

Sharing Research at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

Increasingly, many people are engaging with research into various aspects of Irish traditional music, both in their leisure time and in pursuit of qualifications. Two significant events at this year's Fleadh included the launch of the album *Our Dear Dark Mountain with the Sky Over It* by DkIT doctoral student Seán McElwain and a concert by Leitrim band Ceolus featuring music from a tradition currently under investigation by DkIT student Conor Ward as part of his doctoral studies.

Well-known member of band Téada, Seán McElwain recently completed his doctoral research which focused on the musical traditions of the Sliabh Beagh region under the supervision of Dr Helen Lawlor and Dr Daithí Kearney at DkIT. With a particular focus on music from the collections of James Whiteside (1844-1916) and William Bogue (1860-1930), the recording builds upon Seán's doctoral research and presents music from a number of unexplored sources of regional music significance. It is supported by the Arts Council of Ireland under the DEIS scheme.

From Knockatallon, Co. Monaghan, Whiteside was a correspondent of both P.W. Joyce (1827-1914) and Capt. Francis O'Neill (1848-1936), two of the major collectors of Irish traditional music. Included in O'Neill's 'Irish Minstrels and Musicians' (1913) publication, he was in the Chicago collector's estimation a 'genius' in equal parts 'scholar, poet, musician and composer'. This recording, in keeping with such sentiments, represents an attempt to retrace the musical imprints of the Sliabh Beagh region of Monaghan / Fermanagh, seeking to reunite material recovered from unpublished music manuscripts and archival recordings with some of the region's current traditional musicians.

Fiddle player Conor Ward is a member of Leitrim band Ceolus directed by Fr John Quinn. At Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2014 they presented a concert of the music of South Leitrim, garnered from manuscripts going back almost two hundred years. Under the supervision of Dr Daithí Kearney and Dr Eibhlís Farrell, Conor is focusing on a range of sources that provide insight into the development of musical traditions in North Longford and South Leitrim since the Famine.

In both Conor's research and the performances by the band Ceolus there is particular emphasis of the great fiddle tradition of the area, which traces its roots back to Thomas Kernan, Hugh O'Beirne, Peter Kennedy, Alex Sutherland, and above all the renowned Reilly family of Drumreilly, one of whom, Marie Reilly, is flying in from New York to join the group, and will launch her latest fiddle CD, *The Road to Glannagh*, at the start of the night. Conor also contributed to the sleeve notes for this album.

These events highlight the ongoing contribution of the *Ceol Oirghialla* Section of Music at DkIT to the wider sphere of Irish traditional music and the dissemination of this research to the benefit of all of those interested in Ireland's rich musical heritage. For more information on undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities in music at DkIT see www.dkit.ie/music.