Chapter 7: Music and Memory in the Monuments of the Sliabh Luachra Region

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Abstract

Sliabh Luachra is a cultural region in the southwest of Ireland. Its boundaries are poorly defined and its identity owes much to the activities of musicians who lived there through the early part of the twentieth century. The style of Irish traditional music associated with the region came to the attention of a wider audience from the 1970s, by which time some of the seminal figures were old or deceased. Memories of these musicians became part of the narrative of both the place and the musical style. These memories were reinforced through the dissemination of archival recordings, performances by their students, music festivals, and the creation of monuments celebrating their lives and legacy. These monuments help to locate the region but also shape its identity, placing music at the forefront. New monuments add complexity to the narrative. In this chapter, I focus on one individual, the fiddle player Pádraig O'Keeffe (1887–1963), and three monuments dedicated to him. The three monuments (Scartaglen, 1983; Glountane, 1993; and Castleisland, 2002) reflect the sustained interest in this character and create three slightly different narratives that reflect different stakeholders' perspectives, motives, and memories. Engaging with themes of monumentalisation and institutionalisation and drawing on both fieldwork and newspaper research, this chapter critically considers the importance of a deceased musician for his local community and place and demonstrates how their story is appropriated and retold through monuments.

Keywords
Irish traditional music, Sliabh Luachra, monumentalisation, institutionalisation, regional style

Music and Memory in the Monuments of the Sliabh Luachra Region

Sliabh Luachra is a cultural region in the southwest of Ireland. Its boundaries are loosely defined and its identity owes much to the activities of musicians who lived there through the early part of the twentieth century.[1] The style and repertoire of Irish traditional music associated with the region came to the attention of a wider audience from the 1970s, by which time some of the seminal figures were old or deceased.[2] Memories of these musicians became part of the narrative of both the place and the musical style. These memories were and are reinforced through the dissemination of archival recordings, performances by their students, and music festivals. Monumentalisation in Irish traditional music, 'the material expression of placing statuary and monuments in honour of Irish musicians,'[3] is important not only for commemoration but also in the communication of narratives around the tradition. This chapter focuses on the importance of the interplay between landscape and memory in constructing narratives of regional identity.

The creation of monuments and memorials celebrating the lives and legacies of Irish traditional musicians augments the cultural landscape and contributes to the persistence and resilience of memory. The monuments are 'a statement of geographical distinctiveness,'[4] and help to locate the region but also shape its identity, placing music at the forefront. The symbolism encoded in the monuments adds complexity to the narrative and cultural geography of the region and reflects the power geometries that exist between

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[1] Pádraig Ó Duinnín, "Sliabh Luachra: cá bhfuil sé?" *Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 1 (1982): 40-41; Matt Cranitch, "The Sliabh Luachra 'Code'," *Irish Musical Studies, Volume 4: Selected Proceedings from the Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995*, eds P. Devine & H. White (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 343–53; Donal Hickey, *Stone Mad for Music: The Sliabh Luachra Story* (Dublin: Marino Books, 1999); Diarmuid Moynihan, *Sliabh Luachra Milestones* (Gneeveguilla: Crede Sliabh Luachra Heritage Group, 2003); Matt Cranitch "Pádraig O'Keeffe and the Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Tradition" (PhD diss., University of Limerick, 2006); Daithí Kearney, "Towards a Regional Understanding of Irish Traditional Music" (PhD diss., University College Cork, 2009).

[2] Dan Herlihy, interview by Peter Browne, *The Rolling Wave*, RTÉ Radio 1, January 10, 2007.

[3] Verena Commins, "Musical statues: Monumentalising Irish traditional music," in *Towards 2016: 1916 and Irish Literature, Culture & Society,* ed. Seán Crossan and Werner Huber (Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2015), 57-68, 57.

[4] Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 4.

various stakeholders. Although Guy Beiner argues that 'by their very materiality monuments are doomed to decay,'[5] Verena Commins notes: 'Engraved stones and plaques solidify the intangibility of performed utterances, placing them as permanent, visible, and therefore less ephemeral records.'[6] As demonstrated in this chapter, the development of a Sliabh Luachra musical identity owes much to processes of institutionalisation and commemoration, which may be read in the monuments to music and musicians in the Sliabh Luachra landscape.

Sliabh Luachra is a process that is increasingly shaped by the celebration of musicians by a variety of organisations and institutions within a wider process of developing regional identities in Irish traditional music that is further supplemented by commercialisation.[7] In his keynote address to a conference focusing on the local accents and regional styles in Irish traditional music, Peter Cooke highlights processes of institutionalisation whilst acknowledging the role of locally based individuals in developing and transmitting a tradition in an area.[8] Presenting a commentary on the conflict between globalisation and localisation through an overview of music from various parts of the world, Cooke highlights three processes of change in a music tradition: recording; the effects of broadcasting; and 'an increasing tendency to institutionalise what were once mostly autonomous and often many-coloured performance traditions.'[9] Over the past thirty years, the evolution of communities and landscape has also been influenced by local development companies and organisations. Amongst the significant stakeholders referred to herein are the local history society, Cummann Luachra. Founded by a small group of local history enthusiasts in 1981 and based in Gneeveguilla, Co. Kerry, Cumann Luachra seeks to promote awareness of the social and cultural heritage of Sliabh Luachra, to collect and publish on aspects of this heritage in a journal, to commemorate local historical events and personages, and to liaise with other local history groups and initiations for the interchange of information and

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[5] Guy Beiner, "When Monuments Fall: The Significance of Decommemorating," *Éire-Ireland* 56, no. 1 (2021): 33-61, 34.

[6] Commins, "Musical Statues," 61.

[7] Kearney, "Towards".

[8] Peter Cooke, "Cultural greyout or survival of the species? – 'The Threat'," in *Selected Proceedings from Blas: The Local Accent in Irish Traditional Music,* ed. M. Ó Suilleabháin and T. Smith (Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick / Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1997), 9-24.

[9] Ibid, 20.

experience. Regional development agencies IRD Duhallow (est. 1989),[10] and North East West Kerry Development (est. 2008),[11] provide funding and support for initiatives that include music festivals and monuments. The development and activities of branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in the region since the 1960s is significant in the context of more formalised structures for the musical traditions, although it is important to recognise the rich musical activity in the region prior to the establishment of branches of the organisation.[12] Recording and selling music, the effect of radio and television, and the establishment of festivals may also be considered part of the process of institutionalisation. Whilst institutions can confer identities and confidence on a region or culture, they are selective and can stultify the evolution of culture.[13] Institutions present particular people,

[10] IRD Duhallow is a community-based integrated rural development company combines the efforts and resources of the State Bodies, Local Authorities, Local Communities and individual entrepreneurs for the benefit of the local areas. The main objective of IRD Duhallow is to establish and to support initiatives directed towards the generation of enterprise for the benefit and welfare of communities in Duhallow who may be deprived due to rural population, immigration, lack of training, economic deprivation or poor infrastructure. To date IRD Duhallow has supported over 37 geographically based communities and over 60 issue based groups from youth to women, lone parents, mental health, sporting, educational, cultural and environmental groups. https://www.irdduhallow.com/ accessed 20 May 2022.

[11] North, East & West Kerry Development is one of 53 local development companies in Ireland. Its main objective is to promote, support, assist & engage in social development, enterprise development, and community development. https://newkd.ie/ accessed 20 May 2022.

[12] Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (translated as the association of musicians in Ireland) was founded in 1951 amidst fears for the future of Irish traditional music. It established branches throughout the country and internationally. Kearney "Towards", "Regions", and Commins "Musical Statues" note the role of Comhaltas in shaping the geography, social memory and cultural economy of regions in Irish traditional music. Daithí Kearney, "Regions, regionality and regionalization in Irish traditional music: the role of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann," *Ethnomusicology Ireland* 2/3 (2013): 72-94. Details of musicking in Sliabh Luachra including activities in Dance Halls and *feiseanna* [competitions] prior to the establishment of Comhaltas are details in John Herlihy, *Footsteps, Fiddles, Flagstones and Fun* (Kilcummin: Comhaltas Craobh Chill Chuimín, 2004), 101-120.

[13] These processes of selection are also evident in the discourse on tourism, which is relevant to an understanding of promoting Sliabh Luachra as a distinctive and musical place. See, for example, Stephen Williams, *Tourism Geography* (London: Routledge, 1998), 179; Russell Staiff, Robyn Bushell and Steve Watson, *Heritage and Tourism: Place, Encounter, Engagement* (London: Routledge, 2013). Drawing on the concept of 'authorised heritage discourse,' Steve Watson identifies the 'rural-historic' as a distinctive cultural construct that underpins one aspect of tourism in England and develops a conservative discourse that seeks to create an

places, and sounds as part of a narrative that defines the place and, in some instances, create monuments in support of these narratives.[14]

In this chapter, I focus on one individual, the fiddle player Pádraig O'Keeffe (1887–1963), and three monuments dedicated to him in the Sliabh Luachra region. The three monuments were erected in the village of Scartaglen in 1983, the rural crossroads at Glountane in 1993, and the town of Castleisland in 2002. They reflect the sustained interest in this character locally and in the wider Irish traditional music community, and create three slightly different narratives that reflect different stakeholders' perspectives, motives, and memories. They present O'Keeffe as the preeminent figure in the tradition and simplify the narrative of a region that had many musical figures. Although I am concerned with a rural place, the chapter mirrors Yvonne Whelan's detailed research on monuments in Dublin city that describes changes in politics and aesthetics related to the design, location, and removal of public statuary.[15] It also reflects Sara Cohen's engagement with music and memory in the context of Liverpool's expression of its popular musical history, which demonstrates that musical heritage is a process of struggle through which collective, individual, and institutional memories are produced.[16] This chapter critically considers the importance of a deceased musician to his local community and place, and demonstrates how his story is appropriated and represented through monuments and public statuary.

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illusion of continuity, stability and 'authenticity' whilst expressing a disconnect between the experiences of place in the past and present. Steve Watson, "Country Matters: The Rural-Historic as an Authorised Heritage Discourse in England," in *Heritage and Tourism: Place, Encounter, Engagement*, ed. Russell Staiff, Robyn Bushell and Steve Watson, (London: Routledge, 2013), 103-126, 104-105.

[14] For more on the 'production of difference,' See also Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 152.

[15] Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, Iconography and the Politics of Identity* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003).

[16] Sara Cohen, "Musical memory, heritage and local identity: remembering the popular music past in a European Capital of Culture." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19, no. 5 (2013): 576-594.

Pádraig O'Keeffe

Pádraig O'Keeffe was born into a musical family in east Kerry, learning music principally from his maternal relations from Co. Cork.[17] He augmented the local repertoire with music he 'picked up' in Dublin in his early twenties whilst studying to be a teacher, and from the records of Michael Coleman and others made from the 1920s.[18] Ennis recorded O'Keeffe in 1947 for the Folklore Commission, 1948 and 1949 for Raidió Éireann, and for the BBC in 1952. In addition to the recordings of O'Keeffe made by Clancy and Hamilton, other recordings that were posthumously released include *Kerry Fiddles* (1977), with his erstwhile pupils Denis Murphy (1910–1974) and Julia Clifford (1914–1997), as well as *Music from Clare and Kerry* (1987) and *The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master* (O'Keeffe, 1993). It was through the radio and subsequently the release of these recordings that Sliabh Luachra became more widely known.

O'Keeffe's legacy is evident through the various studies on Sliabh Luachra music, many of which refer to the musical style of the region. Writing about Sliabh Luachra, Lynch states:

> At the very mention of the music of Kerry, or Sliabh Luachra in particular, the name Pádraig O'Keeffe immediately springs to mind. For it was his unique fiddle style which formed the basis of the distinctive sound emanating from the region as we know it today and can now be heard on almost all traditional instruments.[19]

Whilst O'Keeffe is arguably the most famous individual associated with a Sliabh Luachra style of Irish traditional music, Pat Feeley recognises:

> In discussing regional styles [in Irish traditional music] it is always necessary to bear in mind that individual musicians always introduce a personal dimension into their playing. This was true of O'Keeffe. The self-conscious ornamentation and elaboration that is sometimes found in his playing of airs and hornpipes are purely personal and

[17] Hickey, *Stone Mad,* 89; Cranitch, "Pádraig O'Keeffe"; Matt Cranitch, *Denis and Julia: The 'Waivers' of Gneeveguilla, Ó Riada Memorial Lecture 1999*, (Traditional Music Archive / Irish Traditional Music Society, University College Cork, 2003), 7; Pádraig Ó Duinnín, "Glimpses of Padraig O Caoimh," Sliabh Luachra: Journal of *Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 7 (1993): 22-29, 23.

[18] David Lyth, *Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddle Playing Vol. 2* (Dublin: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, 1996), 25.

[19] John Lynch, "For the record" *Treoir* 26, no. 1 (1994): 32.

> not representative of a style remarkable for its simplicity and directness. Some students of O'Keeffe regard this excessive ornamentation and his use of crescendos and diminuendos to achieve certain effects as overdone, if not actually bad taste.[20]

Nevertheless, in his study of musical style in Irish fiddle playing, David Lyth describes O'Keeffe 'as a musician of extraordinary ability whose settings of both dance tunes and traditional airs are cherished by his pupils in Sliabh Luachra and further afield in ever increasing numbers.'[21] O'Keeffe's role as a teacher may be one of the reasons for his legacy.[22] He taught music to numerous talented and, in their own right, influential musicians including Denis Murphy, Julia Clifford, Johnny O'Leary (1923–2004), and Paddy Cronin (1925–2014). Although Murphy and Clifford adapt their playing styles, influenced by their experiences in the USA,[23] they also continue to present repertoire associated with O'Keeffe and other musicians of the region, often returning to a musical style developed from O'Keeffe's teaching. O'Keeffe taught the importance of the bow in creating the sound and emphasised this, even marking in bowing patterns on his manuscripts – an unusual occurrence in Irish traditional music.[24]

As well as his musical prowess, O'Keeffe is also integral to the stories that are formed through the collective memory that influences the narrative of the Sliabh Luachra region. Emphasising the importance of memories in understanding the regional musical traditions, Lyth states: 'Though Pádraig died in 1963, he is still the single 'most-talked-about musical personality' in this very musical district. He is a legend, a folk hero and the anecdotes of his

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[20] Pat Feeley, "Pádraig O'Keeffe: The Last Fiddle Master," *The Old Limerick Journal*, 38 (Winter, 2002): 53-59, 59; see also Lyth, *Bowing Styles 2*, 26.

[21] Lyth, *Bowing Styles 2*, 26.

[22] Seán Ó Suilleabháin, "Réamhrá," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 6 (1991): 2; Hickey, *Stone Mad,* 88; Matt Cranitch, "The Legacy of Pádraig O'Keeffe, A Half Centruy After his Death," ¸*Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra*, 1, no. 14 (2016): 112-114.

[23] Matt Cranitch "Paddy Cronin: Musical Influences on a Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Player in the United States," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 4, no. 4 (2010): 475–490.

[24] Cranitch, "The Legacy," 113, 114; Conor Ward includes other examples of tablature in Irish traditional music in his PhD study of the Conmhaicne musical traditions. Conor Ward, "Thomas Kernan and the fiddle traditions of the Conmhaicne region: a critical analysis of selected fiddle sources 1844 to 1973" (PhD diss., Dundalk Institute of Technology, 2018).

doings and sayings seem to be limitless.'[25] Stories and folklore perform an important role in preserving and communicating memory, knowledge, and understanding of place.[26] These stories and memories can be appropriated by various interest groups and become institutionalised to promote a particular narrative or contribute to collective memory.

Whilst 'Sliabh Luachra' remains a recognisable reference to a regional repertoire and style in Irish traditional music, music performed in or associated with the Sliabh Luachra region is no longer exactly the same as that which O'Keeffe and his contemporaries and predecessors played, perhaps best exemplified by the increasing and now almost ubiquitous presence of the guitar.[27] As Caroline Bithell argues, the study of the past in music is not just about what music sounded like in the past. Instead, an approach that aims to 'explore the ways in which echoes and legacies from the past can still be heard in the present and to consider the extent to which musical practices in the present are shaped not only by past experience but also by ideas, feelings and beliefs about the past.'[28] Although polkas and slides dominate the narrative description of Sliabh Luachra music, the repertoire is much broader and O'Keeffe preferred to play reels and was respected for his repertoire of slow airs. The increasing presence of the button accordion and gradual but almost complete integration of the guitar have altered the soundscape. Yet O'Keeffe remains a very visible and often referenced character in the narrative of the region and his monuments are a silent reference to his music.

Defining 'Sliabh Luachra'

Translated as 'the rushy mountain,' Sliabh Luachra is the name of a loosely defined region located on the borders of counties Kerry, Cork, and Limerick in the south west of Ireland. The identity of the Sliabh Luachra region is constructed primarily through the identification

[25] Lyth, *Bowing Styles*, 26; see also, Ó Duinnín, "Glimpses," 25; Feeley, "Pádraig," 57; Crantich, *Denis Murphy*, 8.

[26] Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*; Doreen Massey, *For Space,* (London: Sage, 2005).

[27] Daithí Kearney, "Joining In: The Introduction of the Guitar to the Sliabh Luachra Soundscape" (paper presented at ICTM Ireland Annual Conference Dundalk Institute of Technology, 28 February - 1 March 2015); Daithí Kearney, "Strumming Strings: Guitar Accompaniment in the Sliabh Luachra Sound" (paper presented at Société Française d'Ethnomusicologie (SFE) and the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) Joint Conference Musée du Quai Branly, Paris 2-5 July 2015).

[28] Caroline Bithell, "The Past in Music: Introduction," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 15, no. 1 (2006): 3-16, 4.

and expression of local culture. Foregrounded are the historical poetry traditions in the Irish language, [29] amongst the first projects undertaken by Cumann Luachra was the signposting of sites related to the poets Aodhgán Ó Rathaille (*c.*1670–1726) and Eoghan Rua Ó Suilleabháin (1748–1784), as well as Irish language scholar Fr Pádraig Ó Duinnín (1860–1934).[30] From the latter half of the twentieth century, the musical traditions of the people living there become foregrounded and differentiated within the wider narratives of Irish traditional music as the concepts of regions and regional styles in the tradition develops. There is a history of travelling fiddle players in the area that include Patrick O'Grady (d.1888) and Corney Drew (b.1832/8), Tadhg Ó Buachalla [Buckley] or Tadhgín an Asal (dates unknown),[31] Tom Billy Murphy (1875–1943), and John Linehan (1860–1932).[32] There is an uncertainty around the dates of many of these individuals, even those living into the twentieth century, with variations and inaccuracies in various sources adding to the inexactness of the narratives, from which details are selected in the process of monumentalisation.

Of these earlier 'masters,' only Murphy is represented by a monument, located on the Newmarket road at the edge of the village of Ballydesmond, Co. Cork. Unveiled on 31 October 1999,[33] the headstone-like monument features a dove carrying an olive branch, a typical symbol of peace in Christian culture, and a fiddle with bow.[34] The inscription begins 'In Memory Of' and describes Murphy as a 'Traditional Music Teacher and Storyteller.' The monument includes the phrase: 'music – the language of paradise and we'll dance like the

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[29] For more on the poetic traditions of the region see Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1967).

[30] Seán Ó Ceilleachair, "Réamhrá," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 2 (1983): 2.

[31] 'asal' translates as donkey and is a reference to his mode of transport.

[32] Dan Herlihy, *Sliabh Luachra Music Masters Vol 1* (Killarney: Self-Published, 2003); Dan Herlihy, *Sliabh Luachra Music Masters Volume 2* (Killarney: Self-Published, 2007); https://rushymountain.com/the-people/ accessed 24 May 2022.

[33] Anne Lucey "Monument Honours Noted Blind Fiddler," *Irish Examiner* 1 November 1999, 40; Catherine Halloran "Sliabh Luachra Historian Warns of Threat to Local Traditional Music," *Corkman* 5 November 1999, 4.

[34] Murphy's gravestone in Ballydesmond cemetery also features a fiddle with bow and an inscription of a few bars of sheet music, referring to him as a traditional fiddle player and music teacher and giving his dates as 1875-1943.

waves of the sea,' evoking the final line of *The Fiddler of Dooney*, a poem by WB Yeats in 1892 and first published in 1899.[35] Yeats is arguably the most significant Irish poet of the twentieth century whose poetry drew on Irish mythology and reflected on the complexity of Irish culture and politics.[36] Expressing the voice of the fiddle player, the poem engages with death and the importance of tradition, comparing those who dance to the fiddler's music as 'a wave of the sea.' It is noteworthy, as Ema Rupčić points out, that Yeats repeats the comparison between the dancers and the waves at the end of the poem, 'suggesting that even though time passes and death may come, people will still enjoy the song and it will still cause great emotions.'[37] On the base can be read, 'erected by his relatives and friends' and newspaper reports refer to 'the Tom Billy Murphy Memorial Committee' who received funding from IRD Duhallow to cover 50% of the costs, which are matched by voluntary fundraising.[38] Although a near contemporary of O'Keeffe, Murphy was not recorded but some commentators have noted differences in the musical styles of the two fiddle players.[39] These differences are rarely highlighted in the narratives that describe the Sliabh Luachra musical style, for which O'Keeffe is the main reference point.[40]

Whilst an understanding of regional differences in Irish traditional music owes much to the work of Seán Ó Riada (1931–1971) in the 1960s,[41] the Sliabh Luachra region was not part of

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[35] Frank Hughes Murphy, *Yeats's Early Poetry: The Quest for Reconciliation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975); Ema Rupčić, "Visions of Ireland in WB Yeats's Early Works" (PhD diss., University of Rijeka, 2018).

[36] Maurice Harmon, ed., *Irish Poetry After Yeats: Seven Poets* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1979), 10; Brendan Kennelly, "Introduction," in *The Penguin Book of Irish Verse*, edited by Brendan Kennelly (London: Penguin, 1981), 26-39, 26, 36.

[37] Rupčić, "Visions," 9.

[38] Donal Hickey "Village Honour for Blind Fiddler," *Irish Examiner* 6 April 1999, 4; John Tarrant "Tribute to Poet, Musician," *Irish Examiner County News* 9 November 1999, 6.

[39] Catherine Murphy "Tom Billy," in *Treoir* 12, no. 6 (1980): 21.

[40] Pádraig Ó Duinnín, "Glimpses of Pádraig Ó Caoimh," *Sliabh Luachra: The Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 7 (1993): 22-29; Lyth, *Bowing Styles*; Lynch, "For the Record," 32.

[41] Niall Keegan *Language and Power in Traditional Irish Music; Ó Riada Memorial Lecture 16* (Cork: The Traditional Music Archive and The Irish Traditional Music Society, University College Cork, 2006); Kearney, *Towards,* 28; Daithí Kearney "Radio and regions in Irish traditional music," in *Ancestral Imprints: Histories of Irish Traditional Music and Dance*, ed. Therèse Smith (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012), 128-140.

his mapping of Irish traditional music for the radio series *Our Musical Heritage* broadcast in 1962*,* although he does make loose reference to an area in South Kerry by the Cork border.[42] The omission may be surprising as Ó Riada was familiar with the poetic traditions of the region and was friendly with notable musicians from the area of Sliabh Luachra including fiddle player Denis Murphy, a pupil of O'Keeffe.[43] However, at that time, local musicians did not yet identify with a Sliabh Luachra identity.[44] Murphy and his sister, Julia Clifford, recorded with O'Keeffe and enhanced awareness of the musical traditions of Sliabh Luachra through their performances and recordings, which are integral to the musical canon of the region.[45]

Those who visited the Sliabh Luachra region in the 1940s and through the 1950s encountered a soundscape of musical style dominated by the fiddle that was subtly different to other parts of the country. As well as the standard repertoire of jigs and reels, they encountered a repertoire of polkas and slides that were played primarily for dancers.[46] This precedes the definition and popularisation of Sliabh Luachra as a place of distinctive musical culture through a process of regionalisation that includes the creation and dissemination of recordings, particularly through radio broadcasts. In addition to Ó Riada, other collectors and broadcasters who visited the region include Séamus Ennis (1919–1982), Aindreas Ó Gallchóir (1929–2011), and Ciarán MacMathúna (1925–2009),[47] with accordion

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[42] Seán Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, ed. by Thomas Kinsella and Tomás Ó Canainn (Mountrath, Portlaoise, Ireland: Fundúireacht an Riadaigh i gcomhar Le Dolmen Press, 1982). This book was compiled from the radio programme series, *Our Musical Heritage*, presented by Seán Ó Riada on Radio Éireann, 7 July to 13 October 1962.

[43] Peadar Ó Riada, 'Seán Ó Riada and Ceoltóirí Chualann: A note by Peadar Ó Riada" Sleeve notes to *Séan Ó Riada: Pléaracha an Riadaigh* (Dublin: Gael Linn, 2008).

[44] Daithí Kearney, "Beyond location: The Relevance of Regional Identities in Irish Traditional Music," *Sonas* (2012): 1-20.

[45] Cranitch, *Denis Murphy*, 25; Hickey, *Stone Mad*, 99-109; Peter Browne, "The Legacy of Denis Murphy, 40 Years On," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra*, 1, no. 14 (2016)*,* 115-117.

[46] Matt Cranitch, "The rhythmic dimension in fiddle-playing as the music moves to newer performing and learning contexts," in *Driving the Bow: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 2*, eds. Ian Russell and Mary Anne Alburger (Elphinstone Institute, University of Edinburgh, 2008), 121–134.

[47] Dónal Ó Síodhcáin, *Sliabh Luachra: The place, its people and music* (Cork: Cló Duanaire, 1982), 100; Hickey, *Stone Mad*, 106.

player Johnny O'Leary remembering 'Séamus Ennis did the first radio broadcast in the early 1940s. People like Seán Mac Reamoinn, Ciarán Mac Mathúna, and Seán Ó Riada came after that. They put Sliabh Luachra music where it is in Ireland today.'[48] Liam Clancy (1935–2009) and Diane Hamilton (1924–1991) also visited the Sliabh Luachra region in 1955, recording and photographing Pádraig O'Keeffe and Denis Murphy amongst others. Their recordings later appeared on the album *The Lark in the Morning* (1956) released by Tradition Records and the image of O'Keeffe, one of few in existence, has become iconic.

The Irish landscape has been shaped by generations and is part storyteller of the history of Irish traditional music. The landscape is central to geographical thought and to the fore in descriptions of the Sliabh Luachra region. In one of the few recordings of O'Keeffe's voice, we hear him respond to the question regarding the location of the region as 'Where the bog is.' The damp hills criss-crossed by small roads between fields of sheep and poor forestry, are home to a rural community who continue to imprint their identity on the landscape through agrarian practices. A sense of identity is strengthened by the development of places of memory. The Sliabh Luachra region encompasses several places of memory that promote public memory and the development of a regional narrative that places an emphasis on music. Forest et al. assert:

> Places of memory typically represent the past through historical exhibitions, sculptures or as focal points for commemorative events. They may be symbolic spaces where officials and other social groups express their contemporary political agendas to a larger "public".[49]

Placenames, monuments, statues, and plaques are the result of choices made by those who occupy or are in control of the landscape and the development and display of monuments and public statuary involve choices similar to those made in relation to the content of cultural displays in museums and heritage centres.[50] The places of memory in the Sliabh

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[48] Johnny O'Leary, "My Life and Music" *Sliabh Luachra: The Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 1 (1982): 21-23, 22.

[49] Benjamin Forest, Juliet Johnson, and Karen Till, "Post-totalitarian national identity: public memory in Germany and Russia," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5, no.3 (2004): 357-380, 358.

[50] Catherine Kelly and Caitríona Ní Laoire. "Representing multiple Irish heritage(s): A case study of the Ulster-American Folk Park." *Irish Geography* 38, no. 1 (2005): 72-83.

Luachra region reflect local history and politics and incorporate symbolic or coded meanings, including placenaming and the design of monuments. The renaming in 1951 of Kingwilliamstown, a model village created by British forces and named for King William IV of the United Kingdom,[51] to Ballydesmond with reference to the Earls of Desmond who were themselves an Anglo-Norman family who led rebellions against the British in preceding centuries, reflects nationalistic politics that is subsequently evolved to gain amore regional focus from the 1960s.

Regionalisation and Institutionalisation

Despite the widespread use of 'Sliabh Luachra' as a term of location in the discourse of Irish traditional music, its identity and location is problematic. Its identification as a musical region reflects processes of regionalisation in Irish traditional music in the latter half of the twentieth century,[52] which is inextricably linked to the 'invention of tradition,'[53] or perhaps more accurately the 'transformation of tradition' as described in relation to folk revivals in North America,[54] the Ulster-Scots musical traditions,[55] or changes in the structures of and contexts for Irish traditional music in Co. Clare in the latter half of the twentieth century.[56] The narratives that surround the erection of monuments not only reflect a desire to commemorate but also include a sense of dissatisfaction with contemporary culture[57] and a desire to draw attention to local culture and assert a sense of importance. Hickey highlights

[51] Joan Kelliher, "Ballydesmond: A Glimpse Now and Then," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 1 (1982): 66.

[52] Kearney, "Regions".

[53] Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[54] Neil V. Rosenberg, ed. *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[55] Gordon Ramsey, "The Ulster-Scots Musical Revival: Transforming Tradition in a Post-Conflict Environment," *Études irlandaises* 38, no. 2 (2013): 123-149.

[56] Geraldine Cotter, *Transforming Tradition: Irish Traditional Music in Ennis, County Clare 1950-1980* (Ennis: Self-published, 2016); Gearóid Ó hAlmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 220-222.

[57] Peter Narviaez, "Living Blues Journal: The Paradoxical Aesthetics of the Blues Revival," in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, ed. Neil V. Rosenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 231-257.

the impact of rural depopulation on the musical life of Sliabh Luachra,[58] which may be linked in turn to the closure of pubs across the region.[59] Monuments are part of an interlinked geometry of processes that include performance, collecting, recording, broadcasting, tourism, and institutionalisation. Commins also argues that the 'locally driven placement of monuments and statues, particularly in non-urban environments, stretches the canvas of Irish identity back into rural Irish spaces.'[60] Sliabh Luachra has a long history including references in mythology and folklore that have been documented elsewhere but the musical region presented in this paper has become an institutionalised culture that became defined in the latter half of the twentieth century. It may be argued that without the forces of institutionalisation, such as the recordings of O'Keeffe by Ennis and MacMathúna, as well as the subsequent broadcast and commercial release of these recordings, that Sliabh Luachra would not have been acknowledged.

The importance of the activities of Ennis and MacMathúna in Sliabh Luachra for the development of identity is further emphasised by a story from accordion player Dan Herlihy (1942–2019) from Ballydesmond, Co. Cork who emigrated to London in 1960. The recordings made by Seamus Ennis at Charlie Horan's in September 1952 went into the BBC Sound Archives were disseminated in 1977 as an LP entitled *Kerry Fiddles - Music from Sliabh Luachra Vol.1* released under the Topic label. Speaking on *The Rolling Wave*, Herlihy recollected visiting David Lyth's house to listen to the LP and, despite knowing the musicians, was not familiar with the concept of Sliabh Luachra stating 'I didn't know the Sliabh Luachra before I left but 'twas all Sliabh Luachra when I came home.'[61] Herlihy's memories reflect the historical and imaginative invention of Sliabh Luachra as a musical region and the role of O'Keeffe and his students in the construction of identity for the region.

The importance of recordings of musicians from the Sliabh Luachra region is paralleled with a growth of festivals, some of which include workshops for learning music and competitions,

[58] Lucey, "Monument," 40; Halloran, "Sliabh Luachra Historian," 4.

[59] Kearney, "Towards," 310; Daithí Kearney, "Traditional Irish Music Here Tonight: Exploring the Session Space" in *Spacing Ireland: Space, Society and Culture in a Post-Boom Era* ed. Caroline Crowley and Denis Lenihan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 171-182.

[60] Commins, "Musical Statues," 61.

[61] Herlihy *Rolling Wave*.

which may also be understood in the context of institutionalisation.[62] There are a number of *féile cheoil* [music festivals] in the region during the latter half of the twentieth century, with one established in Ballydesmond beginning in 1966, a year after the establishment of a Comhaltas branch in the town. A similar event was established in Scartaglen the following year. The first 'Sliabh Luachra Community Festival' was held in Gneeveguilla in 1985, although the village had hosted the 'Denis Murphy Music Festival' since 1983. Whilst many of these events no longer take place, the 'Patrick O'Keeffe Festival' in Castleisland, which began in 1993, continues today.

The Patrick O'Keeffe Festival highlights the connections between different processes of institutionalisation and demonstrates a flow from establishing a story based on memory, festivalisation and monumentalisation. Broadcaster Peter Browne travelled to Castleisland in 1992 to research the life and times of O'Keeffe for a programme on RTÉ Radio 1, which led to the broadcast in November 1994 of a four-part documentary. At the conclusion of his work in the Sliabh Luachra area in early 1993, Browne suggested that Castleisland should remember O'Keeffe by means of a festival to mark the 30th anniversary of his death. The idea for the festival was first mooted in Charlie Horan's pub run at the time by Mary Jones - a Glountane native, where O'Keeffe had been recorded on 9 September 1952. Jones became the first festival president in 1993 and it was the festival committee that erected the monument to O'Keeffe in the town.

Monumentalisation in Irish Traditional Music

Monuments and public statuary have become an integral part of the study of landscape and in recent years a number of monuments have been created that recognise the contribution and legacy of Irish traditional musicians in their local area.[63] The context in which the landscape is shaped through the creation of monuments and other structures is important in understanding the process of creating or constructing both landscape and memory. Studies by Nuala Johnson and Yvonne Whelan on monuments in the Irish landscape have noted the power of the spaces that these monuments create and their role in the

[62] Cooke, "Cultural Greyout," 21; Roger Wallis and Krister Malm, *Big Sounds from Small Peoples: The Music Industry in Small Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[63] Kearney, "Towards"; Commins, "Musical Statues"; Verena Commins, "From Milan to Kilbaha: Bronzing Irish Traditional Music," *Éire-Ireland* 54, no. 1 (2019): 275-296.

reinforcement of identity and power.[64] The spaces created by these monuments shape and contribute to the narratives of the tradition by foregrounding the memory of selected musicians and are integral to the construction of place in these narratives as they provide a reference point for a physical location of a cultural region with loosely defined boundaries.

Whilst the focus of this paper is on musicians, it may be informed by the discourse on war memorials in Ireland and internationally. In her investigation of centenary monuments to the 1798 rebellion in Ireland, Johnson investigates 'the role of public statuary in constructing a heroic analysis of the past.'[65] Within the Irish music tradition, the individuals who have gained fame through their individuality or importance to localised communities become the central characters of a body of folklore, heroes of a heroic tradition. It is a process that glorifies not only the music and the individual but, often, the place. Places become important in Irish traditional music narratives because of the sense of 'home' that they present.[66] The concept of home becomes intertwined with concepts of 'tradition' and 'authenticity,' which can be challenged by death and changes in society and culture.

Understanding the context for the design, placement, and erection of monuments is critical to understanding their importance, not only in the context of memory and commemoration but also with regard to the political, social, and economic contexts at the time of their unveiling. Johnson outlines the importance of the social and historical contexts of monuments, stating:

> Monuments were not just decorative appendages erected to beautify cities and towns, and their location within public space was no historical accident.

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[64] Nuala C. Johnson, "Sculpting Heroic Histories: Celebrating the Centenary of the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 19, no. 1 (1994): 78-93. Nuala C. Johnson, "The spectacle of memory: Ireland's remembrance of the Great War, 1919," *Journal of Historical Geography* 25, no 1 (1999): 36-56.); Yvonne Whelan, "The construction and destruction of a colonial landscape: monuments to British monarchs in Dublin before and after independence" *Journal of Historical Geography* 28, no. 4 (2002): 508-533; Yvonne Whelan, "Mapping meanings in the cultural landscape," in *Senses of Place, Senses of Time* ed. G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham, (London: Ashgate, 2005), 3-14.

[65] Johnson, "Sculpting Heroic Histories," 78.

[66] Martin Dowling 'Communities, place, and the traditions of Irish dance music' in *Crosbhealach an Cheoil – The Crossroads Conference: Tradition an change in Irish traditional music,* ed. Fintan Vallely et al. (Dublin: Whinstone Music, 1996): 64-71.

> They represented self-conscious attempts to solicit public participation in the politics of the day.[67]

By sequentially analysing the construction of monuments and statuary on both a spatial and temporal basis, they can be examined in relation to the sequence of historical events in Irish society.[68] Monuments and statuary construct and express elements of and attitudes towards a musical tradition and may in turn be read in relation to the process of creating regions within the narratives of Irish traditional music.

The monuments in the Sliabh Luachra landscape reflect both the increased awareness of regional culture and the evolution of that culture, as well as the proliferation of monuments in the county. Not considering earlier periods and examples of public statuary that often had a religious and political/nationalistic focus, public statuary from the early 1980s to late 1990s includes monuments by Alan Ryan Hall to poet Sigerson Clifford and politician Daniel O'Connell in Caherciveen, unveiled in 1985 and 1996 respectively. *Draíocht an Ghabha* [The Magic Blacksmith] by Fred Conlon (1998) is located outside the Siamsa Tíre Theatre in Tralee and a group of three limestone statues, showing stylized statues of three musicians by Dick Joynt (1995), stands in Kenmare. These are more stylised or referential to a broader culture rather than focusing on particular individuals.[69] There is a mix of stone and metal, with many being busts and plaques rather than life-size or larger. Monuments from the late 1990s are, for the most part, larger and more often bronze, coinciding with access to greater financial support as a result of the Celtic Tiger economy.[70] Examples include large and life-size bronze sculptures by Ryan Hall to Charlie Chaplin (1998) in Waterville, King Puck (2001) and Fr Tom Lawlor (2003) in Killorglin; Eamonn Kelly in Gneeveguilla (Dan Cronin, 2003), St Brendan the Navigator in Fenit (Tigh O'Donoghue / Ross, 2003), Gaelic Footballers in Tralee (Mark Rode, 2007), and musician Christie Hennessey (Nicholas Dimbleby, 2009). Hugh Hanratty's bust of

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[67] Johnson, "Sculpting Heroic Histories," 78

[68] Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin.*

[69] The significance of the blacksmith and the location of the monuement may be connected to the production, *Ding Dong Dederó* (1991), which was the first production staged in the new theatre by the Siamsa Tíre company and focused on the life of dancing master and blacksmith's son, Jeremiah Molyneaux, and was largely set in a blacksmith's forge.

[70] Commins, "Musical Statues," 61.

writer Con Houlihan, whose writings include reflections on Pádraig O'Keeffe and the cultural heritage of the Sliabh Luachra region, was also relocated to the main street in Castleisland in 2004.[71] It is notable that the first of the monuments to O'Keeffe mirrors this later period but precedes all of these large-scale monuments and the advent of Celtic Tiger prosperity.

Monuments in Sliabh Luachra

Noting how they concretise 'what had previously been a sonic and print legacy,' Commins highlights that 'monuments dedicated to Irish traditional musicians begin to appear in civic spaces from the 1970s onwards, representing a new cultural trajectory of commemoration in Ireland.'[72] There are many monuments located throughout the Sliabh Luachra region that seek to identify places of memory and connect them to the history, folklore, and artistic culture of the region. Historian Donal Hickey makes reference to the rich poetic traditions of the region and the poets Aodhgáin Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Rua Ó Suilleabháin in particular, noting the political contexts for their writing.[73] Some monuments are more generic in their reference to local culture such as *The Cultural Corner* in Gneeveguilla,[74] or the *Spéirbhean* in Killarney,[75] whilst others celebrate a variety of other figures, including storyteller and actor Éamonn Kelly.[76] For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on the three monuments to Pádraig O'Keeffe, located in Scartaglen, Glountane, and Castleisland.

Scartaglen

A life size bronze bust of Pádraig O'Keeffe, unveiled in 1983 in the small village of Scartaglen, is the earliest of the three monuments. The village, in which the two pubs of Flemings' and

[71] Anon. "Castleisland's Con Immortalised on Main Street," *Kerryman*, January 8, 2004, 27

[72] Commins, "Musical Statues," 59.

[73] Hickey, *Stone Mad*, 26, 30.

[74] 'The Cultural corner in Gneeveguilla depicts the strong tradition of Irish song, music and dance in the Sliabh Luachra area and was designed and executed in bronze by Don Cronin to mark the huge contribution to Irish music, song, dance and literature of the Gneeveguilla greats.' IRD Duhallow Annual Report 06/07.

[75] Translated as 'sky woman,' the *spéirbhean* is a common character in Irish *Aisling* or dream poetry, in which Ireland is represented as a beautiful woman who is imprisoned or oppressed by foreign forces.

[76] The life size bronze statue of Kelly was unveiled on 7 September 2003, created by west Cork-based sculptor Don Cronin who has a family connection to the area and also created the earlier monument to Sliabh Luachra culture on the main road. Donal Hickey, Honouring the Seanchaí Éamonn Kelly," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra*, 1, no. 11 (2003): 54-59, 54, 55.

Lyons' are located, is described in a local newspaper article from 1979 announcing the formation of a committee to plan for the monument as O'Keeffe's 'second home.'[77] At that stage there was a desire to erect a suitable monument in Scartaglen 'in the near future' but ultimately, the project took some four years. The local committee was led by Tom Fleming, a member of Kerry County Council. Highlighting the connections between the locality and emigrants from the area, Scartalgen native Ted Kenny, then resident in Willesden, London, was elected Honorary President.[78] Kenny had already accumulated £300 from the proceeds of an Irish function in London and plans were made to organise other Irish nights during the year. Locally, fundraising plans indicate a network throughout Sliabh Luachra, with plans to organise dances in Ballydesmond and commitments from the communities in Scartaglen and Castleisland to help the fund.

The monument to O'Keeffe in Scartaglen consists of life-size statue from the waist up, holding his fiddle, located in the village green outside the public houses in which he played and recorded. It was sculpted by a local man, Mike Kenny (1966–2011) of Castleisland, who went on to create similar life size bronze statues of composer Seán Ó Riada in the grounds of St Gobnait's Church in the west Cork Gaeltacht area of Cúl Aodha and Sliabh Luachra musician Johnny O'Leary in Killarney, Co Kerry. Kenny was a graduate of the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. He cited Romanian-born sculptor Constantin Brancusi and Kerry native Jerome Connor as his heroes and inspiration.[79] For Kenny's monument in Scartaglen, O'Keeffe is well dressed with a youthful appearance and faces west across the valley. There is resonance with the photograph taken in 1955 by Diane Hamilton, albeit without the glass of porter. His name, in old script, appears as Pádraig Ó Caoim, accompanied by the phrase 'Sar mháistir cheoil,' a master of music. There is a mistake in the inscription, related to the birthdate of O'Keeffe, resulting from human error.[80] He is, it tells us, 'Last of the Fiddle Master of Sliabh Luachra.' This echoes the title of a short memoir by Séamus Ennis, *Pádraig O'Keeffe,*

[77] Anon. "Memorial to Honour Fiddler," *Kerryman*, January 05, 1979, 28.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Anon. 'Artist Michael Kenny laid to rest in Kerry.' *Irish Times*, Aug 16, 2011.

[80] Kearney, "Towards," 352.

The Last of the Old Fiddle-Masters,[81] and a radio programme produced by Ciarán MacMathúna entitled *The Last of the Fiddle Masters*, first broadcast in 1963. It is a statement that not everybody would agree with. There are many fine fiddle players around yet this monument, a site of celebration of music, memory, and tradition pays tribute to 'the *last* fiddle master of Sliabh Luachra', invoking a complex sense of mortality whereby the individual may die but the musical tradition survives, at least for a time. The monument constructs a narrative of Sliabh Luachra whereby it can only exist in the past yet it faces the Sliabh Luachra Heritage Centre, a building opened in 2000 that attempts to preserve and develop the culture of Sliabh Luachra into the future.[82] The monument is now at the centre of activities for Scartaglen's World Fiddle Day events, which began in 2014. During the day, fiddlers gather at the monument to perform a pre-selected set of tunes, reflecting the living tradition that draws on the repertoire of the past.

The timing of the planning and unveiling of the O'Keeffe statue in Scartaglen is noteworthy in the context of what is happening in other parts of Ireland in relation to Irish traditional music and monuments. Commins indicates that a plaque to uilleann piper Willie Clancy unveiled in 1974 is the first of its kind to an Irish traditional musician, preceding the unveiling of a monument to fiddle player Michael Coleman in Sligo by a few months.[83] The formation of a committee in 1979 to plan and fundraise for a statue in Scartaglen, makes this movement contemporaneous with the earliest developments elsewhere in Ireland, although the O'Keeffe monument in Scartaglen was not unveiled until 29th July 1983.[84]

It should also be noted that plans for the O'Keeffe monument were preceded by plans to commemorate O'Keeffe's pupil, Denis Murphy, in Gneeveguilla, with a committee formed in 1976. An article in the *Kerryman* newspaper stated:

> A committee has been formed in the Sliabh Luachra area from a recent gathering of friends, musicians, and admirers of the late Denis Murphy. The purpose of this Committee will, be the ultimate erection of a suitable memorial befitting, of this

[81] Séamus Ennis, "Pádraig O'Keeffe, The Last of the Old Fiddle-Masters," *Fonn – Bulletin of the Newry Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann*, 3 (1963): 2.

[82] Donal Hickey, "Centre Provides Insight into Rich Musical Tradition," *Irish Examiner* May 20, 2000, 7.

[83] Commins, "Musical Statues," 60-61.

[84] Anon. "Scartaglen Feile Cheoil Welcomes You," *Kerryman*, July 29, 1983, 9.

> famous traditional fiddler, as a deep reminder of what he has done for traditional music in this area.[85]

A large-scale statue to Murphy is never realised. In contrast with the Clancy example, where Commins notes the limitations placed on the design and nature of the memorial by the level of funding available in the 1970s, decisions were made in Kerry to wait and raise more money to create a more significant monument. Two years later, the same newspaper reported:

> A site has been acquired and the committee have managed to collect. £2,000. However, it is felt that anything approaching, a, proper memorial to this son of Lisheen would cost. £5,000 at least and a further campaign of raising funds is continuing while the form of a suitable memorial is still being, debated. [86]

Unlike the statue of O'Keeffe, the committee decided to donate the money raised towards the cost of the Community Hall in Gneeveguilla, which was named in Murphy's honour in 1983.[87] A stone plaque outside the door carved by local sculptor John Murphy from Boherbue was unveiled by Ciarán MacMathúna.[88] Murphy also created the monuments to poets Aodhgáin Ó Rathaile and Eoghan Rua Ó Suilleabháin for Cumann Luachra. Unlike the life-size statue of Clancy in Miltown Malbay unveiled in 2013, plans for a larger sculpture representing Murphy were not returned to.

Glountane

The second monument to O'Keeffe is located at Glounthane Cross and was erected by Cumann Luachra to mark the 30th anniversary of O'Keeffe's death. The unveiling of the monument to O'Keeffe took place on 12 September 1993 for Heritage Day, an occasion when the group held annual gatherings. Relations, former pupils, and people who knew O'Keeffe were present at the event and former President of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Domhnall de Barra, was the main speaker.[89] The monument is similar in design to those erected to the

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[85] Anon. "Memorial to Fiddler is Planned," *Kerryman*, November 05, 1976, 7.

[86] Anon. "Memorial to 'Weaver' Murphy," *Kerryman*, November 10, 1978; 7.

[87] Pauline Pitcher, "Gneeveguilla Tribute to Denis Murphy." *Kerryman*, August 5, 1983, 17; Anon. "Centre Will be Named After Denis Murphy," *Kerryman*, October 8, 1982, 7.

[88] Anon. "Hall named after Kerry Musician," *Irish Examiner* August 8, 1983, 8.

[89] Donal Hickey, "Cumann Luachra Activities Since 1991," *Sliabh Luachra: Journal of Cumann Luachra* 1, no. 7 (1993): 96-97, 97.

poets Ó Rathaille and Ó Suilleabháin at Faha the previous year is located at the corner of the crossroads beside O'Keeffe's former home and across the road from the school in which he taught for a while. It is a quiet location with little passing traffic. At the top and bottom of the monument, in two forms of notation, are inscribed two different polkas 'in the way he used to write it down.'[90] The plaque features two instruments, the button accordion and fiddle, by far the most popular instruments of the region and those with which the region is most associated, but the accordion only became part of the local soundscape during O'Keeffe's lifetime. O'Keeffe himself is acknowledged as 'A Master of Traditional Music. Gifted performer, composer, arranger and teacher.' This is a potential place of pilgrimage and I have enjoyed bringing students here on occasion. Both the house and the school are dilapidated; the roads are narrow and quiet. Despite its remoteness, this place is central to the imagination of the Sliabh Luachra music region.

There is recognition that O'Keeffe is part of the paradoxical process in Irish traditional music that includes change – the introduction of new tunes – whilst at the same time those who seek stability retain him as an icon. The celebration of individuals and the acceptance of aspects of an individual's performance by a community or in the process of institutionalisation highlight the importance of considering individuals within a regional tradition. In relation to Irish traditional music, broadcaster Cathal Goan highlights the role of the individual in Irish traditional music and the value placed on having a tune or a song that nobody else might have,[91] whilst Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin exemplifies how individuals in the Irish tradition shape music in highly individualistic way.[92] More broadly, ethnomusicologist John Blacking notes the role of individuals in musical change and the challenge presented by attitudes to 'folk music' that seek to preserve rather than accept change. Blacking also notes the paradox of those termed as "purists," members of community that seek to preserve a tradition, and states:

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[90] A statement by Cumann Luachra chairperson Seán Ó Suilleabháin in Noel Twomey, "Sliabh Luachra Honours a Great Lover of Music," *Kerryman*, September 17, 1993, 3.

[91] Cathal Goan, "Traditional Music: The Public Perception" in *Traditional Music: Whose Music?*, ed. Peter MacNamee (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1991), 56-58, 57.

[92] Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin, "Crossroads or twin-track? Innovation and tradition in Irish traditional music," in *Crosbhealach an Cheoil – The Crossroads Conference: Tradition an change in Irish Traditional Music*, ed. Fintan Vallely et al. (Dublin: Whinstone Music, 1999), 175-199.

> The "purists" have been curiously ambivalent in their attitudes to continuity and change in music. They have lamented departure from what they conceive to be traditional practices and have invoked concepts such as authenticity to distinguish between what is and is not good and worthy of study; but they have also applauded the creative musicianship of outstanding individual performers, whose originality must, by definition, threaten the stability of any "authentic" tradition.[93]

Like many others in the Irish tradition, O'Keeffe is at once a creative and innovative individual who becomes a reference point for attempts at preserving Irish traditional music. He is a single individual around whom a regional narrative is constructed but he is also part of a social network whose memory is evoked by a regional community.

Castleisland

The third monument to O'Keeffe is located on the main street of the town of Castleisland and reflects processes in the evolution of Irish traditional music in Sliabh Luachra, as well as conscious efforts to develop the streetscape in Castleisland and other towns in the county. Journalist John Reidy reported on a proposition to a meeting of the Sliabh Luachra Development Committee in February 2001 from Lyreacrompane born sculptor and artist John Joe Sheehy. Sheehy sought to examine spaces in the town which could be enhanced by life-sized pieces of sculpture influenced by local history and heritage. Reflecting an emphasis on the local, Reidy notes:

> The plan is to contact sculptors, native or working in the county, and invite them to submit ideas and costings relevant to their works. Local sculptors Mike Kenny and Austin McQuinn, and well as Tralee based John Joe Sheehy and Billy Leen, were among the names mentioned.[94]

Erected by the Patrick O'Keeffe Festival Committee in 2002, the monument to O'Keeffe in Castleisland makes reference to and reflects the evolution of the Sliabh Luachra soundscape, and an understanding of a musical region as a process is encoded in its design. The monument features three instruments, which may be read as the past, present, and future of the

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[93] John Blacking, "Some problems of theory and method in the study of musical change," *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 9 (1977): 1-26.

[94] John Reidy, "Artwork wanted to sculpt local streetscape," *Kerryman* March 1, 2001, 32.

soundscape during O'Keeffe's lifetime. As the instrument with which he is most associated, the fiddle represents O'Keeffe's present. In the centre of the monument sits a concertina, an instrument most often associated with musicians of Co. Clare and which has become notably popular in the twenty-first century but, in an older form may represent the soundscape into which O'Keeffe was born. It is notable that O'Keeffe's mother played the concertina and the mothers of musicians Maurice O'Keeffe, Maureen O'Carroll (Cronin), Paudie Gleeson, the fathers of Tom Carroll and Con Curtain, and both parents of Patrick O'Connell's played concertina.[95] The accordion represents the future as it was during O'Keeffe's lifetime. O'Keeffe himself taught the accordion, which arguably replaced the fiddle as the most popular instrument in the region at the end of the twentieth century.

The monument, like the aforementioned memorial to Tom Billy Murphy, includes a quote from *The Fiddler of Dooney* by Yeats, a national figure without local or regional significance. Commins proposes that the quotation from Yeats confers both the monument and the region of Sliabh Luachra, as represented here by O'Keeffe, with national significance.[96] In contrast with the monument at Scartaglen, the text at Castleisland presents hope for the future of Sliabh Luachra as the space celebrates 'a legacy,' suggesting a culture that continues. The circumstances of its construction, by a festival organisation responsible for an annual celebration, add an additional layer of meaning as there is an attempt to maintain a living culture in the region. As Commins asserts: 'The raising of a monument speaks as much, if not more, to the present moment as it enacts a celebration of the past, and statues have the potential to elevate the status of their geographical proximity as much as the status of the actual people named on them.'[97] The celebration of O'Keeffe is an effort to assert the traditions of the Sliabh Luachra region at a time, post-*Riverdance*, when Irish traditional music is not only a popular recreational activity in Ireland, but has achieved international attention and participation, and is to the fore in Irish tourism.[98]

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[95] Herlihy, *Music Masters 2.*

[96] Verena Commins, personal communication, 12 November 2021.

[97] Commins, "Musical Statues," 63; see also Johnson "Sculpting Heroic Histories," 78.

[98] Kearney, "Traditional Music," The experience in the Sliabh Luachra region in this context may be compared with the description of Co. Clare as critiqued by Ó hAlmhuráin, *Flowing Tides*, 220-222. For further

Narratives in Bronze and Stone

The three monuments to Pádraig O'Keeffe create three different narratives. His name differs on each. At his birthplace he is Pádraig O'Keeffe, the name to which he is most often referred to as and which is used on many of the recordings.[99] In Scartaglen, the old Irish typescript is used and his name appears as Pádraig Ó Caoim, with a *séimhiú* or dot of lenition over the m to indicate a 'h.' In Castleisland his name appears as Patrick O'Keeffe. Each place constructs a separate identity for the musician and soundscape with which they are connecting. In each space, particular instruments are prominent: the fiddle appears in all three, accompanied by the box at Glountane and both box and concertina at Castleisland. The Sliabh Luachra music tradition, which often begins its narrative with Pádraig O'Keeffe, is a fiddle tradition that was supplemented by and arguably taken over by the button accordion in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, O'Keeffe's music can be traced back to the concertina playing of his relatives.

The location of the three monuments contributes to the narrative of locating the Sliabh Luachra. In contrast to the village of Scartaglen or rural crossroads at Glountane, the monument located on the main street of Castleisland symbolically brings O'Keeffe into Castleisland town where he is joined by other local characters such as writer Con Houlihan, who published many stories about O'Keeffe and contributed to his memory and legend. The committees who organised the second and third monuments were engaged in other projects – the first is Cumann Luachra, a historical society who have arranged for many monuments, events and publications; the second is responsible for the music festival named for O'Keeffe. Even the first committee in Scartaglen, similar to a concurrent committee in Gneeveguilla focused on commemorating Denis Murphy, organised a promoted musical events that enriched local culture and facilitated greater engagement in musicking in the region. Stories, histories, and cultural landscapes are part of the process of generating a collective memory.[100]

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examination of tourism and Irish traditional music, see Adam Kaul, *Turning the Tune: Traditional Music, Tourism, and Social Change in an Irish Village* (Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

[99] On *The Lark in the Morning* (1956) his name is spelled with one 'f'.

[100] Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-133. Alan Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American*

In reference to the study of place, Ryden states: 'Since places are fusions of experience, landscape, and location, they are necessarily bound up with time and memory as well.'[101] The narrative of time differs in each space. In Scartaglen we view the image of a young man and are left mourning the 'last of the fiddle masters of Sliabh Luachra,' signalling a lost culture. Death, or rather substitution after death, may be considered as part of a three-sided relationship with memory and performance.[102] The appearance of notated music on the monument at Glountane Cross invites the observer to engage with and play the music, and to continue the culture. In his study of how people perform remembrance and forgetting, Joseph Roach points to the process of surrogation, whereby communities seek to replace people who have died or left their places. Individuals who have inherited a tradition must make decisions in the way the tradition evolves and how their predecessors will be remembered in that process. Johnson identifies this as impinging on 'the approaches taken by the monument-maker, the artist, the museum curator, the historian or the geographer making sense of and translating the past to popular audiences.'[103] In selecting particular musical heroes, the narrative of the tradition is being distilled. As Whelan has pointed out, there is, perhaps, an inevitability that 'aspects of the past should be distilled into icons of identity that are rooted in the cultural landscape and which highlight the historical trajectory of cultural groups in a process that reinforces narratives of group identity.'[104]

Locating Monuments and Places of Memory

Monuments and public statuary concerning Irish music and musicians have contributed to the acknowledgement of the musicians' contribution to and skills in Irish traditional music, as well as emphasising the connection between music and particular spaces and places. Clusters of monuments also contribute to the concept of musical regions. The landscape of

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Historical Review 102, no. 5 (1997), 1386-1403. Susan A. Crane, "Writing the individual back into collective memory," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1997), 1372-1385.

[101] Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape*, 39.

[102] Joseph R Roach. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

[103] Johnson, Nuala. "Historical geographies in the present," in *Modern Historical Geographies*, ed. Brian Graham and Catherine Nash (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 2000), 251-273, 252

[104] Yvonne Whelan, *Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, Iconography and the Politics of Identity* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003), 15.

Sliabh Luachra is enriched with monuments to a number of local musicians. These may become part of heritage trails designed to attract tourists to the region, which in Sliabh Luachra has been developed to include concerts and festivals.[105] However, the signs and statues that often appear as visual markers for the tourist or visitor may in fact serve the local population in a much more significant way. Regions and regional identities are part of a commercial market that seeks to present unique products in a variety of industries including tourism and music. Regional music styles become imbued with a commercial as well as aesthetic value but Fintan Vallely argues that 'a regional style is of real meaning only to local identity, because only therein is it invested with the experience of its people's earlier lives.'[106] Drawing from tourism and heritage studies, it is also important to consider how, in the museumification of landscape, it is possible that the tangible and intangible cultures of a place become disconnected.[107]

The three monuments to O'Keeffe help foreground him in the narratives and geographies of music in the Sliabh Luachra region, centring its location on the rural locations of Scartaglen and Glountane. Whilst Commins highlights the practice in Sligo of commemorating lists of musicians in an area, contributing to the sense of the county as a place of 'abundant musicality,'[108] the practice in the Sliabh Luachra continues to focus on individuals. A statue dedicated to Johnny O'Leary was unveiled at Kenmare Place, Killarney on 28th April 2007 by then Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism John O'Donoghue.[109] The sculptor for the statue to O'Leary is Mike Kenny of Castleisland, who had previously created the statue of O'Keeffe in Scartaglen, and there are similarities in the approach taken to the design and execution of the monuments.

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[105] John Reidy, "Minister Deenihan to Launch 2014 Sliabh Luachra Music Trail," *Kerryman,* March 5, 2014, 30.

[106] Fintan Vallely, "The Migrant, the tourist, the voyeur, the leprechaun…" in *Blas: The Local Accent in Irish Traditional Music* edited by Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin and Therèse Smith (Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick / Dublin: Folk Music Society of Ireland, 1997), 107-115, 113.

[107] Georgina Lloyd and Im Sokrithy, "Cambodian Experiences of the Manifestation and Management of Intangible Heritage and Tourism at a World Heritage Site," in *Heritage and Tourism: Place, Encounter, Engagement* ed. Russell Staiff, Robyn Bushell and Steve Watson (London: Routledge, 2013), 228-250, 245.

[108] Commins, "Musical Statues," 62; see also Kearney "Towards," 252-255.

[109] Aidan O'Connor, "Statue Hails Legend of Trad Music," *Kerryman*, May 2, 2007, 9; John Reidy, "O'Leary Sculpture a Triumph for All Involved," *Kerryman*, May 2, 2007, 12.

There are a number of reasons behind the location of the statue at Kenmare Place. Killarney is a renowned tourist site and provides a larger audience for O'Leary's memory than his homeplace might. Not that O'Leary would be out of place here as, for many years, Johnny played a regular session in Jimmy O'Brien's pub, around the corner from where his statue now stands. The walls inside O'Brien's pub act as a museum of photographs to the many great musicians who performed there including Julia Clifford and Maurice O'Keeffe (1919–2017). The location of the statue also connects Killarney more closely with the hearth and concept of the Sliabh Luachra region in the context of music – there are already references to the poetic traditions including the *Spéirbhean* sculpture near the train station and the commemorative plaque in Muckross Abbey where the poets Aodhagáin Ó Rathaille, Geoffrey O'Donoghue (*c*.1620–1678), and Eoghan Rua Ó Suilleabháin are reputedly buried.[110] The presence of a Sliabh Luachra musical tradition adds another dimension to the Killarney product, which is driven by tourism. The connection between music and tourism may even be read in another memorial, to the uilleann piper James Gandsey (1767–1857) who is associated with Ross Castle and Aghadoe in Killarney.[111] He has been commemorated in the landscape at Muckross Abbey where he is reputed to have been buried, in a plaque erected by the Gandsey families of Minnesota, USA. Described in the inscription as 'Píobaire Cill Áirne / The Killarney Minstrel,' 'it was very much part of the routine for anyone visiting Killarney to hear Gandsey play as it was to view the lakes'[112] but Gandsey is now disconnected from the musical tradition now associated with the Sliabh Luachra region.[113]

Killarney can, arguably, provide an audience for Sliabh Luachra musicians in the nearby rural areas who are faced with rural depopulation and the closure of rural public houses. The representation of O'Leary in Killarney points to a way forward for a continuously evolving musical tradition and points to a shift from rural to urban-based practice. While the statue

[110] TJ Barrington, *Discovering Kerry; Its History, Heritage and Topography* (Dublin: Blackwater, 1976), 207; Richard Hayward, *In the Kingdom of Kerry* (Dundalk: W. Tempest Dundalgan Press, 1976), 59-60.

[111] Nicky MacAuliffe and Anne MacAuliffe, "Musicians of Sliabh Luachra" *Treoir* 17, no. 3 (1985): 4-5; Herlihy, *Footsteps*, 41.

[112] Breandáin Breathnach, "The Pipers of Kerry," *Éigse Cheol Tíre / Irish Folk Music Studies* 4 (1985): 5-29, 6

[113] The separation may be considered in a similar manner to Commins' identification of monuments to the harper Turlough O'Carolan (1670–1738) as representing an older tradition; in this instance Gandsey represents a largely pre-Famine solo uilleann piping tradition.

creates a link to a rural past, it is surrounded by images of modernity and commercialisation. During the first decade of the twenty-first century the statue faced posters for modern commercial Irish dance shows including *Riverdance* and *The Liam O'Connor Show*, which are present in the town during the summer.

Conclusion

> I see the Past, Present & Future existing all at once
>
> Before me.
>
> William Blake.

Sounds, monuments, and stories reflect aspects of musical traditions that are selected by various agents and inform the development of regional identities. A regional understanding of Irish traditional music must consider the role of the visual through the monuments and public statuary associated with music and the role of the visual in the development of memory, history, and the representation of regional space. The landscape remembers musicians of the past and assigns them status and, when examined together, monuments designate the cultural landscape as something of an outdoor museum. The location of monuments, performance spaces, and organisations reinforce the connection between music and place. These artistic representations are in many ways silent but are full of music. They also act to validate and reinforce regional narratives and contribute to the local economy as many of the sculptors are local. Monuments reflect an interest in regional musical styles and narratives within Irish traditional music and the potential to connect with community development and tourism.

With an increased awareness in regional traditions and admiration for local musicians in various parts of Ireland, there has been a proliferation in the development of monuments related to Irish traditional music in the Irish landscape. These monuments become part of and help construct a built heritage that communicates the narrative of culture and region. Monuments become part of the telling of a story, assertion of identity, and development of collective memory. They exist within a wider social context and their meanings are intertwined with the performance of music and the use of space. Through the construction of monuments and the creation of located sites of meaning within the tradition, the relationship between memory, power, and identity as signified through these tangible

entities, particularly in relation to competing national, regional, and local narratives, is reinforced. These monuments cultivate a sense of shared heritage, contribute to the assertion of a regional identity associated with distinctive musical traditions, and represent resistance to cultural homogenisation.

The monuments and public statuary located in the Sliabh Luachra region serve to locate the tradition and tell its story. The Sliabh Luachra region is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations. It is constructed through the diffusion of stories and music, which provide contexts and motivation for some of the social networks and the creation of particular spaces within the region. The Sliabh Luachra region is dependent on stories, legends, and tradition in maintaining a sense of identity during periods when the performance of regional culture is less prominent, sometimes subsumed within a larger, global, and commercial Irish traditional music culture. The identity of the Sliabh Luachra region is strengthened by the interest shown in local and regional cultures in response to the globalisation of Irish traditional music and the reference to and performance by groups outside of the region of aspects of the regions musical culture. The Sliabh Luachra region has been the location of an important poetic tradition and a way of life but it is through the distinctive musical traditions of the area that it now attracts attention. Though Sliabh Luachra has become deterritorialised to some extent, the celebration of people and places through the construction of monuments and public statuary allows for the creation of a sense of pilgrimage. As the distinctive musical style and repertoire of the region becomes diffused and diluted, the identity of the Sliabh Luachra musical region is maintained through stories, the landscape and social networks, as well as the institutionalisation of that identity.

The image of Pádraig O'Keeffe has become iconic, his name symbolic, and the sound of his music a point of reference for the Sliabh Luachra musical region. The monuments to Pádraig O'Keeffe in Sliabh Luachra contribute to the affirmation of local identity and regional style, but whilst the sites of memory celebrate O'Keeffe as an iconic element or heroic figure in the narrative of the Sliabh Luachra region, he is just one individual of the Sliabh Luachra soundscape.

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