 'Dermot O'Byrne': *A Dublin Ballad and Other Poems*.[123] Bax described writing these poems 'with painful intensity of emotion just after the rebellion.'[124] Published in 1918, the pamphlet contained nine poems in total and was subsequently banned by the British censor. The pamphlet opens with 'A Dublin Ballad – 1916', Bax's searing condemnation of the destruction of Dublin by the British forces, followed by a poem headed 'In Memoriam, My friend Patrick H. Pearse *(Ruler of Ireland for one week.)*' In fact, Bax only met Pearse on the one occasion when they were both guests of the poets Padraic and Mary Colum. It was a matter of pride to him that Pearse had allegedly remarked to Mary Colum 'I think your friend Arnold Bax may be one of us. I should like to see more of him'.[125] In a letter to the pianist Harriet Cohen just after Pearse's execution, he described the meeting:

> We had a wonderful talk one evening at the Colums about the west and the Gaelic world, all those little intimately and tenderly Irish things that stir the heart's depths like the little characteristic movements of a beloved one. I shall never forget those who move me in this way, wherever he or she may be or whatever the world's verdict on them.[126]

[122] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* p. 140.
[123] Dermot O'Byrne [pseud. Arnold Bax], *A Dublin Ballad and Other Poems* (Dublin: The Candle Press, 1918).
[124] Letter from Arnold Bax to Tilly Fleischmann, quoted in Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, p. 147.
[125] Bax, *Farewell my Youth,* p. 93.
[126] Bax to Cohen, 4 May 1916, British Library, MS Mus. 1651. Quoted in Peter Atkinson, '"An Ireland Built Anew": Bax's "Tintagel" and the Easter Rising', *Music & Letters*, 97 (2016), 100–35 (p. 109).

Bax also wrote a tone poem for orchestra in 1916, *In Memoriam*, with a dedication 'I gcuimhne ar bPádraig mac Piarais' ('in memory of Patrick Pearse'), which waited until 1998 to get its first performance.[127] A later tone poem, *Tintagel*, written in 1917 and orchestrated in 1919 has also been interpreted as an implicit response to the 1916 rising by scholar Peter Atkinson.[128]

He also set four poems by George Russell in 1916: 'A Leader', 'A Patriot', 'A New Being' (set by Bax as 'I Know Myself No More, My Child'), and 'Parting'.[129] While two of these do not seem to have survived, the manuscript for 'A Leader' was donated to the library of University College, Dublin, after Bax's death. This is a setting for baritone and piano written 'in memory of certain Irish patriots'. Russell's poem begins:

> Though your eyes with tears were blind,
> Pain upon the path you trod:
> Well we knew, the hosts behind,
> Voice and shining of a god.[130]

Figure 8.10 shows a reconstruction of the opening of the song from the manuscript, which may still have been in draft form. Bax's setting is a short work of 52 bars, beginning with a slow march in common time with a walking bass line set at a low register of the piano. Ostensibly in B♭ minor, repeated use of a flattened 2nd suggests a Phrygian mode. Bax exploits this ambiguity with short chromatic rising and falling motifs (for example, in bars 3–4 and 11–12). A descending figure in the left hand piano part is strongly evocative of a funeral or execution setting. Bax chose the same key and characteristic dotted rhythms of the iconic slow movement (*'March funèbre'*) of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2 in B♭ minor.

[127] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* p. 472. The work was performed on the 17 June 1998 by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley, at the Studio 7 Concert Hall in Manchester.
[128] Atkinson, pp. 100–35.
[129] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, p. 494.
[130] A. E. [pseud. George William Russell], *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan & Sons, 1917), p. 149.

Fig. 8.10 Bax, 'A Leader', bars 1–12
Reproduced from the manuscript by kind permission of UCD Library

The final setting of a poem by Russell was published by Murdoch in 1921. 'Parting' is an extended impressionistic treatment of Russell's comparatively short poem and may have been intended as a tribute to Harriet Cohen, for whom Bax left his wife in 1918.[131]

Bax himself regarded the outbreak of World War I as the end of his youth and the idyllic days in Ireland. He concludes his autobiography with his departure from Ireland, writing:

> I crossed over to England, not to revisit Ireland for over four years, and with the exception of 'AE', never again to see one of my Dublin friends in the land of Ireland. The golden age was past!

[131] 'Parting' shares thematic material with Bax's *Symphonic Variations* for piano and orchestra, a work which was first performed in 1920 with Cohen as soloist. Bax granted Cohen exclusive rights to the work.

> At the outbreak of war, or soon after, the Colums went to America, no more to come back to their native country unless as passing visitors; Ernest Boyd and Madeleine (by now his wife) followed; Stephens gave up his post as curator of the National Gallery of Ireland to work as a literary reviewer on London papers; Pearse and MacDonagh were shot after Easter Week, whilst even the conscientiously Celtic ladies broke up their joint household and departed elsewhere. If I return now I am an utter stranger in that city of my young manhood, knowing amongst the indifferent population not one soul (now that 'AE' too is no more) that was intimate with mine when for too short a time I was an adopted—and, I like to believe, not unloved—child of Eire.
>
> Farewell my youth![132]

He did not visit the country again until after the war and stayed away during the violence of the War of Independence and the civil war that followed. Visiting the country in 1919, he was horrified by the 'ghastly ruins of O'Connell St'.[133] Several commentators have noted that the creative influence of Ireland on his works began to decline from this point.[134] Nonetheless, his two most substantial collections of Irish songs date from 1921 and 1922 when he published *Five Irish Songs* (lyrics by Padraic Colum, Joseph Campbell and John Millington Synge) and *Three Irish Songs* (Colum). Two further songs were composed in 1922 ('Dermot Donn McMorna', with lyrics by Colum), and 1923 ('To an Isle in the Water'—his only setting of a Yeats text). These were the last Irish texts that he set until a late setting in 1932, at the request of Herbert Hughes who was compiling his Joyce book. Bax submitted a setting of Joyce's 'Watching the Needleboats'. These songs are examined briefly below.

Bax set a total of six of Padraic Colum's poems, all taken from the poet's 1907 publication *Wild Earth*, a collection that had similarly inspired Hamilton Harty and Herbert Hughes. These settings mark a change from his preoccupation with mysticism and Celticism evidenced in some of his earlier songs to texts more concerned with rural life and human experience. *Five Irish Songs* opens with 'The Pigeons' from Colum's poem 'No Child' (also set by Herbert Hughes, see Chapter 6), where Bax makes extensive use of chromaticism and dissonance. The piano opens with a discordant figure tempered by a 'ppp' dynamic, which continues while a second treble figure introduces further dissonance and a triplet cross-rhythm in bar

[132] Bax, *Farewell My youth*, p. 99.
[133] Bax to Cohen, 2 March 1919, London, British Library, Harriet Cohen papers, Deposit 1999/10. Quoted in Foreman, p. 179.
[134] Thomson, p. 58. Fuss, p. 71. Foreman, p. 194.

two. The vocal line produces several tritone intervals over the piano's chromatic tone clusters, and is itself tonally unstable, centred on B/B♭; C/C♭; D/D♭. The dynamic remains subdued at 'p', creating an effect of intense, intimate pain (see Figure 8.11).

Fig. 8.11 Bax, 'The Pigeons', bars 1–4

There is little here in the music that is suggestive of Ireland, except insofar as it may reflect Bax's personal reaction to the events that were unfolding there, and his disconnect from the more mystical elements that had attracted him to Ireland in his youth. Foreman has noted that there is no evidence to show how Bax reacted to events of the War of Independence or the Irish civil war, but that his music has proved and absolutely reliable barometer of his emotional state.[135]

The second song of the collection, Joseph Campbell's 'As I came over the grey, grey hills' deals with pseudo-religious themes, from Campbell's poetry collection 'The Gilly of Christ'.[136] The poems are based on an Irish legend that when Christ visited Ireland a local boy showed him around, hence 'Giolla Críost', or 'Servant of Christ'.[137] In Campbell's romantic reading, the 'gilly' is a willing servant who despises wordly goods, and is more spirit than man, not visible to mortals. The

[135] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, p. 194.
[136] Joseph Campbell, *The Gilly of Christ* (Dublin: Maunsel, 1907).
[137] Saunders and Kelly, p. 43.

last stanzas of ‘As I came over the grey, grey hills’ also suggest a world that is slipping away, and it is not difficult to connect the gilly in the final stanza with the figure of Pearse whose martyrdom figured so prominently in Bax’s creative output during that period:

> The moon it set and the wind’s away
> And the song in the grass is dying
> And a silver cloud on the silent sea
> Like a shrouding sheet is lying
>
> But Christ and the gilly will follow on
> Till the ring in the East is showing,
> And the awny corn is red on the hills
> And the golden light is glowing.[138]

The setting bears comparison with ‘A Leader’, with its solemn slow march piano introduction, walking bass line and modal (mixolydian/dorian) melody. The vocal line is strongly reminiscent of an Irish folk tune in even four-bar phrases, with primarily strophic verses. A contrasting third verse in 3/4 time introduces a more gentle theme, before an unmetered interlude (*senza tempo*) ushers back the march tune for the final stanza. Bax builds to a climax before arpeggiated chords high in the upper register of the piano suggest the ‘golden light’. The ending is marked *pesante* and uses the full range of the piano.

In ‘I heard a piper piping’, the third song of this collection and another Campbell poem, the narrator describes the experience of listening to the plaintive song of a piper, such that the birds are quiet and the sound seems part of the hills, where no piper ‘could ever be jolly’. Bax has set the poem in a minimalist fashion that opens in Aeolian mode and evokes a rhythmically free flute solo (Figure 8.12):

[138] Campbell, *The Gilly of Christ*, p. 9.

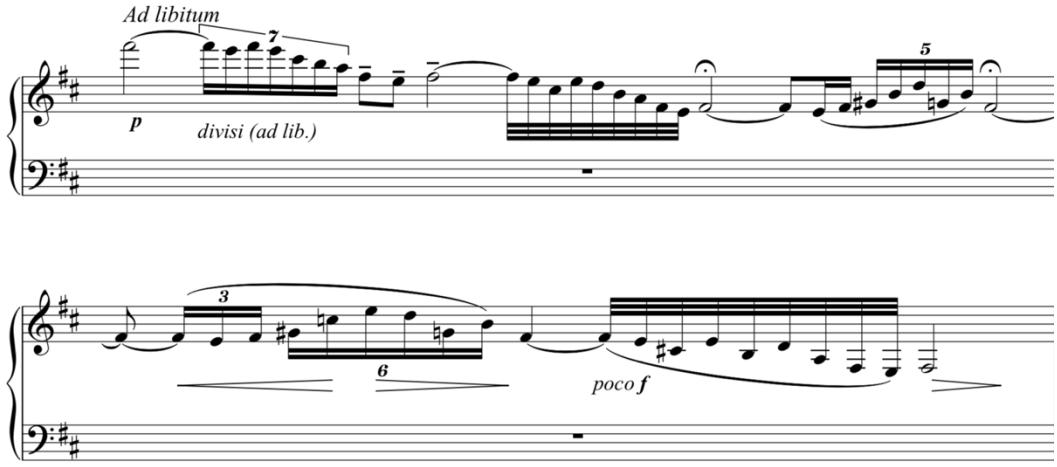

Fig. 8.12 Bax, 'I heard a piper piping', opening

An unaccompanied vocal line singing a simple folk-like melody in the Dorian mode responds (Figure 8.13):

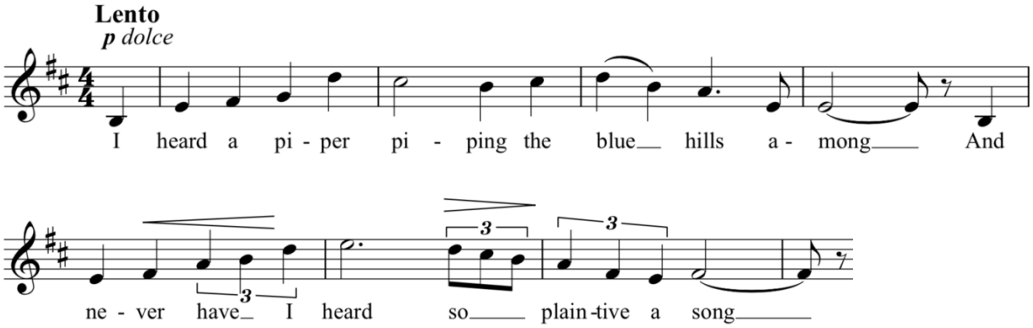

Fig. 8.13 Bax, 'I heard a piper piping', bars 3–11

The song continues as a conversation between the singer and 'flautist', briefly overlapping while retaining their independent lines, with the accompaniment figures reduced to occasional punctuating chords. This delicate setting shows Bax at his most restrained.

'Across the Door', a setting of Colum's poem of the same name, opens with a livelier setting—that of a country dance where a pair of lovers escape outside for a moment of intense romantic connection. The *vivace* opening, suggestive of a fiddle playing an Irish reel, sets the scene for a vocal line that enters with a triplet rhythm at variance with the semiquavers of the dance figure, as the narrator describes the lover enticing her 'across the door'. A rising staccato passage on the piano slows the music to *Molto lento*, at which point Bax uses a richer chromatic treatment as the

lyrics describe a more mysterious scene: ‘strange were the dim wide meadows’. Ths song reaches a pianissimo climax at the text ‘his kiss on my mouth’. Banfield has suggested that this change of treatment in the song is necessitated by ‘the yearning of a romantic Celt for an unrecapturable moment of love’, a yearning that has a parallel with Bax’s unrecoverable past in Ireland.[139]

The final song in this first set is ‘Beg-Innish’, notable for being the only text by Synge which Bax set. The poem was published in a posthumous collection just after Synge’s death in 1907 and describes the transport of a keg of porter to the island of Beginnish near Dunquin in County Kerry.[140] The keg is rowed in by boatmen, and the song is marked ‘Fierce and Reckless. To be played throughout with a harsh and crude accentuation’. It is a rollicking call to a dance at the end of a hard-working day. Bax uses a pseudo-folk melody in the Phrygian mode to set the text, while varying the accompaniment in each verse. The second verse is introduced by an interlude featuring open fifths (suggestive of the fiddle at the dance) and a jig tune in 6/8 in the right hand piano part is played against a steady 4/4 in the left. This device is deployed throughout the second verse. Cross rhythms continue in the accompaniment as a tone of defiance is introduced in the vocal line at the lyrics:

> We’ll have no priest nor peeler in to dance in Beg-Innish,
> But we’ll have drink for M’riarty Jim rowed round while gannets fish.[141]

An extended coda, marked *feroce*, brings the song to a triumphant finish.

Bax composed four songs to lyrics by Padraic Colum between February and March 1922, although only three of these were published during his lifetime: *Three Irish Songs* includes Colum’s ‘A Cradle Song’, ‘Rann of Exile’ and ‘Rann of Wandering’. ‘A Cradle Song’ is one of Colum’s most popular poems and has been set by several composers including Herbert Hughes, Frank Bridge and Hamilton Harty. Bax uses a motif of open fifths and fourths in a 9/8 rocking rhythm to accompany a modal melody in the first two verses. The song’s middle section modulates briefly downward (from E♭ to D♭). The accompaniment drops away at the lyrics ‘and the peering of things across the half door’, before the rocking motion resumes.

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[139] Banfield, p. 262.
[140] John M. Synge, *Poems and Translations* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1909), p. 10.
[141] Ibid. A ‘peeler’ is slang for a policeman.

In ‘Rann of Exile’ Bax addresses the recurrent theme of separation from the beloved country. Colum’s poetry deals with the effects of the famine, referring to the ‘scatt’ring of the dearth’ and more explicitly a reference to seeing ‘potatoes rot and melt black in the earth’. The narrator is left homeless, away from his kindred and from Connacht. Bax responds to this emotive text with an emulation of an Irish ‘caoin’ or lament in the right hand piano part, which is reprised in the voice before the second stanza. Bax uses a folksong-like melody that is almost entirely pentatonic throughout the song. Shifting time signatures and cross-rhythms between voice and piano contribute to an unsettled atmosphere. Much of the texture is provided by the piano accompaniment which begins with very restrained single notes and diatonic chords. Later verses are accompanied by impressionistic chains of extended triads, while interludes occasionally break into polytonalities and chord clusters.

The final song in the collection is ‘Rann of Wandering’, also alludes to Irish traditional idioms, including a repeated final, and a melody that is largely pentatonic with an occasional flattened 7th. Here Bax uses a more regular 3/4 metre and a more restrained harmonic palette and texture throughout. This setting (as with the other two songs in the collection) stands in stark contrast to the complexity of his earlier songs in its restrained elements and judicious use of both traditional and modern elements.

The fourth poem by Colum that Bax set in 1922, ‘Dermott Donn McMorna’, was not published until 1994 and has been described by the musicologist Trevor Hold as one of Bax’s most disturbing songs.[142] The poem deals with a married woman calling on her lover to rescue her from her husband. The lyrics suggest a painful marriage: ‘Hugh’s dark door’ and also the woman’s contempt for ‘the pious, the quiet, the wise’ who might condemn her for leaving. Yet she also realises that no easy path lies ahead: ‘Ah, but the winds do bitter blow, Dermott Donn MacMorna.’ The song’s subject matter recalls aspects of *verismo* opera, and Bax’s passionate setting utilises a simple modal melody contrasted with an accompaniment which is much richer in texture, exploring distantly related keys and a wide dynamic range to convey the more dramatic aspects of the song.

Foreman has noted another text by Yeats, ‘To an Isle in the Water’, that Bax set in 1923, however, this was never published and the whereabouts of the manuscript

[142] Hold, p. 231.

is unknown.[143] In a BBC radio interview given in 1949, Bax explained how his admiration for Yeats had not translated into settings of his poetry:

> in spite of my veneration for Yeats I have never attempted to set any of his poetry to music; it's too good. The plain fact is that it is sacrilege to tamper with great verse by trying to associate it with another art. Poetry has its own precise rhythms and intrinsic melody and at its height should be reverently let alone.[144]

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, Yeats had very particular requirements for the setting of his poetry, so Bax's deferential attitude here would doubtless have met his approbation. However, Banfield has speculated that Bax might have been more tempted to set Yeats's poetry 'had there not been a likelihood of censorship jeopardising publication.'[145]

At this time, Bax's musical career in Britain was taking off. Foreman notes that during the winter of 1922, 'Bax was well and truly launched as a leading—possibly *the* leading—composer of the day.'[146] Simultaneously, as Huss suggests, the fantasy of Bax's early view of Ireland changed and diminished in potency as he outgrew the period of his life that produced it.[147] His reaction to the years of rebellion and violence can be seen in his Irish works up to 1923, the year that he produced his final work of Irish inspiration—a choral setting of *St Patrick's Breastplate.* This triumphant work for chorus and orchestra coincided with the end of the Irish Civil War and marked the end of Bax's direct engagement with Ireland as a musical influence, excepting one final song in 1932, when, at the request of Herbert Hughes, he set Joyce's poem 'Watching the Needleboats' for the anthology *The Joyce Book*. The song is just twenty-eight bars long (notably shorter than his earlier works), and structured in two strophes, the second extended by a short vocal coda and longer piano postlude. Although beginning and ending in A minor, extended chords ascending and descending chromatically destabilise the tonal centre (Figure 8.14). The song is more austere than his earlier works and was Bax's last song setting to be published in his lifetime.

[143] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* p. 497.
[144] Talk by Arnold Bax recorded 6 June 1949, BBC. A recording of this broadcast can be found on: Sir Arnold Bax, *First Recordings 1925–1949* (Symposium, 1336, 2004).
[145] Banfield, p. 253.
[146] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, p. 215.
[147] Huss, p. 71.

Fig. 8.14 Bax, 'Watching the Needleboats', bars 19–25

Bax continued to visit Ireland in later years, and in 1927 made the acquaintance of the German composer and organist Aloys Fleischmann (senior), then professor of harmony and choral singing at the Cork School of Music, and his wife Tilly who was also a well-known piano teacher. This initial meeting occurred when Bax travelled to adjudicate at the Cork 'Father Matthew Feis'.[148] A friendship developed and many of Bax's later visits were to see the family. It was while visiting the Fleischmanns in 1953 that Bax took suddenly ill and died. He is buried in St Finbarre's Cemetary in Cork.

Ireland was a considerable influence in Bax's works. He could justly claim to have expressed the spirit of the times in an original musical language, having inserted himself into the heart of both the Irish countryside and the leading litterateurs in Dublin. His response to the revival period in Ireland was sincere and personal, and his shock at the events of 1916 to 1922 is reflected both in the music he produced

[148] Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times,* pp. 262–63.

during those years, and in his subsequent withdrawal from the country—although his affection remained sincere, he felt himself a stranger there.

It is interesting to compare the work of Bax and Hardebeck, who can be considered the two non-native composers that engaged most directly in the revival movement, albeit in radically different ways. If (as suggested by White) Bax incorporated Ireland into the fabric of British music, Hardebeck took the opposite approach, looking to expunge Irish music of all but what was most authentic to the tradition.[149] Yet they had certain experiences in common: both arrived to Ireland as non-nationals, yet responded passionately to the revival movement. In Hardebeck's case this manifested as a love of the Irish language and musical heritage, whereas Bax was inspired to write his own original music in response to the stimulus of the Literary Revival and associated mythologies. Both were welcomed into the heart of the movement and its interlinked societies, which says much about the movement's openness to external perspectives. Hardebeck was a prizewinner at the Feis Ceoil, where he fell under the influence of Esposito, Stanford, and Graves, and later was a regular accompanist at Gaelic League concerts. His circle included Bigger, Patrick Pearse, Charlotte Milligan Fox, Alice Milligan, Charles Wood, and Padraic Gregory—names that come up repeatedly in this research. Bax too was welcomed into Dublin's literary elite, counting Yeats, Synge, Russell, Moore, and the Colums among his close acquaintances. Bax also made efforts to learn Irish, although this had less of an impact on his creative output. However, their relationship with the country and the music it inspired was ultimately vitiated by political events. Bax's alienation from Ireland and Hardebeck's struggles in the nascent state provide two perspectives on how the violence that erupted in the early decades of the new century devasted the peace that had fostered the Cultural Revival.

Together, Bax and Hardebeck represent two approaches to the latent potential of the Revival to develop Irish song literature along nonsectarian lines. The following final chapter considers the historic events that ultimately constrained any such developments, and sets out the overarching conclusions of this study.

[149] White, *The Keeper's Recital*, p. 123.

9. Conclusions

9.1 After the Revival

The revival period was a relatively brief and halcyon period in Ireland's history where creative projects could be explored and passions indulged, even as forces were gathering which would convulse the country—the external shock of the Great War, the domino effect of the 1916 Rising and War of Independence, followed by the tragic descent into civil war. The cultural nationalists that have been surveyed in this research, and even those composers and advocates who would not have considered themselves nationalists, had worked in a liminal space between two cultures. Many had been actively promoting greater understanding and cooperation across the cultural divide. While unionists held that this celebration of Irish culture and identity was not incompatible with loyalty to the British Empire, the threat of Home Rule increasingly polarised cultural as well as political allegiances. As an increasingly confident nationalism demanded more constitutional autonomy, unionism hardened its stance against any such reform. The signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912 and the subsequent formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1913, countered by the foundation the same year of the Irish Volunteers, set both communities on a collision course that eventually led to the painful schism of partition. This made it increasingly difficult for those promoting inter-community cooperation through shared cultural expression. The crucial moment for cultural activists can be identified in 1915 when the Gaelic League voted to align its aims with the realisation of an independent Irish nation, leading to Hyde's resignation and control of the executive falling to the militantly nationalist Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The impact of this resolution has repercussions to this day, but an immediate impact was the polarisation of cultural affiliations. Many unionists who had played key roles in the language revival and who had enthusiastically supported Gaelic culture felt betrayed, finding themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to choose between their unionism and their cultural inclinations. Activists such as Alice

Milligan and Cathal O'Byrne, caught on the wrong side of the border after partition, were isolated and effectively silenced. The diasporic community were equally impacted. Stanford, like Bax, was horrified by the changes in Ireland, writing to Sir John Mahaffy in 1917: 'I suppose some day I'll summon the courage to go and see my native soil. But the awful papers frighten me. I shall see ghosts all day and every day.'[1]

F. J. Bigger provides a particularly poignant example of how the cultural shock impacted the project of revival. The historian Guy Beiner notes that though Bigger was an Anglican who openly harboured nationalist sympathies, his gatherings at Ardrigh had crossed religious, political and class divides, making him an unusual character in an increasingly polarised Ulster.[2] In this, he may have been somewhat naïve. When the Belfast separatist Joseph Connolly asked Bigger to draw up a will as a precaution to the 1916 Rising, Bigger was horrified. The young revolutionary later recalled that 'Frank shied away from the whole business, told me to have sense and not to be worrying about a will or anything else. His attitude stunned me…'.[3] Bigger was profoundly shaken by the events of the Easter Rising and the subsequent execution of two regular visitors to Ardrigh, Roger Casement and Seán McDermott. The Rising marked the end of cultural evenings and political discussions at Ardrigh, and like many nationalists in Ulster, Bigger found himself increasingly isolated. He welcomed the withdrawal of the English troops and the independence that the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 promised, but he was outraged by partition and refused to cross the border after 1921. Bigger died in 1925, and his name and legacy lapsed into relative obscurity, returning briefly to public attention in 1971, when, as part of a series of attacks on iconic memorials, his gravestone in Antrim was blown up by loyalist paramilitaries.[4]

Some musicians such as John F. Larchet and Annie Patterson managed to carve out a role in the new nation state. However, Patterson's vision of an expert school of composition fusing Irish and Western musical styles was not to be realised, and her attempts to rehabilitate Irish music in a European idiom put her in opposition to an

[1] Stanford to Sir John Mahaffy, 5 May 1917, Trinity College, Dublin, MS2075/270. Quoted in Rodmell, p. 312.
[2] Guy Beiner, 'Revisiting F. J. Bigger: A "Fin-de-Siècle" Flourish of Antiquarian-Folklore Scholarship in Ulster', in *Béaloideas*, 80 (2012), 142–162 (p. 153).
[3] Quoted in Eamon Phoenix, 'Francis Joseph Bigger: Historian, Gaelic Leaguer and Protestant Nationalist', in *Feis na nGleann*, ed. by Phoenix and others, pp. 65–77 (p. 74).
[4] Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), p. 505.

emboldened nationalist ideology that sought to free the new state from foreign influences. Larchet fared rather better, with his secure role in the national theatre movement, and in his efforts to build up the musical institutions of the nascent state. But ideas of cultural fusion and mutual understanding were increasingly out of step with the political reality of the times. The liminal space where two cultures met during the period of the Revival had been fatally undermined.

9.2 Research Questions

This thesis set out to examine the development of song literature during the Irish Cultural Revival and to investigate the role that song literature played in the cultural ferment of the time. While recent academic discourse around the scope of the Revival has been extended to include many diverse cultural activities, the song literature of the period has not attracted the same degree of academic scrutiny. This study set out to address this lacuna through a focus on four research threads, articulated through the following questions: First, in what ways did the movements within the Cultural Revival of 1891–1922 cultivate and support Irish song literature? Second, what was the response of Irish composers and songwriters to this stimulus? Third, how did Irish song literature of the period articulate issues of national identity? Finally, where does this repertoire sit in the canon of Irish song? These questions are now revisited in light of findings from the research in the following sections.

9.2.1 Support for the development of Irish Song literature in the Revival years

In Ireland, the decades after the Great Famine (1845–49) can be characterised as a long slow recovery from the devastation of that event, with ongoing unrest over land ownership, and nationalist discontent with foreign governance. By comparison, the closing years of the century were relatively peaceful as political reforms addressed the most pressing grievances and a rising middle class experienced some degree of prosperity. This produced conditions favourable to creative expression and the building up of an infrastructure to support creative endeavour. During the revival period, however, a formal infrastructure to support musical arts was still in its

infancy, compelling those who wished to advance to a professional level to seek musical training and a career abroad. Production of larger musical forms (opera, symphonic works, etc) faced considerable challenges both in terms of the availability of skilled musicians and financial investment. However, this study has shown that the art of songwriting, with its inherently lower compositional demands, could survive and even flourish with considerably less formal infrastructure.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the heritage of antiquarian research from the eighteenth and nineteenth century set the context for an expression of Irish identity and provided a rich vernacular in which that identity could be expressed. The collections of folk music, poetry and literature resulting from antiquarian research inspired translators and composers, and served as compositional materials that could be utilised in the production of song literature. Chapter 3 has explored the work of a tightly-linked network of societies that encouraged collaborations between litterateurs and musicians. Literary societies provided composers and other musicians with performance opportunities and supported the dissemination of song. The rapid decline of the Irish language and the cultural heritage that was embedded within it added urgency to these endeavours. Much of the contemporary discourse during the Revival reflects this urgency, and also the aspiration that such projects might be seen as a common endeavour which could unite a fractured population.

The songs of Thomas Moore in the early nineteenth century had demonstrated the market that existed for drawing room arrangements of Irish folk songs, and this demand continued unabated, and arguably intensified during the Revival. Most of the composers considered for this thesis made arrangements or collections of Irish folk songs. These were enthusiastically accepted by music publishers certain of the demand for such songs in Ireland, Britain and America. Ballad concerts and performances by contemporary singers ensured their popularity, while works for the stage provided a new platform for the performance of song. Pedagogues including Stanford, Esposito, Patterson and Larchet encouraged the study of folk song as a preliminary to writing original material in an Irish idiom. Stanford was the first composer to write original art songs that were recognisably Irish in character and utilised contemporary Irish poetry. This innovation was encouraged by the organisers of the Feis Ceoil, through prize compositions for original songs as well as arrangements of Irish songs. However, although intended to encourage the

development of a school of Irish composition, it has been argued that such approaches had a stifling influence on compositional development.

The entire thrust of the Revival was centred around the expression and assertion of a unique Irish identity. While there was dispute about how that identity would be defined and who would define it, the imperative to develop such an identity saturated all aspects of Irish life. Language, games, art, drama, literature, even agriculture, trade, and journalism were harnessed to this national project. The enthusiasm for this project among the Irish population and diaspora provided Irish composers with compelling motivation to address or express some aspect of this identity, and they found a ready and appreciative market for any of their work that would meet this criterion. This is not to suggest that they were always motivated by commercial or social considerations—in fact, many of the songs discussed in this thesis express a deeply personal resonance. However, despite the demand for 'Irish' music, few of the composers surveyed had the luxury of focusing solely on composition as a career path. Most were educators. Hughes was a music critic, Harty a conductor, and Hardebeck worked as an organist and choir master. There is little evidence to suggest that any made significant income from collections of folk songs or from their participation in the work of volunteer societies. For some (Hughes, Needham), the regular publication of songs provided a welcome extra income stream which they turned to in times of financial difficulty. For others, of whom Hardebeck is perhaps the most poignant example, there was little financial reward for years of dedication. For many of the songwriters surveyed the work of collecting, arranging, or composing Irish songs was clearly a labour of love.

A major finding of this research is the importance of certain key figures of the revival period in stimulating and supporting the production and performance of Irish song. Alfred Perceval Graves provides an early example. His role in introducing Stanford to the Irish song collections and the collaboration which led to Stanford's first publication of arrangements of Irish song has been largely overlooked in biographies of Stanford and in histories of Irish song. Yet he continued to support Stanford's interaction with the repertoire and to encourage him to think along Irish lines, resulting in several more collaborations. As a founder member and secretary of the Irish Literary Society, Graves pushed for the publication of Irish song books, and was undoubtably influential in the appointment of Stanford as editor or the 'complete'

Petrie collection. His influence was again apparent in the setting up of both the Folk Song Society and the Irish Folk Song Society, and he also collaborated with other composers such as Esposito, Wood, Hughes, and Needham. Perhaps his greatest achievements, however, lie in his ability to stir up interest in Irish literature and song, through his published works, the setting up of societies and subscription lists, and the promotion of lecture recitals and concerts. He was inordinately successful in this, as testified by the sheer volume of organisations and journals which he helped to found. The Irish Literary Society (for which Graves served two terms as President and eight years as Honorary Secretary) was influential in the nascent literature and theatre movements, and it would go on to spawn the National Literary Society, the Folk Song Society, the Irish Folk Song Society, and the Feis Ceoil, all of which Graves played a personal role in instigating.

The cultural activist Francis Joseph Bigger played a similar role in the north, encouraging the collection of Irish folk songs in Donegal, and financing the publication of song collections such as *Songs of Uladh*. Bigger's home in Belfast became a gathering spot for cultural activists and through his auspices many projects supporting the composition, performance and publication of Irish songs were inaugurated. Activists such as Charlotte Milligan Fox and Annie Patterson also made substantial contributions promoting the repertoire in their roles as journalists, event organisers and educationalists, creating a supportive infrastructure and receptive audiences for the dissemination of Irish song. Such contributions were considerable, and arguably surpassed their individual contributions to the repertoire itself. The research has also shown how the endorsement of singers such as John McCormack and Denis O'Sullivan could create performance opportunities, open the door to publication and increase the market reach of composers of Irish song.

This study concludes that some aspects of the Cultural Revival provided a uniquely favourable environment for the development of song literature, even while official supports were not available to adequately support larger musical endeavours or individual careers. In particular, the wealth of inspiring cultural material as compositional material, and the pervading Zeitgeist supporting all 'Irish' endeavours encouraged the production, performance and publication of Irish song literature during this period.

9.2.2 Responses of songwriters to the Cultural Revival

This study has also considered the ways in which songwriters responded to and impacted upon the progress of the Revival. Contrary to narratives that have suggested that music was an absent element within the Revival, this research finds musicians at the heart of revival activities, working in close collaboration with writers, activists, leaders of the theatrical movement, and even with revolutionaries such as Patrick Pearse, Cathal O'Byrne, and Bulmer Hobson. Musicians were actively involved with the formation and promotion of a whole network of interlinked societies including the Irish and National Literary Societies, the Feis Ceoil and Glens Feis, the Folk Song Societies, the Gaelic League, the Dungannon clubs, and the Abbey Theatre. While major compositions in response to the Revival (such as operas and orchestral works) were relatively rare, this study has shown that the composition, publication and performance of song was a consistent and popular activity during the revival period.

The research provides numerous examples of composers within this milieu working together to promote Irish song and in many cases influencing each other. This is evidenced by direct teaching relationships such as that between Stanford and his composition students at the RCM, including Charles Wood and Herbert Hughes. Stanford may have introduced Wood to Graves, initiating their later collaborations *Irish Folk-Songs* and *Irish Countryside Songs*. When the IFSS and its journal were set up in 1904, Stanford served as vice-president, along with Wood and Graves, while Hughes served on the committee and another RCM graduate, Charlotte Milligan Fox, served as honorary secretary. We have also seen this group collaborate with other composers such as Harty and Needham in concerts and lecture recitals promoting Irish repertoire and folk song.

Michele Esposito occupied a similar role in Ireland to that held by Stanford in England. Esposito is credited with building up a distinguished school of piano playing at the RIAM and was active in many aspects of musical life in Dublin, including his revival activities discussed in Chapter 5. His students included John F. Larchet, who later became a colleague at the RIAM, and he worked with Annie Patterson to argue for the inclusion of classical music in the proposed national music festival which became the Feis Ceoil. Hamilton Harty also acknowledged Esposito as a major

influence and valued his relationship with his mentor all his life. The esteem in which both Stanford and Esposito were held by the younger generation of Irish composers may account for some of the more conservative aspects of their work as can be seen in Harty's writings on composition and in the general adherence to Romantic concepts of beauty of melody and tonal harmonic language that can be evidenced in many of the songs surveyed here.

There is also evidence of composers actively following and being influenced by each other's work. Herbert Hughes's *Songs of Uladh* was swiftly appropriated by Hamilton Harty, who took three of the melodies that had been set to lyrics by Joseph Campbell, and published new arrangements of his own. Similar opportunities were taken by other composers who made new arrangements or set new texts to melodies discovered and published by collector-composers such as Fox and Hughes. These later re-presentations were sometimes more successful than the original, famously in the case of 'The Londonderry Air' and 'The Foggy Dew', both of which inspirted many arrangements. Similar opportunities were taken with poetic texts for original songs. Stanford was the first to publish songs with texts from Moira O'Neill's *Songs from the Glens of Antrim*, but Hardebeck, Harty and Wood all followed his example in using her popular poetry as lyrics for original songs. In some of Stanford's later songs, he in turn set lyrics that had previously been set by others: for example, in 1920 he published new settings of O'Neill's 'At Sea' and 'Lookin' Back', texts that had been set by Harty in 1908. Thus we see a reciprocal influence among this cohort who were clearly aware of and influenced by each other's work. While some of these links are tenuous and largely driven by the revival preoccupations of the day, they suggest a more active milieu of Irish composers than has previously been allowed in histories of domestic and diasporic Irish music to date.

The composers surveyed in this research overwhelmingly supported Irish poets as lyricists for their song output. In many cases, these were poets who were known to them or active within their close circle. This was a mutually beneficial relationship. Poets such as Moira O'Neill had a strong diasporic following, and Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery were publishers of nationalist journals with a wide readership. Conversely, should a well-known composer such as Stanford or Harty choose to set the poetry of a contemporary poet, this could offer significant additional exposure. Collaborations such as that between Herbert Hughes and Joseph Campbell, or

between Stanford and Graves played a significant part in the success of their songs. Where English lyrics were successfully paired with existing Irish melodies, several achieved iconic status and even re-entered the oral tradition.

The thesis has examined the various metamorphoses and reinterpretations of Irish songs as they were collected from a rural Gaelic population and re-presented to a largely Anglophone world unfamiliar with Irish musical idioms. The fashion for Irish music intensified during the period of the Revival when its expression was tied to the assertion of a distinct national identity. Many Anglo-Irish loyalists were equally passionate about Irish song and saw in it a path to uniting a divided population and promoting peace between communities. Their edits, alterations and omissions can be read as an act of translation, the intention of which was to increase understanding and sympathy between Irish communities with different cultural paradigms. Undoubtably this endeavour brought Irish music to a larger audience, albeit in a form which native practitioners might scarcely have recognised.

Issues of cultural appropriation have also been explored. In many cases, songs were pressed into drawing-room arrangements with little sympathy for the integrity of their original forms, and none at all for the language in which they originated. While many arrangements did little more than add simple harmonic accompaniments to folk melodies, others re-constructed fragments of melodies and words, added original poetry, and made more sophisticated demands of the accompanist. The reception of these arrangements within the canon of Irish song has been problematic, as they have been alternately regarded as failed attempts to interpret the authentic, native melodies; as blatant cultural appropriation; or more generously as legitimate art inspired by a native tradition.

During the revival period, there is evidence of more diligent attention being paid to the integrity of collected materials on the part of antiquarians and scholars (although many still fell short of the standards demanded by modern academics and ethnologists). Collectors became more aware of issues of authenticity—idioms of Gaelic language and poetry, modal structures, rhythmic flexibility and native performing practices were better understood and contributed to a more considered response to Irish folksong. There was also growing traction among scholars who argued against any re-purposing of traditional airs. These two positions polarised after 1916. Although the prevalence of more hybrid forms of music has contributed

to a softening of attitudes in Irish musical life today, issues of authenticity and cultural appropriation continue to have relevance to composers and performers alike.

9.2.3 Identity and Irish Song Literature

This study has also considered how Irish song literature of the period articulated issues of national identity. The concept of a distinct Irish identity was key to the revival movement, as was the idea of re-presenting traditional materials for a modern nation. By the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the revival period, a tradition of song as an expression of national identity was well established, and a considerable body of new poetry and collected melody was available to serve as inspiration or raw material for aspiring song composers.

Analysis of the song literature of the revival period confirms that national identity was a preoccupation that continued to shape song composition, reflected through a number of persistent themes. Irish mythology and folklore provided inspiration for many songs: Stanford used the myth of Cuchualainn and Emer; Esposito, Hardebeck and Bax were all inspired by the Deirdre myth; while fairies and mystical landscapes were ubiquitous in the songs of Harty, Larchet and Wood. Also prominent as a theme are scenes of rural domesticity—picturesque depictions of family life and imagined scenes of the working poor. In these depictions, song literature can be seen to be closely aligned with the Literary Revival, mirroring themes that were being explored on stage by Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge. Religious piety is also a recurring theme, evidenced by references to the Rosary and other Marian themes, often mixing superstition and Christian iconography.

Recollections of the landscape of Ireland and evocations of a sense of place also frequently occur in Irish song literature. Stanford's 'exile' songs have a nostalgia and pathos that suggests a sincere affection for the land of his youth. This reflects the popularity of poets such as Moira O'Neill who expressed a sentiment that clearly resonated with diasporic communities in Britain and America. In these songs, the beauty of the Irish landscape is conflated with a yearning for an idealised homeland, particularly when contrasted with the harsher realities of an urban existence abroad.

Perhaps the most potent symbol of identity is the Irish language itself, which occupies a role in Irish song literature that is equally profound in its presence and

absence. The decline of the language led to the abandoning of Gaelic lyrics in the project of song collection, an absence which created many opportunities for Anglophone poets, even as it raised issues of cultural appropriation, authenticity, and aesthetic suitability. The rapidity of the language switch was unparalleled in modern history. The struggle to adopt an unfamiliar language in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created a rich variety of dialects, which were celebrated by cultural leaders such as Douglas Hyde and Lady Gregory. The presence of the Irish language can be felt in much of the lyrical prose and poetry of the revival writers, often unpinned by idioms that are Gaelic in origin. This also gave rise to a fashion for dialect poetry that has been deplored by more modern critics and has arguably prevented much of the repertoire from being performed in contemporary times.

Songwriters also utilised the Gaelic language as an actual presence, for example, in the songs of Padruig Breathnach, Annie Patterson, and Carl Hardebeck. Others such as Alicia Needham, Esposito and Thomas O'Brien Butler navigated a dual approach to the language, as had been pioneered by Hyde in his 'Songs of Connaught'. These efforts were proudly announced and were published using the 'cló Gaelach' typeface and warmly praised in national journals. But such endeavours struggled to find a lasting audience: the language was unintelligible to the majority of the population, and those that did understand it did not always approve of such appropriations.

Among the most enduring songs which emerged from the Revival are folk song arrangements that have achieved an iconic status within Irish national culture: songs such as 'My Lagan Love', 'Down by the Salley Gardens' and 'The Foggy Dew' were successfully united with English lyrics and presented in a modern arrangement during this period. Their success can be measured as much by their re-entry into the oral tradition as their continued presence on the recital platform. It is this final element—the music itself—that most loudly proclaims an Irish identity, be that the literal quotation of folk song melody or the use of recognisable musical idioms in original art songs.

9.2.4 Revival Song Literature and the Irish canon of song

The Irish songs considered in this thesis can be described as occupying a spectrum that spans from the indigenous songs of the oral tradition to art songs composed according to the norms of western art music. At one end of the spectrum, traditional elements and oral processes predominate, while at the other original ideas and contemporary directions are organised according to (or in defiance of) the principles of western art song. In between these extremes lie the antiquarian collections of airs and lyrics; arrangements of collected airs re-presented with accompaniments for drawing room or concert hall; re-constructions of songs from fragments of melodies or lyrics; and original art songs that make use of traditional elements including text, subject matter or musical idioms. While both the oral tradition and the antiquarian collections are referenced as background to the general thrust of this thesis, it is with the reconstructions, arrangements, and original art songs of the period that this research is most concerned.

The research has shown that there was little distinction made between these categories during the time of the Revival, rather, they were collectively known as 'Irish songs' and published according to their perceived Irish credentials, whether this came from an original impulse, a new discovery of previously unpublished material, or a new arrangement or setting of a known melody or text. Whereas modern criticism tends to prize originality and new directions, the political and cultural climate of the time placed a higher value on the assertion of Irish identity, hence the distinction between original work and song arrangements was less of a concern than it is today. The milieu that gathered around this work clearly saw it as a modernising project: through a re-discovery and re-assertion of a Gaelic heritage, interpreted and reimagined by young musicians according to contemporary ideas of composition and performance, the Irish could throw off foreign influences and defend the dignity of their inheritance, and so bolster their claim as a modern nation with an identity of its own.

That composers, lyricists, publishers and performers gathered around this project suggests that there was a shared understanding of what constituted an 'Irish song'. This is further evidenced by lectures and concerts such as those hosted by the

literary and folk song societies, which showcased the work of songwriters, and expounded on how traditional elements might be used in new compositions. Essays such as those included by Hughes and Graves in the prologues to their songbooks and by the Milligan sisters and others in the *JIFSS* also set out parameters by which Irish song could be understood and consumed. Such explications were still open to challenge, however, such as Ní Annagáin's denunciations of the Patterson / Walsh collaboration, echoed in more recent times by critics such as Munnelly who queried the authenticity of these derivations. The liveliness of such discussions can be regarded as evidence of the various allegiances of different cultural groups and sub-groups and the passionate defences mounted suggests that these more modern examples of Irish song were pervasive enough to be considered a threat.

While much has been written on the Irish oral tradition and, in more recent decades, on Irish art music, histories of Irish music have largely excluded the original and hybrid forms of song literature discussed in this thesis. There is undoubtably a renewal of interest in Irish art song, including folk song arrangements, as evidenced by the number of projects currently underway to perform and record works from this canon. Leading musicians on both sides of the Irish sea who are engaged in this work include Una Hunt, Iain Burnside, Ailish Tynan, Niall Kinsella, Carolyn Dobbin and Kathryn Rudge. While this indicates that there is a place on the contemporary recital platform for this repertoire, this study further argues for a more detailed consideration of the place of these songs in Irish cultural history and in the canon of Irish song.

In *The Invisible Art*, Klein muses aloud on the idea of writing a history of Irish music with 'a consciously naïve approach'.[5] By this, he means an approach based purely on the music and nothing else, 'using as a background the history of European classical music and nothing else. No politics. No religion.'[6] The discourse on Irish music history has, in recent years, occasionally become so fraught that this approach has a certain appeal. Stripped of political and cultural allegiances, where would this song repertoire sit in the canon of European art song?

There are several difficulties in adopting such an approach (which Klein does not deny). It was precisely because of the political and cultural milieu, in combination with creative, scholarly, and entrepreneurial forces, that an Irish song literature

[5] Axel Klein, 'No state for music', *The Invisible Art* ed. by Michael Dervan, pp. 47–69 (p. 48).
[6] Ibid.

emerged. However, it is reasonable to consider how, for example, Stanford's folk song arrangements might compare with Brahms's arrangements of German folk song, if not weighed down by issues of identity and authenticity. One might also ask whether Herbert Hughes's original art songs, long neglected, stand up to comparison with the work of his peers in England. In a climate of renewed interest in this music, where issues of identity and multinarrativity are increasingly better understood, perhaps such a re-evaluation is now due. While an extended evaluation is beyond the scope of this thesis, the following section indicates some initial thoughts based on this research.

9.3 Critical Evaluation

The composers considered in this survey belonged to a privileged class, in the sense that all of them had access to a broad musical education, often involving study at a higher level institution in Britain or in continental Europe.[7] The possible (and rather unexpected) exception is Hamilton Harty, who despite being an autodidact had one of the most successful professional careers of those surveyed, but even he had access to informal training and mentoring of a very high standard. Thus, it is no real surprise to find that the songs produced by this cohort show a level of competence and professional polish that attracted the attention of respected publishing houses and leading performers, and merit further consideration today.

With that caveat in mind, when considering the musical and textual content of the songs surveyed, the level of sophistication and artistic success of the songs varies considerably, even within the opus of individual composers. Stanford's songs are generally executed to a very high (if conservative) musical standard. Where they fail, it is often in the marriage of text to the music, and in the choice of unsophisticated poetry or subject matter which would be considered problematic today. Nonetheless, some of his best songs are exquisite ('The Fairy Lough' and 'Irish Skies' might merit such an epithet) and many of his humorous songs deserve to be better known.

[7] This is as true for the women surveyed as for the men, the former having access to education and opportunities that were new to their generation, and may seem surprising given the gender disparities that were so prevalent elsewhere. While employment opportunities were certainly not equal, this was the first generation of women who had access to an education in music in higher level colleges, and in this sphere at least they were afforded a significant amount of influence and professional respect.

Stanford's influence can be seen in the output of several of the other composers here, most obviously in the songs of Charles Wood, who studied with him and set many of the same texts, but also in Harty's, who may have consciously or unconsciously been influenced by the older composer to whom he is most often compared.

Harty also chose many of the same texts as Stanford (both composers were attracted to the poetry of Moira O'Neill, for example) and some of his earlier settings suggest a certain debt to Stanford's approach. Yet where restraint might be considered a defining characteristic of Stanford's songs, no such claim could be made of Harty's, which are frequently passionate and romantic. Whether in the overt drama of 'Sea Wrack', the rhapsodic exuberence of 'Lane of the Thrushes', or in the poignant despair of 'Denny's daughter', Harty was always master of emotive material and could summon his musical resources to exactly meet the emotional demands of his chosen texts. This makes his songs very satisfying to sing, although they demand considerable technique and many were written with specific professional voices in mind. His acclaimed abilities as a collaborative pianist are also evident in his sophisticated accompaniments which, like Schumann's, elevate the piano to equal status with the voice. While some of Harty's songs are of limited appeal (for example, those composed for ballad concerts which he later claimed embarrassed him), the best of his Irish songs considered here represent the apogee of Irish song literature of the period, successfully integrating an Irish identity within the art song tradition, without reverting to what he pithily described as 'folk-song tricks'. Despite this, his approach was anachronistic, and like Stanford, Harty eschewed the new compositional directions of the twentieth century, leaving himself open to criticisms of conservatism. Re-considered from the vantage of the twenty-first century, Harty's songs are best assessed alongside those of the late Romantic period, and with this chronological adjustment his songs can be seen to have an expressive and powerful individual voice, and merit rescuing from critical obscurity.

Larchet's songs are relatively few in number, but he occupies a position of some prominence in this survey due to his work at the Abbey theatre and RIAM, and his later contributions as a composer in the nascent Irish state. As with Stanford, some of the dialect songs have dated (for example, 'The Wee Boy in Bed') but others such as 'A Stóirín Bán' and 'Wee Hughie' have retained their charm and remain popular with recitalists today. His position as an educator advocating for Irish music has

ensured that his songs are remembered and performed in Ireland although the impact of his music beyond these shores has been largely limited to recordings by prominent performers such as McCormack and Kreisler. His songs have been given a recent revival with the 2020 CD *Complete Songs and Airs* and associated radio broadcasts and performances. Such projects may result in greater uptake of Larchet's lesser-known works.

Many of the songs of Alicia Adelaide Needham are in the 'ballad style' that was popular during the period. Often strophically set, they showed a sensitivity to the vocal line and were accessible to amateur players and singers alike. The number of songs referencing Irish themes or using poetry by Irish writers reflects the interests of the diasporic community as well as her ongoing connection to the country of her birth. Musically and textually, many of her songs sound dated today, but within her extensive oeuvre are a number of gems that deserve re-appraisal. Her output provides a fascinating glimpse into the popular culture of the time, although not all would translate to a contemporary recital platform.

Esposito's song settings have a certain charm, but the chasm between his Italian cultural heritage and the great Irish project of renaisssance and revival in which he found himself was not always negotiated successfully. His rather perfunctory settings of Irish melodies in the *Roseen Dhu* suite, for example, are reminiscent of Beethoven's Irish arrangements, which fail to identify as Irish, despite the use of Irish airs and texts by Irish poets. Something of this dissociation can also be identified in Patterson's *Traditional Irish Airs* and in her *Six Original Gaelic Songs*, notwithstanding her passionate interest in the Irish cultural movement and genuine desire to create an 'Expert Irish School'. While it is difficult to judge her oeuvre when so much is missing, examination of the songs that are available suggests that she privileged the integration of Irish music into the structures and norms of the European art tradition over a more nuanced understanding of the nature of Irish music itself.

The songs of Carl Hardebeck demonstrate much greater understanding in this regard, and his arrangements of traditional airs show a fine sensitivity to traditional idioms and avoidance of unwanted harmonic and temporal intrusions. His interest in traditional modes was shared by Charles Wood, and also by Bax, who frequently used his own original modal melodies over more complex piano accompaniments. This interest in modes and modal harmonies was fashionable, as they were strongly

associated with more ancient (and therefore more authentically Irish) music. Debussy's interest in modes and other scales was also influential, most notably on Hughes's arrangements of Irish airs. Hughes's treatment of Irish folk songs was innovative in several respects. He combined antiquarian methods of field collection (noting down songs with their sources and folkloric references) while also providing art song arrangements that ensured their relevance to a broader cohort of professional and amateur performers. Few of the individuals mentioned in this survey did both, and none as extensively as Hughes. His arrangements stand as exemplars of the song literature of the period, and many remain in active concert repertory today. Others have found their way back into the oral tradition. His own compositions are regrettably few in number but suggest that he had an original and modern voice that could articulate an Irish identity in a more contemporary way than attempted by many of his peers.

Like Hughes, Charlotte Milligan Fox also carried out the dual function of collecting and arranging songs. While her contribution to the store of songs collected and published was considerable, only a small handful of her arrangements are regularly performed today. While she occasionally composed original material, this was not a substantial part of her oeuvre and offered little in the way of innovation or musical complexity. Her influence can perhaps be better measured in the persistence of songs such as 'The Foggy Dew' which she first published, but which found greater recognition in Hardebeck's setting to the text supplied by Fr Charles O'Neill. As a collector, journalist, promoter and organiser, however, her contribution to the revival project outweighs her significance as a composer.

The songs of Charles Wood have recently been garnering some belated attention, and perhaps fell out of the repertoire more due to his lack of personal ambition than any lack of musical merit in his songs. Although individuals within the revival milieu evidently supported his songwriting and promoted his songs at recitals, he does not seem to have developed this network beyond some tenuous early connections. His relatively early demise cut short a career just at the point where he gained a position of some influence, but he left behind a body of work including arrangements of Irish songs that show a fine sympathy for the traditional materials, and elegantly written original songs that are deservedly attracting more attention today.

Bax's songs have also been rarely performed, although this can possibly be accounted for by their complexity, particularly in the accompanying parts, which would have excluded amateur or less skilled musicians. Free from financial constraints that might have otherwise compelled him to shape his work to conform to contemporary tastes, his songs are utterly distinctive, and express a deeply personal reaction to the Revival and other historic events. While many of the composers considered here remained faithful to a conservative European aesthetic, Bax's songs are more adventurous in embracing twentieth-century idioms, including experimentation with tonality and chord clusters, use of vigorous syncopations and cross-rhythms, and freer melodic phrasing often evoking Irish idioms such as a 'caoin' or lament, or gapped-scale and modal melodies. Despite their relative obscurity, there is much to enjoy in these songs which were always carefully crafted with a view to the beauty of the melodic line.

The above evaluation and the more detailed analyses given earlier in this thesis serve as evidence that this canon of original and arranged Irish songs is more extensive and more musically worthwhile than previous pronouncements on Irish art music might suggest. While the musical language employed is largely conservative, the songs were 'new' in the way that Irish identity and the treatment of traditional idioms were incorporated within a European musical aesthetic during this period.

9.4 Contribution of the Research and Future Research Possibilities

This study demonstrates that music, particularly in the form of song literature, had a vital presence in revival activities, contrary to earlier research which has claimed otherwise. The research further suggests that a close study of this literature can shed much light on our understanding of this critical period of Irish history. Such study nuances a spectrum of political and cultural ideologies that pre-dated the polarities that emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century, shedding light on a striking degree of collaboration across the cultural divides, and on the hopes that were pinned on the power of music, literature and song to bridge such divisions. The Cultural Revival has long been understood as a network of interlinked artistic, intellectual and political movements. This research has shown that musicians had a vibrant network

of their own, which provided connections and collaborations with individuals, societies, and movements at the heart of revival activities. In highlighting the importance of music and songwriting in the cultural eclosion of the period, this research also asserts its claim to inclusion in the critical discourse of Irish cultural history.

From a musicological perspective, the research has proposed a concept for understanding a canon of Irish song as a spectrum ranging from the oral tradition, through collections, reconstructions, arrangements and finally to original compositions, rather than dismissing arrangements as an essentially separate (and lesser) act of composition. The research highlights the importance of song arrangements in the canon: not only was there a considerable demand for these, but it was through making arrangements of traditional songs that many of the composers had their first exposure to Irish idioms and the craft of songwriting. In tracing the afterlife that some of these arrangements were subject to as they re-entered the oral tradition, the research shows that the capturing of folk tunes in collections and their re-presentation as art songs did not prevent ongoing oral transmission and processes of variation. The research has also shown how the translation and re-presentation of traditional materials became increasingly sophisticated during the Revival, and how Stanford's composition of original art songs in an Irish idiom was an innovation which was swiftly embraced by other composers. Finally, the research brings together for the first time a considerable canon of highly singable and sophisticated art songs composed in response to the Irish Cultural Revival that unashamedly reference their Irish heritage.

As the research is intended as a survey of a relatively wide field, a number of future research possibilities emerge from the study. Some of the individuals discussed in some detail here have made significant contributions to Irish musical life, yet this remains largely undocumented. There is the potential for further study of the work of composers such as Herbert Hughes, John F. Larchet and Carl Hardebeck, while the contributions of female composers are only starting to get recognition. Others such as A. P. Graves and F. J. Bigger have largely disappeared from public view, yet by connecting individuals from different political and cultural spheres, and by their sponsorship and advocacy for cultural projects of various hues, they made important

contributions to the nation's perception of itself in a critically important historical period.

Practical applications of this research could include restoration, publication and performance of songs which have dropped out from active concert repertoire and merit re-evaluation. As many of the songs and texts surveyed are out of copyright or will shortly enter public domain, this opens up opportunities for dissemination through digital repositories as well as through more traditional published media. Finally, the research makes a case for greater inclusion and integration of Irish musical history into the wider field of Irish cultural studies. Properly contextualised in their historical and cultural settings, and with due reference to their literary content and origins, the songs have much to say about Irish identity and heritage during an vibrant historical era which celebrated both.

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