



**Locating One's Place: A Traditional Musician 'Of  
Dublin'**

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## Abstract

This dissertation critically analyses the history of Irish traditional music in Dublin using research and performance. It endeavours to use global theoretical models, particularly the concepts of ‘scene’ and ‘subculture’ to assess the role of Dublin within the wider context of Irish traditional music and address the dearth of literature on the significant local scene that existed and evolved from the 1950s to the present day. Building upon Slobin’s (1992) concept of micromusics and using the paradigms of ethnomusicology (Myres, 1992), this study assesses Irish traditional music in Dublin through the integration of performance practice and academic research. It also aims to provide a history based on musical style, performers, institutions and familial and geographical factors.

Through the use of comparative performance studies, analysis of localities, socio-cultural, institutional, familial influences and field research. This project will provide new insights into Irish musical traditions and bring new perspectives to our understanding of the traditions globally. This research will address oral, literal, social, geographical and historical aspects of the development, maintenance and evolution of Irish traditional music in Dublin.

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## 1 Introduction

As a performer of Irish traditional music from Dublin, I draw upon my musical experiences within a community of practitioners located primarily in Dublin but connected with a wider network through which I attempt to locate my position as a musician ‘of Dublin’. Through reflective practice focusing on my own flute playing and critical engagement with influences on my practice, this research provides new insights and theoretical consideration of Irish traditional music in Dublin.

### Dublin as Place

‘As the capital of Ireland, with more than a million living in its environs, many of whom are from all parts of the island and abroad, it would be expected that this city should represent much in traditional music.’ (Vallely, 2011, p.223).

Despite Vallely’s assertion, a critical engagement with Irish traditional music in Dublin is limited in academic scholarship (Kearney, 2007). The city, as the capital of the country and with many Irish traditional musicians living in its environs has been an overlooked location of Irish traditional music. Recent publications and research in the field have focused on redressing a lack of balance in the older perceptions of regional style for example the work of Daithí Kearney in his paper *Beyond location: The relevance of regional identities in Irish traditional music* (2012) and Geraldine Cotters book *Transforming Tradition: Irish Traditional Music in Ennis, Co. Clare 1950-1980* (2016).

This dissertation and practice-based research outputs critically analyse the style and impact of performers who have called Dublin home and the influence these musicians have had on the creation and continuation of a scene in Dublin. I will examine Irish traditional

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music in Dublin in terms of performance practice research, through the parameters of ‘scene’ while drawing on the discipline of ethnomusicology. I endeavour to locate the place of Dublin within the Irish traditional music landscape and the differences that may be found between Dublin and the rest of the country and where, if any similarities may exist.

I draw on comparative performance studies of, for example, Tommie Potts, to illustrate the connecting features including ornamentation, phrasing, style and structure that will endeavour to highlight the link provided by the geographical and social aspects associated with Dublin. I chose to undertake this critical evaluation of the Dublin music scene in regards to Irish traditional music focusing mainly but not solely, on the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s as, I believe that it has been undervalued as a location of Irish traditional music both in academia and in the wider context among many Irish traditional musicians. I have also used this study to re-evaluate and improve my own performance practice through research and preparation for recitals and lecture recitals which have been enlightening in regards to the rich tradition which exists in Dublin and in coming to know my own musical style. Known by a variety of terms, practice-led research is a conceptual framework that allows a researcher to incorporate their creative practice, creative methods and creative output into the research design and as a part of the research output.

Smith and Dean note that practice-led research arises out of two related ideas. Firstly, ‘that creative work in itself is a form of research and generates detectable research outputs’ (2009, p.5). The product of creative work itself contributes to the outcomes of a research process and contributes to the answer of a research question. Secondly, ‘creative practice -the training and specialised knowledge that creative practitioners have and the processes they engage in when they are making art can lead to specialised research insights which can then be generalised and written up as research’ (2009, p.5).



## **Aims of Dissertation**

This minor dissertation draws on the methodologies of ethnomusicology and performance practice research. It provides a new ethnography of Irish traditional music in Dublin, which remains under-represented in scholarship to date. This dissertation examines my positionality within a scene in Irish traditional music in Dublin and other environs. Other important research areas include comparative performance studies and the use of global theoretical models along with assessment of style and influence of key players.

## **Objectives of Research**

The objectives of this research are to provide an ethnography of my musical journey in the Dublin music scene over the past 25 years. This minor thesis serves primarily to underpin my praxial and experiential knowledge with added research into the Dublin music scene. This written component adds another layer to my performance-based research, allowing for contextualisation, documentation and other modes of presentation. Using the parameters involved within the comparative models relating to ‘scene’ or sub-culture and the influence of individual musicians, I will locate the musical space which Irish traditional music in Dublin inhabits in the larger soundscape of Irish traditional music while maintaining a focus on my own artistic practice. The main processes involved in this practice-based research is the use of reflective diaries and through extensive preparation for the performances which were designed to improve my performance practice and versatility as a flute player.

## **Research questions**

1. How has my musical style, artistic process and repertoire been impacted by my personal musical interactions and participation in a unique ‘Dublin’ music scene?
2. Who are the identifiable influential stylists on Dublin music traditions and how their music impacted on the tradition?

3. What, if any repertoire is indicative of the Dublin scene?
4. What socio-cultural events impacted the tradition in Dublin and how?

### **Research Format**

This Masters is practice-based in its orientation (MA by research that combines performance practice with historical research informed and framed by ethnomusicology). There are four performance elements in addition to this minor accompanying dissertation. The performance elements have consisted of two recitals and two lecture recitals. The performance elements in the recitals and lecture recitals comprise my major creative practice-based research. The preparation for these performance elements has been achieved through an intensive schedule of planned work with accompanying reflective diary.

### **Recital 1: Assessment of current personal knowledge<sup>1</sup>**

This recital focused on my existing personal style and my understanding of the state of the art within the parameters of Irish traditional music in Dublin at the time. It consisted of a reflective programme in which I demonstrated ten sets of music that are associated with Irish traditional musicians and groups from or associated with a Dublin-based Irish traditional music scene. The use of a reflective diary encouraged practice which was solo flute focused, with particular emphasis on the aspects of my technique which I felt needed most attention. This recital also gave me the opportunity to communicate my personal experience of Irish traditional music up to that point. Further analysis of all artistic practice elements is presented in chapter 4.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1 for programme notes.

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## **Lecture Recital 1: Tommie Potts<sup>2</sup>**

This lecture recital was based around a study of the iconic Dublin fiddle player Tommie Potts. I found this lecture recital to be extremely challenging in scope and engagement. Potts was one of the most idiosyncratic stylists of his, or any generation, and as such the challenges within his music were many and varied. His music was a source of inspiration for my developing performance practice as I examined his role within the context of Irish traditional music in Dublin. An example of this was the case study I used, namely his version of the well-known tune 'Banish Misfortune'. The Potts version used various time signatures along with other musical structures of which I had little previous exposure. The challenges posed by this lecture recital developed my skills in transcribing tunes, music theory, technique in relation to Irish traditional music itself and the idea of tradition, its parameters and indeed who sets them.

## **Recital 2: Exploration of ensemble performance<sup>3</sup>**

During the research and rehearsal in relation to this recital I committed to draw on past experience in relation to my formative years both as a student and as a teacher in Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann. The challenges I engaged with during my preparation for this recital were multi-faceted. Collaborating with three other musicians, I expanded my scope of knowledge in relation to organisation and arrangement. I also attained a different outlook on interpersonal skills as an arranger, which I had also developed through my professional practice. This recital focused on the interpretation of Irish traditional music, including some recent compositions, in the context of a small ensemble. I also explored the use of modern parameters within the arrangements I presented by using electronic elements such as keyboards in a structured framework to express the idea of modernity which I believe strives to encapsulate the processes involved in being an Irish traditional musician from Dublin.

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix 2 for powerpoint presentation.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3 for programme notes.

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## **Lecture Recital 2: Mapping of stylistic influences and sources of musical inspiration<sup>4</sup>**

In this lecture recital I examined the stylists who influenced my performance practice in relation to technique, style and artistic performance. This included focused sections on two soloists from outside Dublin, namely Micheal McGoldrick and Conal Ó Gráda, and two bands who I consider to be of-Dublin: The Bothy Band and Kíla. I explored flute technique in relation to breath control and ornamentation in regards to the soloists and arrangement and repertoire among other aspects in relation to the bands. This lecture recital was informative in terms of reflectivity in terms of both my performance practice and how I had been influenced to up to this point.

### **Chapter Outline**

In chapter 1 of this thesis I have given an introduction to the work I have undertaken. I have also stated the research format, the aims of the dissertation and my research objectives and questions. I also summarise the practical aspects of my research which were two recitals and two lecture recitals. In the second chapter I discuss the theoretical aspects of scene, ‘Communities of Musical Practice’, style, identity formation and context specific learning. Chapter 3 focuses on Dublin: the concept of place is examined using examples from Geraldine Cotter to emphasise some of the viewpoints associated with Irish traditional music in Ennis and how they may be related to Irish traditional music in Dublin. I also examine selected Dublin musical figures such as Leo Rowsome to gauge the influence of these figures in the context of locating Dublin in the broader Irish traditional music landscape. This chapter also deals with the formation and continuation of a scene and how this may be related to Irish traditional music in the capital, including examples of institutional and familial aspects, as well as geographic influences on Irish traditional music in Dublin. In chapter 4 I address my artistic development and the effects the outcomes of the performance based elements in this

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 4 for powerpoint.

study. I summarise the learnings taken from the two lecture recitals and the two recitals that I undertook. I describe the process and output involved in these practical elements including challenges and difficulties involved and the development of aspects of style and technique on my performance practice. Chapter 5 consists of a summary and conclusions on the work undertaken. This includes an insight into the new knowledge which I have acquired and developed during this period. I also address the limitations involved in the processes which I undertook and the possibility of further research in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin.

## Chapter 2

### **Irish Traditional Music in Dublin: Theoretical perspectives**

Dublin is a complex, cosmopolitan place that includes Irish traditional music in a variety of spaces and contexts that includes networks of performers, educators and advocates of Irish traditional music. The concepts of shared ownership, and social and geographical influences among others are examined. ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ are addressed through concepts such as interaction within group settings and the ideas of structured and unstructured learning.

#### **2.1 Scene**

In my experience, Dublin has a rich Irish traditional music scene in which I have learned, experienced and performed. Kotarba et al define a scene as:

The scene is an inclusive concept that involves everyone related to a cultural phenomenon (e.g., artists, audiences, management, vendors, and critics); the ecological location of the phenomenon (e.g., districts, clubs, recording studios, and rehearsal rooms); and the products of this interaction (e.g., advertisements, concerts, recordings, and critical reviews). (Kotarba, Fackler, Nowotny, 2009, p. 311)

Other scholars present a view that a scene is based primarily on geosocial location (Peterson and Bennett, 2004). They maintain that all factors which facilitate a scene are played out against the backdrop of a geosocial location. This imparts a feeling of belonging and a capacity to differentiate themselves from other localities. ‘Of particular relevance to our research is Peterson and Bennett’s focus on the way participants use local music scenes to differentiate themselves from others (Peterson and Bennett, 2004)’. (Kotarba, Fackler, Nowotny, 2009, pp. 310–333)

I have examined formal and non-formal learning parameters around the Irish traditional music ‘scene’ in Dublin and how they, among other factors influence the formation

and sustainability of a 'scene'. As a practitioner of Irish traditional music in Dublin it is my view that these concepts among others are part of the fabric of the scene that has developed in Dublin. The ideas of shared ownership and a commitment to the shared 'space' of Irish traditional music in Dublin comes from our shared experiential endeavours in certain physical places but, also the possibility of the concept of a discernible shared 'Dublin psyche'. This is an extension of the idea of an 'Irish psyche' which is presented by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (1994) and further explored by John O' Flynn in *The Irishness of Irish Music* (O' Flynn, 2009).

Much as Ó Súilleabháin employs the term 'psyche' in the case of individual musicians, and much as these may be linked by the idea of crossing musical and/or cultural boundaries, it is never stated what exactly is meant by 'Irish psyche' in its specific relation to Irish traditional music. However, we get some sense of Ó Súilleabháin's musical-culture mediation when he employs the concepts of hybridity and syncretism. These terms are also explored in the analysis of McCarthy (1999) and McLaughlin (1999), and in many respects present attractive, alternative ways of interpreting Irish musical identities, particularly when compared with the rigid ideologies and essentialist positions of conservative music interest groups. Yet, as McLaughlin (1999, pg, 34) argues, a key question regarding hybridity and, by extension, syncretism is how it is actually heard, and this returns me to the argument that the theories of Irishness and music need to be examined in the light of actual musical practices (pp. 16-17).

I also consider the idea of psyche in relation to Dublin. Its use must be determined by the attitude of Dublin people and how it affects location in the tradition of Ireland. This may be regarded as different to Ó Súilleabháin's explanation of psyche as I refer to a mindset inherent in many Dublin musicians and not just the crossing of boundaries as suggested by him. The people of Dublin may continue to consider themselves as 'different' because of their self-perceived status, this status may also show itself in other parts of socio-graphical life, however further research is necessary on this topic. This sense of otherness within the idiom of Irish traditional music also explores a readily held view among the practitioners of the tradition in Dublin that they are, in fact a sub-culture or scene within the larger context of global Irish traditional music. In an email correspondence to me the Dublin fiddle player

Daire Bracken ruminates on the factors associated with being an Irish traditional musician from

Dublin and some of his influences, he states:

‘Where are you from?’

‘Dublin’.

‘Really?! Ah, but where are your parents from?’

‘Dublin’.

‘Really?!?!’

That was a quite common conversation for me when people would hear me playing sessions growing up. People were also generally perturbed trying to figure out my style. And rightly so. I was very lucky to have CCE nearby, some musicians in other years at school and siblings also learning music but other than that I wasn’t steeped in music around me, it was tapes. Yes, tapes, telling my age. The first 3 fiddle tapes I purchased with my savings were Michael Coleman, Seán McGuire and Tommy Peoples. Not a bad selection for unguided pot shots in a music shop. My peers were listening to the Stone Roses, Oasis and the likes listening to solo fiddle playing was a fairly lone venture, something you didn’t bring up in conversation at school!’ (Personal correspondence)

The unconscious learnings and sense of belonging in a group may lead to the creation of a scene where a collective mindset takes hold, ‘This brief foray into the internal life of a single subculture shows just how complex and intense even small-scale community musical life can be...’ (Slobin, 1992, p. 71). In this case practitioners of Irish traditional music in Dublin share similar geographic, social, and musical ties both consciously and unconsciously through the shared space that they inhabit. The search for balance between the conscious and unconscious may help us to examine the relevance of this theory in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin. The exploration of the Irish traditional music ‘scene’ in Dublin therefore is based on numerous factors. A sense of belonging must be prevalent if one is to be fully immersed in the processes of learning and in turn dissemination. These factors are surely the most relevant of all when we come to the best practice ideas involved in Irish traditional music.



## 2.2 Communities of Musical Practice

An interesting concept in regards to scene and dissemination of knowledge is the ‘Community of Musical Practice’ (Kenny, 2016). Wenger describes community as ‘a group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment’ (Wenger, 2002, p. 38). In this description Wenger could in theory be specifically referring to Irish traditional music and the social constructs involved in it. I will briefly explore the concept of ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ and its relationship to the scene of Irish traditional music in Dublin. To discuss ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ we must first understand that they are an extension of ‘Communities of Practice’ (CoP) coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998, 2006, 2002, 2000, 2009). A ‘Community of Practice’ is defined by Wenger (2015) as ‘groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly’. The idea of ‘learning by doing’ is the main focus of any ‘Community of Practice’. The three foundations of learning through participation are: mutual engagement (domain), joint enterprise (process/community) and shared repertoire (practice) (Wenger, 1998, pp. 70-3). These fundamentals may be applied to ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ as ‘sociocultural learning’ which takes place, particularly in Irish traditional music, in both non-formal and formal settings.

The ‘Community of Musical Practice’ has parameters that, at the very least, may act as guidelines to help our understanding of Irish traditional music in Dublin and its suitability to be described as a ‘scene’. Three important factors within a ‘Community of Musical Practice’ that have relevance to the formation and sustainability of a ‘scene’ are belonging, collective knowledge and identity. Ailbhe Kenny states;

Key characteristics of the Community of Musical Practice emerged as identity, collective knowledge and belonging. The presence of these characteristics was found to be crucial to the development practices within the cases studied and can be summarised as follows:

Identity: Collective as well as individual identities were formed and projected through interactions within the Community of Musical Practice. These were manifested

through musical, community and distinctive practices. Thus, the members within their respective communities held both identities congruently.

Collective knowledge: Members within the Community of Musical Practice built up knowledge through shared, collaborative experiences. Musical and community practices developed in an interrelated manner largely through a shared learning approach. As such, one type of practice could not be valued over the other where the experiences were socio-musical.

Belonging: A sense of belonging among the members permeated throughout the Communities of Musical Practice investigated. This was evidenced through socio-musical interactions where members' participation formed and sustained practices. Hence, belonging was central to membership within a Community of Musical Practice. (Kenny, 2014 p.129)

In my opinion these three may be defining features of both a 'scene' and a 'Community of Musical Practice' and their importance should be carefully considered. Some of the questions that arise in the search for validation of a 'scene' in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin have their roots in a larger context. These include the historical ideas of what is considered tradition and if these 'traditions' are in fact invented. The larger question of nationhood is a fine example.

### **2.3 Identity formation**

Identity narratives are often dominated by the concept of nationhood. Irish traditional music is often dominated by associations with an Irish national identity which is, in turn, dominated by a 'myth of the west', anti-colonial and Irish-language orientated ideology. Dublin has had a difficult relationship with aspects of identity due in part to its built heritage which serve as a reminder of previous British-ness inside the Pale. These aspects have often been used both consciously and sub-consciously to frame Irish traditional music in Dublin as in some way less authentic, and in the eyes of some of the wider Irish traditional music community less valid.

Geraldine Cotter (2016) describes location and mindset in regard to what people from the rural areas of Clare thought of the 'townies' from Ennis, and this passage may as easily be applied to Dublin in comparison with rural areas throughout the country and the inherent

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attitudes towards authenticity in regards to Dublin by some people generally and practitioners of Irish traditional music particularly. She notes:

Growing up in the town, I consciously drew on my rural roots because I wanted to be considered authentic. Consequently my sense of having an Ennis identity did not emerge until my adult life. During the 1970s, many traditional musicians in Ennis... identified themselves by their rural roots rather than those of Ennis, where they lived. However, in the course of time their Ennisness, their urban identity, became equally important and one which was understood to be as valid as a rural one. This lived reality illustrates the complex nature of belonging and being perceived to be legitimately, within a tradition: something so central to the belief system in Irish traditional music which still persists today. (Cotter, 2016, p.6)

National identity is largely viewed through the prism of history, but these views are not always as they seem. If we take the idea of Scottish nationalism as an example, much of the lauded 'ancient' traditions of Scottish culture including the provenance of the ubiquitous kilt may be called in to question and may be viewed as invented tradition. As Hobsbawm notes, 'Indeed, the whole concept of a distinct Highland culture and tradition is a retrospective invention. Before the later years of the seventeenth century, the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were simply the overflow of Ireland.' (Hobsbawm, 2000, p.15). The basis of these actions lie in the idea of improvement of nationhood, and the direct continuity with the past gives the illusion of instant authenticity. In some cases, historical continuity cannot be determined and therefore must be invented. The invention of the Scottish Highland tradition is a fine example of the promotion of traditional ideas that simply did not exist.

This example helps us to begin to question the veracity of the idea of what 'tradition' is, particularly in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin. Where and how did it start in Dublin and, why is it so underrepresented when other regions have been researched so thoroughly? There are many examples of historical written accounts of the rural traditions of Irish traditional music, but seemingly few on Irish traditional music in Dublin. Due to centralisation of British rule, and the Act of Union in 1800, the musical influences of London began to wane in Dublin. With the removal of many of the British social elite back to London,

Dublin became less of a cultural hub of western art music. Yet the elite who remained continued to strive to maintain its cultural relevance in regards to classical music. Dublin was a centre for art music with Handel premiering his Messiah opera in 1742, and a strong tradition of cathedral choirs and orchestras represented in the capital.

The Act of Union in 1800 fundamentally moved the broader culture of the entrenched and their representatives to London, leaving only the administration of Dublin castle itself in the capital what happened to the vigorous eighteenth century musical culture of the capital and the big houses as a result? Elite musical culture appears to have carried on in Dublin with the same vigour of the Georgian period until the 1820s (Dowling, 2014, p. 89).

While Dowling may paint a picture of a continuing strength in regards to music of the elite, it was only later in the 1800s that a revival of any sort in classical music took place. These factors had a lasting impact on Irish traditional music in Dublin, as it was only in a few other areas of the country, such as Youghal, Dundalk and other garrison towns that the British cultural force was felt so strongly as in the capital. This is not to disregard entirely any positive influences that colonial rule had on formal and structured learning in regards to Irish traditional music in Dublin. Leo Rowsome (1903-1970) who is considered one of the most influential performers, and teachers of the uilleann pipes in the Dublin tradition taught within the formal settings of the Dublin College of Music, although this may have been in relation to demand for tuition and compensation for the teacher more than colonial influence. Rowsome was the third generation of an unbroken line of pipers at this time. His influence may still be seen and heard through his own family and indeed, many of the most well-known Dublin pipers who learned under his tutelage, and who continue to transmit his style and repertoire which I briefly considered in the practice based components of my studies.

## 2.4 Context-specific Learning

Lave and Wenger describe ‘learning as situated’ and it being ‘context specific’ which may lead us to the belief that all musical learning is context-bound. The framework involved in

authentic learning or ‘situational action’ as described by Vygotsky (1962; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978, 1993) and Bruner (1990, 1996) encourages the idea of ‘apprenticeship’ and ‘peer to peer’ learning within a ‘zone of proximal development’.

The zone of proximal development is a concept used in education. Often referred to as the ZPD, it is a way of talking about difference between what a learner can currently do and what he or she cannot do. This zone can be viewed as a bridge between the skills a learner has at the moment and the skills he or she will need to have at a specific time in the future. The ZPD is the gap between current skills and the ones the learner wants to have; the larger the gap, the more skills that must be obtained before the gap is closed. (Flair, 2013, p.1).

Although the ‘zone of proximal development’ is contextualised in the field of education we may view its incorporation in a ‘Community of Musical Practice’. The pragmatic elements of the ZPD and other frameworks such as ‘scaffolding’ suit the premise of group learning within Irish traditional music in Dublin. Repertoire, style and other factors may become invented traditions when transmission is peer led. Context bound group learning which takes place in a ‘scene’ develop new traditions as practitioners beat a new path to the knowledge they seek.

*Where* and *how* learning in music takes place logically shifts the focus from formal learning environs to other spaces the practitioner inhabits, for example, at home and in the case of Irish traditional music in informal social environments such as pubs and community hubs of all guises including familial homes. The increased focus on ‘local’ or ‘community music’ ties in to the *where* and *how* concepts previously written about (Bennett, 2000; Cohen, 1991; Cottrell, 2004; Duffy, 2000; Finnegan, 2007; Higgins, 2007, 2012; Shuker, 2008; Slobin, 1993; Veblen, 2004; Veblen, Messenger, Silverman, & Elliott, 2013).

Jerome Bruner (1990, 1996) eloquently explains that ‘reality is made, not found’, therefore the participants within a ‘Community of Musical Practice’ are the architects of their own learning groups in which collective knowledge is then used for the advancement of more peripheral figures, an example of which are apprentices within a ‘Community of Musical Practice’. As an associated perspective to the Irish situated theory of ZPD, we may look to the

rise of popularity of Irish traditional music in Japan and the success of Japanese ceili bands at all-Ireland fleadhanna. These practitioners of Irish traditional music were not geographically bound to the 'Ireland' 'Zone of Proximal Development' nor were most of them connected through familial lineage to Ireland. They did however exhibit some of the same traits as other players in the Irish idiom. In her research Sean Williams states:

there was an active sense of community on the part of the Japanese participants, and a deliberate engagement with "Irishness" on many levels, from using their first names with each other (and me), to physically performing the mannerisms of Irish musicians in seisiains (Williams, 2016, p. 102).

In reality, these musicians were creating a 'scene' of their own while also looking to the global elements of Irish traditional music in a bid for what they perceived or understood to be authentic.

Bruner also references the idea of 'scaffolding' where more senior members of the peer group provide the framework necessary for the advancement of the more peripheral figures.

So back to the innocent but fundamental question: how best to conceive of a subcommunity that specializes in learning among its members? One obvious answer would be that it is a place where, among other things, learners help each other learn, each according to her abilities. And this, of course, need not exclude the presence of somebody serving in the role of teacher. It simply implies that the teacher does not play that role as a monopoly, that learners "scaffold" for each other as well. (Bruner, 1996, p.21)

The concepts of 'emulation' and 'running commentary' where a less formal concept of dissemination and leadership may occur are prevalent in the less structured aspects of session participation.

Consider the more "mutual" community for a moment. Typically, it models ways of doing or knowing, provides opportunity for emulation, offers running commentary, provides "scaffolding" for novices, and even provides a good context for teaching deliberately. It even makes possible that form of job-related division of labour one finds in effective work groups: some serving pro tem as "memories" for the others, or as record keepers of "where things have got up to now" or as encouragers or cautioners. The point is for those the group to help each other get the lay of the land and the hang of the job. (Bruner, 1996, p.21).

While Bruner contextualises this theory using the example of a workplace environment, the concepts involved fit exceedingly well within the framework of Irish traditional music and how informal and formal learning takes place within a group structure.

There are many other concepts at play including Higgins (2012, p. 7) who describes ‘cultural democracy’ and accessibility as the most important elements. There are also more holistic approaches, for example, Veblen and Olsson who describe ‘community music’ as ‘active participation in music-making of all kinds’ (Veblen and Olsson, 2002, p. 730). Ruth Finnegan makes a case for both formal and informal music practices being important to the various ‘musical worlds’ that are inhabited. Through her case study in Milton Keynes (2007), she observed that schools act as music hubs and centres of learning. She also notes that ‘they are themselves organised centres of music - a real part of local musical practice’ which encompass the ideas of ‘Community of Musical Practice’ (2007, p. 7).

The terminology involved in the description of ‘Community of Musical Practice’ is important. Taking John Blacking’s view that musical processes produce music outputs, the focus may be on the music produced or the processes involved within the paradigm of a ‘Community of Musical Practice’. In relation to the concept of ‘scene’ within the broad framework of Irish traditional music in Dublin, both ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ and ‘Communities of Music Practice’ may be applicable. I will use the term ‘Communities of Musical Practice’ in relation to my own research as the processes determine the output or product, which in turn relates to the doing by learning within the community. Our relationship to these ‘sonic products’ (Elliott, 2007, p. 85) through the spectrum of our environs is the very essence of a ‘Community of Musical Practice’. Elliott explains ‘music involves sonic products, but these are created, maintained, adapted, reinterpreted, and appropriated by people in and across musical communities (Elliott, 2007, p. 85). It is important to note the differing attitudes towards transmission in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin, particularly the thoughts of influential Dublin figures such as Brendán Breathnach who is of the opinion that

Irish traditional music should only be taught through aural learning processes and not more formal teaching practices. He states:

Here it is necessary to repeat that traditional music can be learned properly only by ear, which is the way a child learns his first language. A teacher who is not himself a traditional player should go no further than demonstrating to his class the fingering for the scale. Attempting to teach airs and tunes by playing them from a printed text on the piano or other instruments, if persisted in over a period, could quite easily result in unfitting the children ever to play music in an accepted traditional style. Group playing is another modern fashion to be avoided. (Breathnach, 1971, p. 128)

The parameters in which the transmission of Irish traditional music are viewed are vastly different to the views that were held by Breathnach and some of his peers in relation to the authenticity of learning and performing since this quote was made. Many Dublin musicians may still agree with his assertion in the above quote, which gives juxtaposition to the theory that the ‘scene’ in Dublin is rooted in idiosyncrasy or progressive cross-pollination of musics, and that Dublin, purely by being an urban hub is reflected only by modernism and not traditionalism.

## 2.5 Place

The concept of ‘place’ does not instantly engender a community. In her book Geraldine Cotter gives a succinct evaluation of Ennis in relation to Irish traditional music and the changes which occurred to transform it into what it conceived as a ‘mecca’ of Irish traditional music in a global context (2016). The parameters used may be applied to Dublin in numerous ways and in this example of how the place itself may represent many things and its relationship to the music and practitioners themselves. She states:

Ennis is at the centre of this book. However, it is a model of Ennis that is not simply town boundaries delineated in a fixed geographical space. Ennis is a hub. It is the relationship of the town to its hinterland; it is about the movement of people in and out of Ennis. At times it is the geographical town, other times it is the hinterland because of, for example, music sessions in Toonagh, a small area about six miles outside the town and key centre for the transmission of traditional music from the 1970s onwards, was directly connected in practice to Ennis (Cotter, 2016, p. 5).



These hold relevance to how I believe Dublin was viewed by other parts of the country.

The impact of external and virtual influences on the Irish traditional music scene is noteworthy. The example of online spaces and the formation or non-formation of communities are a prime example of the expanding world. This seems to progress the notion of a global community as opposed to a local one. Kibby notes online activity has created ‘a virtual place that facilitated the belief in a local music community’. Her study further explains that the notions of community online adhere to the same basic principles of the face-to-face communities, offline ‘communities exist through dialogue; through an exchange of past social history and current social interaction’ (Kibby, 2000, p. 91).

Engaging specifically with music education, Pamela Burnard succinctly states ‘practices are things we do and develop’ (2012a, p. 266). The concept of place and space are also vital to the creation and sustainability of a ‘Community of Musical Practice’. The view of de Certeau (1984, p. 117) is that a city street or ‘space’ is a place of practice only due to the walkers or practitioners who transform it from a ‘place’ to a ‘space’. Hence communities themselves create the ‘space’ regardless of decisions from policies and policy makers. The concept of ‘music as doing’ or as an action (Elliott, 1995; Elliott, 2005; Elliott & Silverman, 2014) makes it context-bound. Each individual within the community must deal with the ‘management of their identities’ (Davies, 2005, p. 560) while maintaining in my view possibly the most important aspect of ‘Community of Musical Practice’, learning by ‘doing’. In his 1998 book *Musicking* Christopher Small explores this theory of music not as a ‘thing’ but an ‘activity’ as a ritual that relates to construction of social identity. This may also reflect my own journey through academic studies and if in fact it is part of my own personal audition for a ‘Community of Musical Practice’.

It is important to analyse concept of ‘self’ and the concurrent nature of the scene and the individual. ‘The becoming of self is analytically noteworthy in our study because many of our respondents are faced with rapidly changing social, political, and cultural environments in

which they experience the self' (Fackler, 2009). One of the examples of elements that may help to comprise a scene, is the idea of 'self'. A scene may have a substantial influence on an individual who is searching for a sense of self. These factors may be political, social, or purely individual, but a sense of becoming 'self' is often referenced. 'One of the most important and common ways that people use the scene and the idioculture that pervades it is the experience of the becoming of self' (Fackler, 2009). Other factors which Fackler examines idioculture in relation to Latino music are changes in mobility, the survival of music within differing class structures through the development of multiple identities and the concept of shared genres which an individual or a group may gravitate towards to better fit their 'self-needs' today (Fackler, 2009).

When investigating what constitutes a 'scene' much of the same parameters apply to both 'Community of Musical Practice' and 'scene'. Although both concepts are similar it is apparent that a 'scene' is constituted of both the processes and the products of a 'Community of Musical Practice' and the focus is weighted equally towards output and processes among other factors. The importance of outside cultural influences are important including migration from within Ireland, while mutual engagement (domain), joint enterprise (process), and shared repertoire (practice) are all constituent factors in a 'scene' they do not define it in totality and therefore can only be determined as part thereof. Creativity is another fascinating factor in both the theory of 'Community of Musical Practice' and 'scene', and the role of an individual with very little practical community interaction involving the process of dissemination through collective learning must be examined.

## **Chapter 3 Dublin in Focus**

This chapter focuses on Dublin and how I locate it and myself within the broader idiom of Irish traditional music. I examine the idea of place and I focus on selected Dublin musical figures and the influence that they had on Irish traditional music in Dublin. The prism through which Irish traditional music in Dublin is viewed is also addressed in an attempt to better question the reason for its underrepresentation in the broader surroundings of Irish traditional music nationally. The formation and continuation of an Irish traditional music scene in Dublin are considered along with familial and institutional aspects and how these all contribute to locate Dublin as a scene within Irish traditional music.

### **3.1 Selected Dublin musical figures.**

There are a variety of performers who have had a significant influence on Irish traditional music in Dublin and whose influence may still be felt today. Stylists such as Seamus Ennis, Tommy Reck, Barney McKenna, Paddy Moloney and more latterly Mick O' Brien, Liam O Connor and Séan McKeon have all had an impact on the cultural soundscape of the capital. My criteria in choosing musical figures such as Tommie Potts was his unique style. This brought me to question was he representative of the Dublin music scene or an outlier who happened to hail from Dublin. I felt I needed to clarify these questions about this idiosyncratic fiddle player and explore the impact he has had on Irish traditional music and musicians in Dublin. I have looked to the legendary piper Leo Rowsome as his style and influence were engendered in a different and possibly more formal way.

The rise in popularity and influence of Tommie Potts (1912-1988) is a prime example of the change in the collective thinking in terms of Irish traditional music in Dublin. Potts is an example of a traditional musician from Dublin whose influences ranged from Paganini to Grapelli and back to Coleman. He is reflective of a definite type of Dublin traditional musician, perhaps more individualistic in character and style, who had access to outside

influences and embraced them wholeheartedly although, there are many examples of musicians located outside of the capital who also exhibited this type of curiosity such as Con Cassidy of Donegal and his version of ‘La Marseillaise’.

Potts and uilleann piper Leo Rowsome are good examples of the diversity within Irish traditional music in Dublin. They reflect the very character of the city itself. Both men were highly influential for different reasons and at different times, with Rowsome being widely lauded during his lifetime and Potts’ popularity and influence growing posthumously.

Martin Dowling writes that tradition is, in essence, something that changes depending on who is interpreting it. ‘Every culture changes, from day to day, and all its component elements change accordingly. However, some things may remain unchanged in themselves but, put in other hands, may have gained other connotations’ (Dowling, 2017, pp. 107–134). These two practitioners are an example of diversity of approach within a shared space. In essence, Dubliners have developed an identity that is based on a rejection of British identity and of rural identity, shaped by migration from the countryside and adaptation to urban living, removed from the mythologised ‘Irish’ places of the west but Irish by virtue of being the capital city with a proud Irish heritage. The Irishness of some Dubliners is played out through an intensified participation in Irish activities such as Irish language singing, Gaelic games and identification of traditional values generally.

The contextualisation of transmission and dissemination must be viewed through the formal and non-formal learning parameters practitioners have engaged with. Institutional learning in places such as Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann, Na Píobairí Uilleann and Cairde na Cruite have been prevalent in Dublin with many musicians including this author being exposed at first to the tradition through these organisations. In a more non-formal context the sessions which I attended afforded me the opportunity to engage with other musicians, many of whom were the same age cohort and had similar social backgrounds and in this context increased my knowledge of, for example repertoire, but also the idea of session etiquette and

also the feeling of belonging to a scene which was transmitted subconsciously at a young age but which changed to a more conscious assertion of our Dublin-ness in later years.

In regards to dissemination the collections of tunes from Breandán Breathnach (1912-1985) for example, were resources used during transmission in both the formal and non-formal learning environs in my experience. Depending on the learning environment the aspects of transmission vary. In my experience the use of notation and ABC notation in particular was the main vehicle for the transmission of tunes at a young age in more a formal context, for example in CCÉ. This was used as a gateway to initial learning and, it was not until I became older that I began to concentrate on learning by ear. This was encouraged once a certain standard was reached within the formal learning settings and was greatly enhanced with exposure to more non-formal settings in which tunes had to be learned as they were played or, recording the tunes and learning them from the recording for the following week or when another opportunity to perform them arose. This style of learning informed the outputs I achieved in my lecture recital on Tommie Potts. Using primarily aural techniques to learn the often complicated melodies and deviations involved in Potts' playing would not have been possible without the ability to learn from ear.

### **3.2 Formation and continuation**

Considering the relevance of the institutional, familial, geographical and socio-cultural elements of the tradition in the context of Dublin itself there are questions which must be addressed. How, why, and when did parts of the tradition come in to play in the broader context of traditional culture in the capital? The idea of inclusiveness is shown by all elements of these factors to observe the growth and acceptance in some quarters, of Irish traditional music in the urban areas of Dublin and its hinterland. I begin by discussing the role of the institutional based influences on the capital. Some of these institutions while initially national,

grew to become some of the most globally influential players in the world of Irish traditional music.

By 1958, many of the major national cultural organisations regarded by cultural commentators to have had a significant role in the survival and promotion of Irish traditional music, had located their headquarters in Dublin. Cairde na Cruite was founded in 1960, with particular focus on the harp, it is described as a national organisation but with a focus on Dublin (Lawlor, 2012). Irish music and in particular piping had survived and indeed flourished in the capital up to this point. The Dublin Pipers club was established in 1900 had its roots in the Irish literary revival and the Gaelic league and was a bastion of the wider tradition (Vallely, 2011). Overtly nationalistic in nature and having a high proportion of Irish volunteers and Gaelic propagandists counted as members, the most well-known of these being Eamonn Ceannt (1881-1916) who was a signatory of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic. The organisation suffered many setbacks and was in fact defunct from 1925-1936 wherein the music continued in the homes of musicians such as William Rowsome, John Brogan (1878-1928) and John Potts (1871-1956). With the dedication of individuals such as Nicholas Markey (one of the first piping tutors of the pipers club) James Ennis, and families including the Rowsome and Potts, a cohort of like-minded individuals ensured the tradition and identity of Irish traditional music in Dublin would be kept alive.

Late 1950s Dublin, and indeed Ireland, was quite conservative. (Brown, 2004). In 1958 for example Brendan Behan's 'The Borstal Boy' was banned by the censors. However with relative freedom in regards to Irish traditional music and, as institutions, themselves being inherently state approved, the Dublin music scene began to expand. Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann was founded in 1951. The period of the 1950s and 1960s were unfriendly to traditional music, and CCÉ dealt nationally and in Dublin with ideas of inferiority, dismissiveness, indifference and hostility that musicians who were un-affiliated were faced with on a daily basis. CCÉ offered focus, confidence and credibility to those involved in Irish

Traditional music (Vallely, 2011). Through classes and sessions (one of the most acclaimed being in the North Star Hotel on Amiens Street) they were instrumental in the preservation and growth of Irish traditional music in Dublin.

These institutions were vital to the growth and, as importantly, the sustainability of Irish traditional music in Dublin. Without the support of these institutions, the cohort of musicians who continued to play music throughout the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and even up to the early 1990s, would have found a far more challenging landscape to the one which they inhabited during this period. There are aspects of all formal institutions which musicians deem to be not authentic as there are always anti-establishment aspects of music, however the structures which were put in place by particularly CCÉ and Na Píobairí Uilleann in Dublin gave an authenticity not for the perception of practitioners of the tradition outside the capital, but to the larger majority of its inhabitants, and indeed the government and broadcasters of the time. Due to socio-economic factors during the 1980s mass emigration continued to be the norm throughout the country and the capital was no exception (Brown, 2004). In spite of this, a sub-culture of like-minded Dublin individuals continued to play, preserve and transmit the unique ethos of the traditions in the capital. Since the formation of Na Píobairí Uilleann in 1968 following the split with CCÉ, the strong tradition of uilleann piping had been upheld. With emphasis on the transmission of the old values and piping styles, a direct link had been forged that lasts up to the present, with teachers able to track the lineage of their musical education back to tutors such as Nicholas Markey (NPU website).

A fine example of the cross-pollination between formal and non-formal learning environs are the sessions which were run by the large institutions such as CCÉ. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s various Dublin clubs and venues such as the renowned pipers club venue on Thomas St, the Fiddlers Club, the North Star Hotel, the Traditional Club in Slattery's, the Sheiling Hotel and CCÉ headquarters in Monkstown became popular Irish traditional music venues. Spurred on by the global folk revival and encompassing rising bands such as Planxty,

the Chieftains and the Bothy Band, these venues helped to legitimise the already vibrant session scene in the capital. In my opinion bands like the Bothy Band were directly influenced by Dublin musicians particularly the likes of Tommie Potts whose compositions and processes around structure within the melodies can be heard on album recordings such as 'The Bothy Band 1974' (1974), 'Old Hag You Have Killed Me' (1976) and 'After Hours' (1978). My interpretation of their version of a tune such as 'Julia Delaney' on the 1974 or 'Red Album', demonstrates a direct link to Potts. The band play the tune as a solo piece as Potts did, and although the melody playing is more structured than the Potts interpretation of the tune, the arrangement around the melody is based around a new and dynamic style of Irish traditional music.

### **3.3 Familial, geographical and socio-cultural influences**

The families who came from certain areas and were influential in their locality were also part of a larger cohort that formed the Irish traditional music scene in Dublin. Through gentrification of areas of the north and south inner city of Dublin, families were moved to new dwellings in what would become the suburbs of Dublin. A prime example of this is the movement of many of the musicians from the south inner-city and in particular the Liberties to the south-side suburbs including the Walkinstown area. Many of the residents of the north inner-city were moved to areas such as Donnycarney, Artane and Beaumont areas of the northside. At this time, geographical and familial influences on the Dublin music scene were hugely important as areas like the Liberties in inner-city Dublin produced highly regarded musicians and collectors such as Seán and Tommie Potts, Tommy Reck, Brendán Breathnach and Mick O'Connor. Areas such as Fingal in north county Dublin and latterly Donnycarney on the northside of the city also produced high calibre musicians, most notably pipers such as Séamus Ennis. Ennis at this point had established himself as one of the finest exponents of his instrument and a master collector and field researcher. (Úí Ógáin, 2010). Donnycarney



produced musicians including Paddy Moloney and Barney McKenna who became global icons in the Irish traditional music scene. In 1963, Moloney founded the massively influential band The Chieftains, while in the same year McKenna was to co-found the iconic ballad group The Dubliners.

Throughout this period and into the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s certain new geographical areas began to emerge as hotbeds of Irish traditional music in Dublin. As social factors dictated the movement of families who were culture bearers of the Dublin tradition began to migrate from the inner-city of Dublin to its suburban areas. An excellent example of this is the northside of Dublin and its surrounding areas. This locality has produced numerous influential musicians across generations including Paddy Moloney (b.1938), Mick (b.1961) and John O'Brien (b.1973), Barney McKenna (1939-2012) and Liam O'Connor (b.1983) to name but a few. Special mention must also be given to the individuals and families who migrated to the capital from rural Ireland. Families including the Glackins (father from Donegal) and Kellys (father from Clare) contributed greatly to the shaping of the Dublin scene. To examine Irish traditional music in Dublin and include the song culture would be too wide-ranging to address thoroughly in this short thesis, however I will highlight a brief example of how the song culture particularly in the 1960s helped to expose a wider audience to the 'pure drop' of tune playing.

1963 was a hugely important year for Irish traditional music in a global context as both the Chieftains and the Dubliners were formed. These Dublin-based bands provided the catalyst for what is considered a boom in interest and appreciation of Irish traditional music globally. The Dubliners in particular made use of easily accessible songs to guide the listener towards the more traditional aspects of Barney McKenna's banjo style (Vallely, 2011). The Dubliners were formed during the heady days of the burgeoning Dublin session scene and, mainly in O'Donoghue's pub, which was a focal point for musicians wishing to express

themselves creatively in an environment other than CCÉ and the Dublin pipers club. In his book Fintan Vallely says of O'Donoghue's:

Among the other habitués were art student Joe Dolan who had played rhythm guitar with The Swingtime Aces showband. Architecture students and traditional music enthusiasts, Eamonn O'Doherty and Johnny Moynihan (who had recently re-established the University Folk Club) and agriculture student Ciarán Bourke were part of this milieu. Ronnie Drew and Bourke were to be the nucleus of the Dubliners and the other three later formed Sweeny's Men with Andy Irvine (Vallely, 1999, p. 275).

Another of these iconic bands was The Fureys. While drawing from their own culture as Travellers, using popular folk and self-composed songs and tunes, they gave searing live performances with Finbar Furey (b.1946) as the totemic figurehead. All of these factors helped to create more awareness in the general populace of Dublin in regards to Irish traditional music, and the importance of the song culture and 'ballad boom' perhaps made Irish traditional music more palatable to the untrained or under-exposed ears of the capitals dwellers. As I have discussed the institutional, geographical, familial and socio-cultural elements of Irish traditional music Dublin become intertwined and with no one element surviving without the others. The formal and non-formal aspects of the Irish traditional music scene in Dublin may be as important as each other in regards to the formation and sustainability of the 'scene', the practitioners and stylists may learn in differing ways (both formal and non-formal) however they all contribute to the overarching theme of belonging and togetherness which is a very practical part of a 'scene'. This includes personal and musical development among peers and a reliance on each other at different periods through the individual learning process, where 'scaffolding' occurs through peer to peer learning. This can be found as easily in a formal grúpa ceoil lesson (with the correct guidance) in a branch of CCÉ or at a non-formal session, once again however the type of guidance may vary but is inherently responsible for the growth of the scene.

In this section I focus on the concept of style and performers, both individual and in terms of ensemble playing and commercial bands. The formation and continuation of a scene

is based around the participants of that ‘scene’ and their interaction with the space which they inhabit. Although this is done through many formal and non-formal avenues as discussed previously, the main component of any scene is its practitioners. There are many types of stylists and practitioners within the area of Irish traditional music in Dublin, some were lauded for their influence during their lifetime, others have become more influential posthumously. An example of this is the attitude towards, for example, Leo Rowsome (1903-1970) and Tommie Potts (1912-1988). Both of these practitioners have heavily influenced Irish traditional music in the capital in distinct ways. Leo Rowsome, whose father William was, one of the main protagonists in keeping the uilleann piping tradition alive, was considered to be a monumental figure in the continuation of the tradition in the capital, through dissemination in a largely formal structure through the auspices of the Municipal College of in Dublin among other organisations and institutions. Indeed Rowsome’s influence on a multi-generational cohort of uilleann pipers may still be heard to this day through the playing of his own family members and many other pipers who either learned directly from him or through dissemination from the lineage of students which he taught. Many referred to Leo Rowsome as ‘the king of the pipers’ such was the esteem with which he was held during his lifetime.

Another influential figure is Séamus Ennis (1919-1982) who was highly regarded as an uilleann piper, singer, storyteller and archivist, who hailed from north county Dublin. Ennis is one of the most well-known figures in Irish traditional music yet in some ways seems less ‘of Dublin’ and more a global figure as he travelled extensively during his time working for RTÉ and the BBC. Ennis was considered by many to be the most accomplished uilleann piper of his generation, and was a firm favourite even in his latter years at concerts and festivals due his iconic status, stage presence and dexterity, some of which are traits which I would associate with, but are not confined to Dublin musicians. As this chapter highlights, there are many influential musicians who are located in the Dublin area who draw on the rich

history and narrative surrounding Irish traditional music in Dublin and whose influence may be felt both nationally and internationally as they contribute to the wider context of Irish traditional music. The influence of the cohort of musicians who developed and are still developing the ‘scene’ in Dublin continue to be important factors in Irish traditional music globally and in the next chapter I will look at two influential bands The Bothy Band and Kíla who I feel were structurally important to the continuation of the Irish traditional music ‘scene’ in Dublin.

## **Chapter 4 Professional and Artistic Development**

I faced many challenges relating to my own performance practice. These challenges were largely based around my own limitations as a practitioner of Irish traditional music prior to undertaking postgraduate studies. The learnings I took from the preparation and rehearsal for the recitals and lecture recitals initialised a period of intensive learning within my performance practice that I had never previously experienced. The progress I made through the educational aspects of theory and aural learnings during this process expanded my musical capacity while also encouraging me to concentrate on technical aspects of my flute playing such as learning complex tunes based around the playing of Tommie Potts. This led me to change certain aspects of my breathing style and work closely on trying to imitate things such as bow triplets with my tongue. The challenges I faced were varied and brought with them a new relationship in my approach to Irish traditional music. These included a focused re-evaluation of my performance practice. I realised at an early juncture that while my knowledge and previous experience in relation to Irish traditional music were relatively broad, a deeper understanding of the tradition as a whole and particularly performance-related history of Irish traditional music in Dublin was needed.

### **4.1 Recital 1 Assessment of current personal knowledge**

In the first of the four practical aspects of the postgraduate degree I performed a recital based around the current knowledge of Irish traditional music I had at that time. This consisted of rehearsal and arrangement with one accompanist. One of the taxing components of this recital was the choice of repertoire. I decided to showcase tunes which I had been performing regularly in a professional capacity such as ‘The Independence Hornpipe’, ‘Colonel Frazier’s’ mixed with newly composed Scottish pieces such as ‘The Sandpiper’. This gave me an opportunity to gauge how my performance practice was improving through the use of reflective diaries as I continued my studies. In a quote from my diary at the time I note that:

‘These tunes have to reflect my technique and style at the moment are the use of common tunes too basic?’ In the same diary entry I suggest that I’m ‘pushing too hard, let the instrument work for you’. These are some the concerns which were context-bound during my personal rehearsal periods. The skills I acquired in the lead up to this first recital were an excellent foundation for the other practical aspects involved in the study. In particular the gathering of information for the programme notes gave me an in-depth understanding of my repertoire that I had previously not attained.

#### **4.2 Lecture Recital 1 Tommie Potts**

Tommie Potts is one of the most idiosyncratic musicians in the idiom of Irish traditional music. This posed challenges I had not encountered musically. I had long been an admirer of Potts and had listened to his first commercial recording *The Liffey Banks* (1972) extensively. It was not however until I began to delve more deeply into his catalogue of interviews and recordings that I began to understand the influence that he has had on Irish traditional music in Dublin. Valley, ruminates on Coleman’s wide-ranging impact on Irish traditional music and how in comparison Tommie Potts’ influence is deep (Valley, 1999). While examining the influence of Potts on my performance practice I focused on some key elements to develop such as, repertoire, technique and musical theory which all drove my learnings to a higher level through the study of this musically challenging performer. Potts informed my consideration of style, composition and artistic practice using parameters set out by him in his use of pragmatic and well thought out variations or as Micháel Ó Súilleabháin would explain it in his in-depth study of Potts ‘deviations’. The most complex and intensive aspect of this lecture recital was the case study of his version of the well-known jig ‘Banish Misfortune’.

The processes involved in the case study of this piece led me to many areas of growth in my own performance practice. This was exemplified by the depth of structural breakdown which I engaged with in relation to this tune. Transcribing the tune was a challenge in itself as

I was exposed to a musical approach I had little experience of. His use of differing time signatures and the scope of structural breakdown in both phrasing and melody made this piece an intense, challenging and worthy learning experience. During this period while preparing for this lecture recital my reflective diaries suggest frustration with my inability to instantly ‘get’ the piece ‘Banish Misfortune’. I also suggest that I need to ‘Enjoy it again, find peace in it, don’t allow subconscious to be cynical’. A more in-depth view on this piece and others may be seen in appendix no. 2. The attitude Potts undertook towards his performance practice led me to question the attitudes of many practitioners within the tradition and the parameters involved in the idea of what is traditional. Potts mixed popular and classical music with Irish traditional music in a way that few if any had previously done. Two examples of this are in the other tunes which I used within the lecture recital. In his version of ‘My Love is in America’ Potts uses a phrase from the well-known Bob Merrill composed song ‘Mambo Italiano’. Using the opening line of this popular song he deviates from the melody in My Love is in America by inserting the ‘Hey Mambo’ theme into the tune. The use of what Ó Súilleabháin states is the ‘submerged round’ also showcase Potts’ idiosyncratic style. This along with his composition in regards to the traditional tune ‘The Butterfly’ where he uses Chopins’ *Funeral March* (Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor, Op.35: III. ‘Marche Funèbre’) pushed the boundaries of my own approach to performance and also led me question where Irish traditional music is located within the context of the wider gamut of the arts both nationally and internationally. Another entry to my reflective diary brought me to question the challenges I faced with this lecture recital and my own performance practice: ‘Do I push enough? Or too much? Should I be writing out all variations because at the moment it’s all spontaneous? Does this create too much risk?’ The figures for these pieces of music may also be viewed in appendix no. 2 of this dissertation. This lecture recital and the study of Potts, while intense and at times challenging, expanded my thought process in regards to the traditional arts, our location within a broader context of art forms and on practical level,

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raised my standards musically through improvement of technique, music theory, approach to performance, compositional and improvisational elements.

### **4.3 Recital 2 Exploration of Ensemble Performance**

The next recital I undertook was focused on ensemble performance and arrangement.

Drawing on my experience in various commercial and non-commercial ventures including teaching large groups with Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann, and my participation in commercial groups such as Electric Ceilí and The Dublin Rovers, I curated a performance programme consisting of flute, fiddle, keyboards and guitar. I once again reviewed my reflective diaries in an effort to minimise non-productive processes, one entry does suggest that I ‘listen more and talk less’ and during the period of rehearsal for this recital I gained valuable experience in inter-personal skills. I was however fortunate, as the calibre of the musicians who collaborated with me was to an extremely high standard. I had also been performing with these musicians for a long time period and the combination of these factors allowed me to express my personal attitude towards Irish traditional music in Dublin and the progressive, forward-thinking attitude that pervade some quarters of the tradition in the capital. The most important outcome of this recital was the level of inter-personal and collaborative experience which I gained during the rehearsal period. I used learnings from my previous lecture recital on Tommie Potts as a framework for the arts practice aspect, and my first recital in which repertoire was crucial to the success of the performance. The overall aesthetic of this performance was one of a progression in my own approach to the boundaries of performance practice in Irish traditional music using keyboards with synthesiser sounds and guitar. With these instruments generally playing repeated progressions and the addition of traditional fiddle I mixed the two aesthetic qualities I felt represented my musical journey the most. An example of this was the set in which I used a Schottische (‘The Sweet Flowers of Miltown’) a



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traditional reel ('The Hare's Paw') and self-composed reel ('Tully's Shuffle'). This was an example of mixing old with new and this is the aesthetic I am most drawn to.

#### **4.4 Lecture Recital 2 Mapping of stylistic influences and sources of musical inspiration**

The second of the two lecture recitals I undertook consisted of a detailed look at the stylistic influences and the sources that inspired my musical journey to date. I used soloists Micheal McGoldrick and Conal Ó Gráda as a point of reference to show influences from outside Dublin on my performance practice. I also use the bands Kíla and The Bothy Band to review my ideas surrounding ensemble performance and the influence which these bands (who I consider to be of-Dublin) had and continue to have on my repertoire, stylistic approach and attitude to Irish traditional music, and how these bands influenced many among my peer group in the capital. During the preparation for this lecture recital I focused on specific techniques in relation to the performers who I studied. In the soloist section of the lecture recital I focused on breath control in relation to Ó Gráda and ornamentation in regards to the flute playing of Micheal McGoldrick.<sup>5</sup> In my reflective diary I suggest: 'Do not at any point focus solely on breathing unless during stated "practice" time. Only at designated times. During these periods it is to be worked on continuously.' The specific focus on these techniques gave me scope to improve my approach in regards the rehearsal of some of the technical aspects of my performance practice. The use of reflective diaries in which I was able to review best practice processes and their outcomes was an invaluable resource to the improvement of my performance practice.

The band section of the lecture recital consisted of the influence these bands had on my peer group and I. These included repertoire and arrangement, and the perception of these bands within a modern traditional idiom. I have referenced the quote from fiddle player Daire

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix 4 for programme notes.

Bracken above which I believe encapsulates the influence of The Bothy Band. Kíla were influential in my own performance practice due to my fascination with the arrangements involved and the sometimes seemingly unstructured live performances they delivered. A more comprehensive view of this lecture recital may be viewed in appendix 4.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

The learnings I achieved during the period of study were multi-faceted in theoretical and practical aspects of my development. The new insights and knowledge which I gained in regards to Irish traditional music, specifically in Dublin are discussed, while the limitations of the study on such a wide-ranging topic and the challenges I faced in tackling an area of research which is so underrepresented are also written about. My views on further study of this research and my belief in the importance of greater representation for Irish traditional music in Dublin in academia are also addressed.

This consisted of a period of reading in relation a broad range of subjects. It began with a new learning phase in which I engaged with academic literature, drawing particularly on Slobin's model in relation to micro-musics scene and sub-culture. This period of study was a formidable challenge as my knowledge was initially sparse on these subjects, however through focused engagement I began to inform myself of the parameters involved in ethnomusicology and the idea of the multi-disciplinary aspects of it.

The parameters involved in being a modern proponent of Irish traditional music are now different from the ones that defined my earlier learnings and my level of knowledge. My academic knowledge has increased greatly in the field of the tradition. Two questions which arose and to which I gave much critical reflection are: 1. Did my study exclude me from my previous 'Community of Musical Practice' in Dublin? And 2. does it change my place within the original 'Community of Musical Practice' of which I was a part? Globally, people have taken it upon themselves to become as knowledgeable as many Irish traditional musicians who grew up and live in Ireland, and this may be viewed through the rise in postgraduate qualifications which have been awarded in relatively recent times, although once again the scope of my field research in regards to this topic and others was limited due to the challenges

I faced in the practical elements of my study. The practical aspects improved my knowledge of many facets of my performance practice and the practical knowledge I gained has benefited me greatly. This leads me to the conclusion that the answer is less defined and more nuanced than a simple yes or no. I would conclude that as most traditional musicians engage with the tradition on general learning basis through the idea of learning tune names and the origins of where tunes originate it has become natural for them to become academic researchers. I have attained a new outlook on both performance practice and theoretical engagement in relation to Irish traditional music, and more specifically Irish traditional music in Dublin. During the recitals the focus on repertoire and the research involved to enhanced and reignited my interest in the narrative surrounding the tunes I perform and the stories and folklore in relation to them. An example from my first recital was the tune ‘The Haunted House’. This tune was composed by Vincent Broderick and the narrative that surrounds the tune, whether in fact true or not is fascinating. Other tunes such as the slow air ‘Lament for Staker Wallace’ holds a different attraction with numerous stories surrounding the piece which gave me pause to examine my relationship to Irish traditional music and what I believed I knew. The other learnings I took from the recitals were an appreciation once more of managing time in relation to rehearsals and the inter-personal skills involved when relating to other musicians in an ensemble setting. I found the lecture recital on Tommie Potts to be extremely challenging and although I had listened extensively to his commercial recordings, my research into the field-recordings and particularly the one-on-one recordings that were made opened me up to an even more complex and idiosyncratic aspect of this Dublin stylist. A particularly challenging part of this lecture recital was the in-depth study of his versions of tunes such ‘Banish Misfortune’ in which my musical theory was improved. His music and my further study of it gave me a definitive sense of improvement as I used my reflective diaries in all cases to gauge my improvement in all aspects of my performance practice. Although there many technical notes which featured in my diaries, some of the best insights I gained related to more cerebral

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thoughts around enjoyment and refining and re-finding my love of the music overall and specifically what it meant to play Irish traditional music and to be from Dublin.

The limitations I encountered in my research stemmed mainly from the lack of time I faced while preparing my written dissertation. I found my research time to be mainly taken up by my research into the performance aspects of my study. This resulted in a decision to move away from my initial plan for fieldwork and to concentrate on theoretical research from established academics combined with critical artistic reflection.

I also found my own time-management a challenge in regards to full-time study but through which I gained valuable knowledge and applicable skills to my professional life. This is an aspect of performance that was never as focused even in my professional life as it was during my research. This helped me to gain focus professionally and also helped to improve my approach to my professional environment. I examined my thought process surrounding parameters involved in Irish traditional music, who sets them and how they are defined. I have realised through my research that my belief is that Irish traditional music is a living, organic tradition. This may be viewed by some people as different, but these among many factors may contribute to the scene or subculture of Dublin while not diminishing or dismissing more traditional aspects of the music. I raised many questions to myself over the period of study which I undertook, in relation to what my knowledge and thought processes are to Irish traditional music in Dublin, many of which I have been unable to answer definitively. I do believe however that this study has added to the academic discourse in relation to Irish traditional music in Dublin and has addressed a small part of its underrepresentation.

The aspects of familial and geographical influences on the formation and continuation of a 'scene' in Irish traditional music in Dublin and the concepts of formal and non-formal learning structures are among the most engaging aspects of my research. The idea of Dublin

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as a participant in the location of Dublin musicians within the larger context of Irish traditional music is also a subject I feel could have further research outputs. The relationship of the wider Irish traditional music cohort towards Dublin musicians may at times be viewed through the prism of non-authenticity by some, but in my opinion the influence of Irish traditional music in the capital has been somewhat overlooked. When Ó Riada first performed his seminal concert that changed Irish music forever, he chose the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin. The Pipers Club on Thomas Street in the 1950s and 1960s was integral to the preservation of many of the great tunes that are still played today. The ballad boom of the 1960s, that many purists heap scorn on, played its part in ensuring that many of the songs in danger of dying out were brought to a young and new audience. The development of the Chieftains, Planxty, the Bothy Band - would these have happened without the music scene in Dublin offering an audience that allowed these musicians to earn a living and allow the music to grow and develop? In Uilleann Piping alone, Dublin lays claim to Tommy Reck, Séamus Ennis and Paddy Moloney.

While my study engages with a very small part of many aspects of Irish traditional music with a focus on my own performance practice and the influence on me of some prominent Dublin musicians, it serves to highlight the potential for further study. As a performer, the opportunity to critically engage with the factors that influence transmission, style and community engagement in the context of one's place is enlightening and challenging and, through the approaches taken in this research, can be represented in both written and performance elements. These elements have greatly enhanced all aspects of my performance both academically and professionally, and the scope of the study leads me to believe that further research on this topic could be extremely beneficial to the overall discourse on Irish traditional music in Dublin.

## Appendices

### Recital 1 Programme Notes



Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Dhún Dealgan

Dundalk Institute of Technology

**Barra McAllister**

**Performance Recital 1**

**in partial fulfillment of the degree of**

**Master of Arts (by Research) in Music Performance**

**Fr McNally Recital Room**

**5<sup>th</sup> February, 2018**



**Running order**

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Independence Hornpipe/Colonel Frasier                            | Hornpipe/Reel |
| Elizabeth Kelly's Delight/The Fairy jig/Give us a Drink of Water | Slip Jigs     |
| An Raibh Tú ar an gCarraig                                       | Slow Air      |
| O'Connell's trip to Parliament/The Boyne Hunt/O' Gorman's        | Reels         |
| An Dro/The Burrow/An Dro Pays Vannetais                          | Breton Tunes  |
| The Castle Jig/The Drunken Parson/The Sheep in the Boat          | Jigs          |
| Lament for the Death of Staker Wallace                           | Air           |
| Tommy Coen's/Black Pats  | Reels         |
| Monaghan Jig/The Haunted House                                   | Jigs          |
| The Sandpiper/The Bulgarian Bandit                               | Hornpipe/Reel |

### **Independence Hornpipe/Colonel Frasier (Hornpipe/Reel)**

The ‘Independence Hornpipe’ is a popularly-recorded tune and is considered to be a demanding test piece. The first tune is alternatively known as ‘Vendome’ which is a Scottish tune that was published in *Kerr’s Merry Melodies* in the 1870s. Charles Gore, in his reference work *The Scottish Fiddle Music Index* (1994), gives the publication date for *Kerr’s Collection of Merry Melodies for the Violin* as 1875. The tune follows a standard hornpipe setting in the first part with glimpses of what is to follow in the second, with some triplet runs that I will embellish and vary. The second part doubles the amount of notes with long triplet runs engaging different techniques. The ‘Independence’ is suited to the flute, as it is in G major and the intricate runs are more accessible on the flute than on other traditional instruments because of its linear and simpler method of execution. I will utilise breathing techniques including glotal stops to accent the staccato elements of the second part as variance. An undated archive recording of the great uilleann piper Leo Rowsome (1903-1970) was sourced from the archives of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.. Many other artists have recorded this tune and I learned it from the self-titled debut album from Danú (1997) on which flute player Tom Doorley plays it as a solo. Flook (1997) with Micheal McGoldrick also recorded it on their self-titled live debut album. These versions are different on many levels. The Flook version uses different rhythmic ideas through tonguing technic and harmony, with two low whistles and heavy guitar, while the Tom Doorley version is closer to the more considered, Matt Molloy style.

The second tune in this set is the reel ‘Colonel Frasier’. This is one of the most well-known of the ‘big’ tunes in traditional Irish music. It is very popular with uilleann pipers and is considered to be an important part of any serious pipers’ repertoire. It also a firm favourite of flute players and is suited to the flute because of its key (G). It has been recorded by a pantheon of artists including banjo player Barney McKenna (1939-2012) on the Dubliners album *A Drop of the Hard Stuff* (1967). Patsy Touhey on *The Piping of Patsy Touhey* (1907), Johnny Doran (1907-1950) on *The Bunch of Keys* (1947) and Liam O’ Flynn on *The Given Note* (1995). Leo Rowsome recorded a single-part version of the tune on a 78rpm recording in 1948. Many flute players have also recorded ‘Colonel Frasier’s’. Conal Ó Gráda recorded it on his *Top of Coom* (1990) album and Tom Doorley plays it as the second tune of his solo piece on Danú’s self-titled debut *Danú* (1997). It is a tune which is highly regarded as we can see from the plethora of recordings from influential artists. The tune itself is an example of differing techniques within one tune. Both staccato and legato styles may be used at points throughout the tune, sometimes in the same place at different times. The tune moves dynamically from part to part with the third part inviting a softer more measured approach

with the BCD triplets and the long G and F rolls. We then move in to the fourth part with more emphasis on overblown G and F notes. These notes may be replaced by low D notes to add emphasis to the rhythm of the tune. In the final part the tight triplets are a reminder of the influence of the uilleann pipes and I will vary the triplets which lead to G and F by using the second octave B and A in their place.

### **Elizabeth Kelly's Delight/The Fairy Jig/Give us a Drink of Water (Slip-Jigs)**

The first of these slip-jigs was written by Elizabeth Kelly (1889-1964) a concertina player from Kilcloher, County Clare. Known as Eliza or Lizzy Kelly, she was the mother of the celebrated fiddle player John Kelly (1912-1989). This tune is played generally in B or A dorian mode. I play this tune in E dorian as I had to transpose the tune when I played in a short-lived band with world champion bagpiper Alen Tully (*b.* 1982) who is now the Laurence O' Toole Pipe Band pipe major. Due to the range of the bagpipe chanter we transposed the tune to E dorian and I found the closed style of that key more suitable to my playing.

The second tune in this set is from the county Donegal area. It is known, like many traditional tunes, by many names. I know it as the 'Fairy jig' but it is also known, for example as the 'Gift of the Fairies' and on Mickey 'Simey' Doherty's (1894-1970) recording *The Gravel Walks: the Fiddle Music of Mickey Doherty* (1949), it is noted as 'The Fairies Taught Me This'. As the title suggests, the story of the composition of the tune is based around the fairy myth. 'This is a jig that has been learnt off the fairies in Teelin. I heard my uncle Mickey saying that there was a man learnt it off the fairies. He was a Mickey Mac Connell. I heard him saying that before he died. That's about thirty years ago. So he used to play it himself on the fiddle' (Ríonach uí Ógáin & Tom Sherlock, 2012, p. 21). Mickey 'Simey' Doherty was a brother to the famous Donegal fiddle virtuoso Johnny Doherty (1900-1980). The connection with the fairies and the Dohertys seems to be a strong one, as Mickey Doherty often told stories of the music and the fairies being interrelated. The fairies would help musicians with repertoire and even enchant the instruments themselves. This tune in D mixolydian mode, has two very different parts in terms of rhythm. The first part has a punchy rhythm which gives space for interpretation of the slight break in the second bar. The second part of the tune finds commonality with the other slip-jigs due to its cyclical nature. The second part also has a large range which is enticing for a flute player as it may show the capabilities of the instrument. The fairy jig was also recorded by Frankie Kennedy (1955-1994) and Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh (*b.* 1959) on the album *Altan* (1987).

The last of the slip-jigs in this set is not to be confused with another slip-jig which sometimes goes by the same name, ‘Give Us a Drink of Water’. Both are G major but the other slip-jig is referred to variously as the ‘Swaggering Jig’ or ‘The Drunken Gauger’. The tune I will play however is in *O’Neill’s 1001* and is numbered 1131 called ‘Give us a Drink of Water’. I learned this tune from my favourite duet album, the extraordinary, *Contentment is Wealth* (1985) by Matt Molloy (b. 1947) and Sean Keane (b. 1946). This piece again is a prime example of the circular nature of these types of tunes with a strong melodic basis being set in the first part. I like to emphasise a tight BCD triplet in the first part which draws attention to the G note at the beginning of the tune. The second part is a particularly good place for variational experimentation in the second register and I use a third octave D along with melodic variations of thirds in the last bar.

### **An Raibh Tú ar an gCaraig? (Slow Air)**

I first encountered this slow air through the playing of Dublin flautist Éamonn DeBarra. The song text (which is in the Irish language) has its roots in Penal times (1697-1782). Under Penal Law it was (among other things) illegal to practice the Catholic religion. Worship took place in secret at local landmarks. The name of this air when translated means ‘*Were You at the Rock?*’, referring to meeting places, such as well-known rocks that acted as gathering places for worship or as an altar. It is an allegorical song which presents a coded message through a story, in this instance a love song. A series of questions are asked of which the last is ‘was my love asking for me?’ If the answer in the song is ‘yes’ this means that it is safe to go to the rock to worship, if the answer is no then the authorities are aware of the intentions of the congregation. This slow-air challenges the performer with the use of phrasing and breath control. The second part has prevalent long and double notes as key points to the expression of the piece.

### **O’Connell’s Trip to Parliament/ The Boyne Hunt/O’Gorman’s (Reels)**

All three of these reels are based in the key of D and the subtle differences in each are the reason that I have put them together as a set. The first of these reels was named for Daniel O’Connell (1775—1847) who was also known as The Liberator or The Emancipator. It is thought that the tune was named after his election as the first catholic to the Westminster Parliament in England. The tune is firm favourite of flute players since Conal Ó Gráda recorded it on his debut album *The Top of Coom* (1990). Various settings of the tune are played with a C sharp in the first part or even a B replacing the C altogether. I will play this punchy rhythmic tune with a C natural in the first part as to subtly show the tune in D

mixolydian. The tune may also be played with a run which is repeated three times in the second part. I will play the version that Ó Gráda recorded which has the run repeated twice.

The second of these reels is the ‘Boyne Hunt’, which was also recorded by Ó Gráda on *The Top of Coom* album. This tune seems to have originated in Scotland. It was called ‘The Perthshire Hunt’ and was written by Miss Magdalene Stirling of Ardoch, Perthshire who was a well-known composer at the time (hAllmhuráin, 2012). It was included in Keith Norman MacDonald’s *The Skye Collection of the Best Reels and Strathspeys Extant* (1887). It was written as a three-part tune and was notated as such in *O’Neill’s 1001*. I will play the two-part version. The tune is an excellent vehicle for strong, driving and up tempo flute playing, with a great emphasis on hard Ds and crans on the D and E notes in the first part. The final tune in this set of reels is ‘O’ Gormans’, a popular tune in the Irish musical tradition. I have recorded with Electric Ceilí on our self-titled album *Electric Ceilí* (2009). The structure of this tune with the emphasis on the A roll as the first note, is slightly different to the others in this set. The capacity for intricate ornamentation particularly around the second octave in the second part of the tune differentiates it further from the others and the influence of flute players such as Seamus Tansey (b. 1943) may be heard in this arrangement.

### **An Dro/The Burrow/An Dro Pays Vannetais**

During my childhood I spent many of my holidays in Brittany, as my mother was teaching Irish dancing in a cultural centre near Rennes. Brittany or Breizh in the Breton language, is located in the north-west of France. Breton culture almost died out due heavy sanctions by the French government, particularly after world war two. The global folk revival which started in the 1950s created a surge in interest in Breton culture once more which lasts to this day. I learned the first and last tunes from a bombarde player from Lorient where the famous Celtic festival is held every summer. ‘An Dro’ is a dance from Pays Vannetais. These tunes are interesting for their rhythmical variance, with the last having a simple four four time which lends itself to improvisation. I will also use many traditional Irish ornaments and glotal stops to accentuate the staccato rhythm in places. The middle tune was written by the uilleann piper Éamonn Galldubh. ‘The Burrow’ is the windy road which snakes around the peninsula in Portrane, north county Dublin. Eamon advised me that this tune is very much Breton-inspired, and the rhythmic patterns divide the set nicely with a more choppy, staccato style.

### **The Castle Jig/The Drunken Parson/The Sheep in the Boat (Jigs)**

The first and last tunes in this set of jigs were taught to me by Paul McGrattan, the well-known Dublin flute player. The castle a flowing and melodic tune which lends itself to

dynamic variations and an expressive feel. ‘The Drunken Parson’ is a nineteenth-century jig which was recorded by the McNamara Family on their album *Leitrim’s Hidden Treasure* (1998). The jig is in the mode of G. On the album it is played in a medley along with a multi-part 3/4 time set-piece, which has three movements based around the same melody. It has a unique fourth bar in the first part of the tune which makes it an inviting melody to play. The pattern of notes in the fourth bar contains an unexpected run of DC natural BFA GDB, which is uncommon in most tunes of in this mode and style, particularly when played on the flute. The melodic structure provides scope for long rolling ornamentation, not always associated with the Leitrim style of flute playing which is usually more rhythmic and closer in style to the flute player John Mc Kenna (1880 -1947), *The Music and Life of John McKenna. ‘The Buck from the Mountain’*.

‘The Sheep in the Boat’, composed by Junior Crehan (1908-1998) is a tune of meandering melody, stylistically adhering to many tunes in the Clare tradition. It effectively explores the tonality and warmth of the flute. Phrasing of the tune is of upmost importance here and transferring the jig to E dorian from the more naturally fiddle- orientated key of G dorian allows me to discover the flow of the tune more easily.

### **Lament for the Death of Staker Wallace (Air)**

This slow air is considered one the finest examples of its type in the canon of traditional music. The piece is very expressive and is typical of the type of airs that were favoured by uilleann pipers and more recently flute players. Unlike many other slow airs this tune does not have lyrics.

The story of Staker Wallace is well known in the Limerick area. He was born in 1733 near the town of Kilfinane in county Limerick. There is some debate over the Christian name attributed to Wallace. In some accounts he is called Patrick, in others William, and also Edmond. (Staker Wallis: His Life and Times and Death, Mainchin Seoighe, 1994). In various accounts he is described as a leader of the ‘Whiteboys’, who were a gang tasked with disrupting the peace of the landowners of the time. Many disparate groups around Ireland at the time had the same agenda such the ‘Hearts of Oak’ in county Armagh. The ‘Whiteboys’ or Buachaillí Bána, were an agrarian organisation who defended tenant farmers rights through violent protest. Their name was derived from the white garments they wore during their nighttime raids. They levelled the fences of the landed gentry and were thus referred to by the authorities as ‘Levellers’. The ‘Whiteboys’ referred to themselves as the ‘fairies’ or ‘the children of Sadhbh Amhaltach’ which translates as ‘ghostly Sally’. (Making Sense of the Molly Maguires, Keven Kenny, 1998). After his association with the ‘Whiteboys’ Wallace is

believed to have become involved in the United Irishmen movement. He was arrested in March 1798, as a local captain of the United Irishmen, for fundraising in his locality to procure the assassination of Captain Charles Silver Oliver. The sexagenarian would not divulge information on the others in his group. He was then publicly flogged on the twenty first of April at a cattle fair in Ballinvreena. One source maintains that he was hung, drawn, quartered and beheaded immediately, once the torture did not obtain the required results. In other accounts it is noted that he was executed in July 1798. ‘The best-known episode in relation to the Palatines and 1798 in Limerick is that of Patrick (sometimes known as William) ‘Staker’ Wallace, said to have been a member of the Defenders, who was hanged without trial in the gaol-yard in Kilfinnane after having been flogged and incarcerated there for a number of weeks (Hick 1997, 37-8)’ (The Palatines: 1798 and Its Aftermath, Vivien Hick, The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Vol. 126, pp. 5- 36, 1996). He is buried in the Glenroe-Ballyorgan parish, County Limerick.

### **Coen’s/Black Pats (Reels)**

The first tune in this set of reels was composed by Tommy Coen. Coen was a prominent east Galway fiddle player who was a contemporary of the great Paddy Fahy and Fr. P.J. Kelly, both renowned composers. This tune is played and has been recorded in many guises and keys, and is known in parts of county Clare as ‘*The Crosses of Annagh*’. The tune is more usually played in E or G dorian but I will play this setting (which I learned from the flute playing of Majella O’ Beirne) in A dorian which gives scope on the flute for longer improvisational elements and distinct rhythmic variations.

The second reel was composed by Tommy Peoples (*b.* 1948), the renowned Donegal fiddle player. He wrote the tune in honour of his cousin Patrick Peoples. This is a well written three-part tune: the range and dynamics, when played in G, make it eminently suited to the flute because tonally this is one of the strongest keys on the Irish wooden flute. Syncopated rhythms are employed in the third part as the melodic line lends itself well to syncopated articulation. This tune was recorded by the band *Lúnasa* (Otherworld, 1999).

### **Monaghan jig/The Haunted House (Jigs)**

‘The Monaghan Jig’ has been recorded by a host of musicians and remains popular in traditional repertoire. Having originally learned the tune from a live recording of the Manchester fiddler Dezi Donnely (*b.* 1973), I discovered many other recordings of the tune

from some of the powerhouses of Irish traditional music. The Micheal Coleman (1891-1945) recording is possibly the most well known. Mary Bergin (b. 1949) plays a version on her recording *Feadóga Stáin* (1979). This four part version is a follow-on from the Coleman recording which also has four parts. It is thought that Coleman added or even composed the fourth part himself. Séamus Ennis recorded the tune in its three-part setting, the same as is published in the Chief Francis O' Neill's (1848-1936) collection *The Dance Music of Ireland* (1907) also referred to as *O'Neill's 1001*. I will play the four-part setting. Leaning on my favourite recording, that of Patrick J. (Patsy) Touhey (1865-1923) recorded in 1904 at the World Fair in St Louis. In the first part of the tune it has become commonplace to play the first notes as BGE FE. In older recordings, and indeed latterly the playing of musicians such as Mary Bergin and Tommy Peoples for example, a more subtle BGE EE is often used. I will play the setting with the double E with some variance to the F sharp.

The second tune in this set of jigs was composed by Vincent Broderick (1920-2008). Broderick was a celebrated composer and flute player from Loughrea in east Galway who compiled two books of his compositions called the *Turoe Stone Vol.1* (1999) and Vol.2. (2007). 'The Haunted House' may be found in his first volume of compositions. I learned this tune along with many more from the book when I was striving for advancement as a beginner. The origin of the name comes from a story of the two Broderick brothers cycling home from a session one night. It is said that they encountered a house that they hadn't seen before, and went to investigate the music that was emanating from it. They saw people dancing and heard music playing in this fine house. The brothers decided that they were too tired to ask to join in, and they resolved to go home. The next day they set out to find the house once more. They came across ruins in place of the fine country house they had been at the night before, and when they got home the tune that they had heard the previous night came to them. They attributed the tune to the ghosts who had attended the party the previous night. This is a story that is similar to many other stories that relate to older tunes where ghosts or faeries compose the melody. 'A belief in the Otherworld is a prominent feature in the lore of Ireland. Tales, legends and lore associated with the world of the *sí*, the *púca*, ghosts, revenants and mermaids are central to the fabric of that lore. Preternatural or supernatural beings and events are commonplace and occur in different forms. Characters, tunes, motifs, themes, place names and verses continually serve to remind us that there is a very real sense of the existence of the Otherworld' (Ríonach úí Ógáin & Tom Sherlock, 2012, p7 ). This simple G ionian tune is very well suited to the flute and the simple melody lends itself to explorations in variation.

### **The Sandpiper/ The Bulgarian Bandit**



‘The Sandpiper’ is a bagpipe hornpipe, which differentiates itself from a hornpipe in the Irish tradition because of the tempo at which the tune is usually played, and the more rigid approach to the melody and rhythm. This makes it more similar to a march than a hornpipe in the traditional idiom as there is less ‘swing’ in the tune. The tune can be found in the collection of tunes from Don Bradford called *The Call to the Gathering* (2004). I will play the tune in A dorian as I had to transpose it to suit the bagpipe chanter. The tune itself is a strong march style tune with a very definite simple melodic root in the first part. The first part is simple with a long F sharp giving a surprising twist to the melody. The second part of the tune displays an octave jump on the A note. This gives a welcome irrational element. The tune’s simplicity in parts lends itself to variations including long “double-time” style movements in the first part particularly.

‘The Bulgarian Bandit’ was composed by Australian bagpiper Murray Blair. It can be found in his collection of compositions called *Philharmonic*. It was recorded by among others the gifted bagpiper Gordon Duncan (1964-2005). I initially learned this tune from Alen Tully. The tune is described in bagpiping circles as a hornpipe, but I feel it relates more to a reel in the traditional Irish idiom. ‘The Bulgarian Bandit’ is a tune which has a lot of syncopation as I would expect from a bagpipe tune of this nature, and when played on the wooden flute it is inviting for the nature of dynamic and rhythmic variations. The second part like the hornpipe before has an octave jump on the A note and gives space for expressive melodic and rhythmic variations.

**Lecture Recital 1 Tommie Potts**



# Tommy Potts

Lecture Recital

## Introduction to Tommy Potts

- Tommy Potts (1912-1988)
- Liberties
- Familial Background
- Work-life



# Interpretation of Style in Potts' Music

- Defining Style in Irish Traditional Music
- Examining Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin's Model
- Audio Examples
- Comparative Examples

# Defining Style in Irish Traditional Music

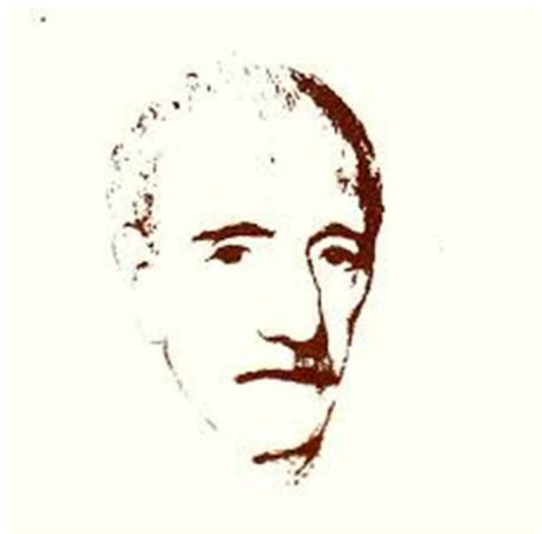
- Ó Riada - Regional Style
- Keegan - 13 Components
- Kearney - Foundation Myths/Coleman
- Vallely - Authenticity

# Ó Súilleabháins Model

- 'My Love is in America' - 'Hey Mambo'
- 'The Butterfly' - Chopins' 'Funeral March'

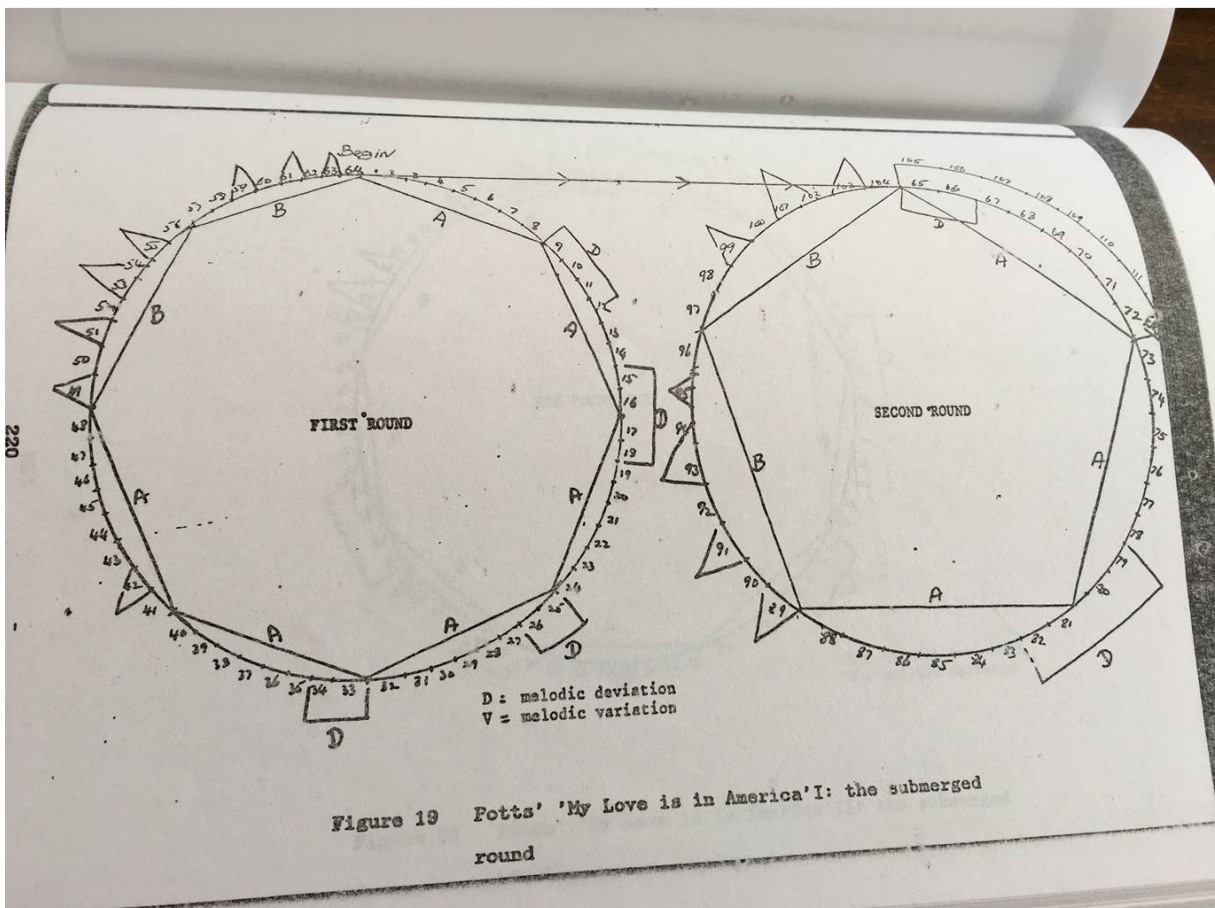
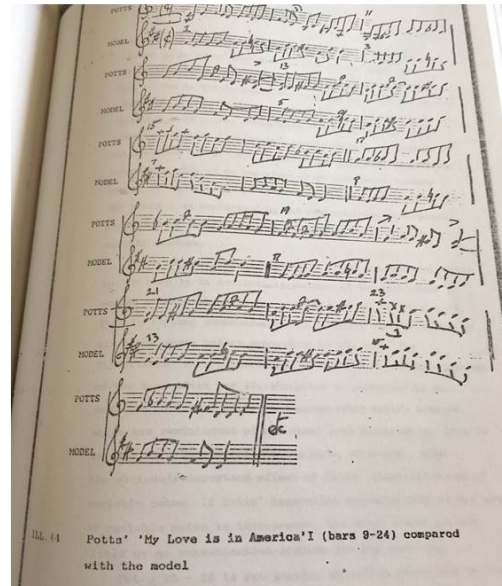
## My Love is in America

- Contemporary Music
- 'Hey Mambo'
- Deviation
- The Submerged Round

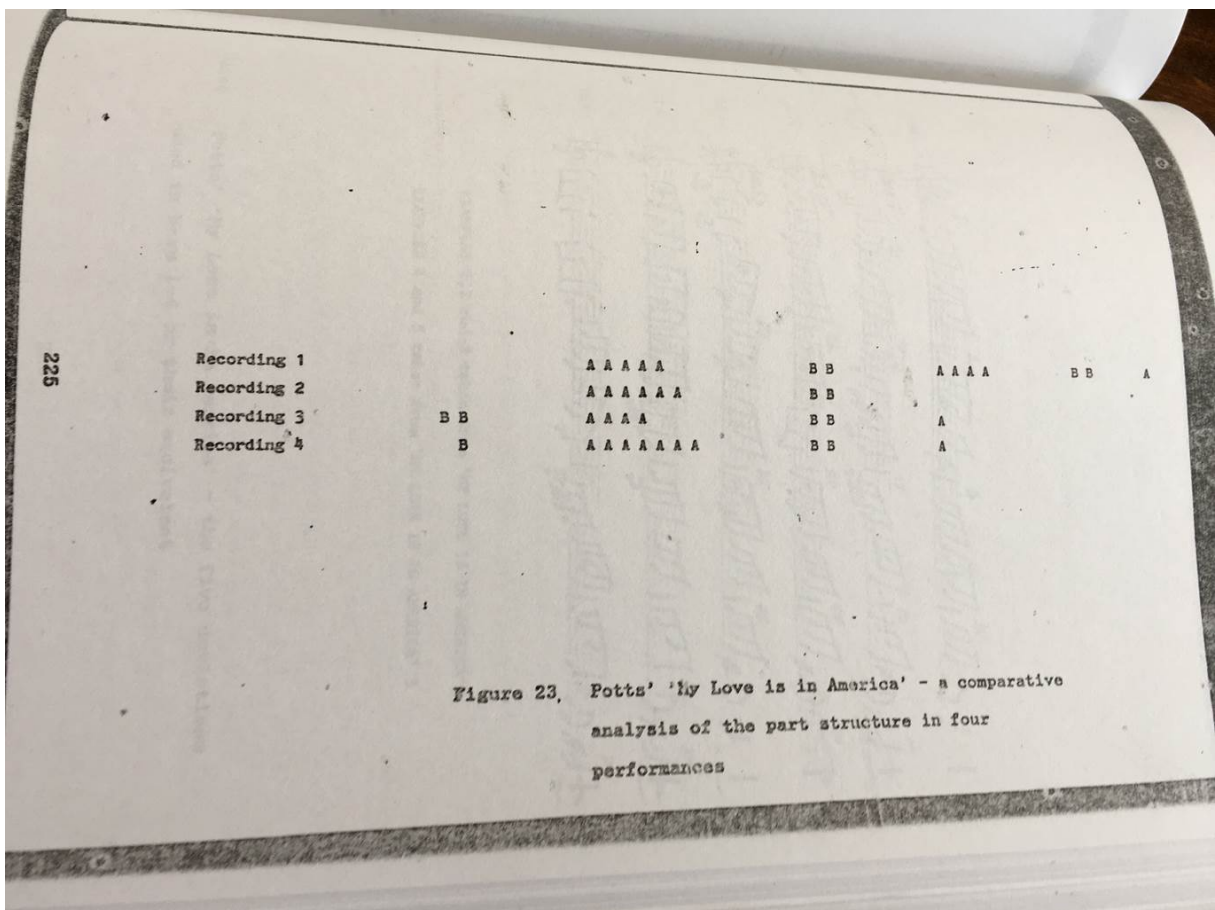


# My Love is in America

- Comparison
- The Submerged Round
- Part Structure Comparison







# The Butterfly

...And then he takes the chord, which of course are notes played simultaneously, and he starts to turn it on its side, into a linear thing, and he started to make a tune out of the harmony, he still has that note...

*Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin*





# Banish Misfortune

Tommy Potts Comparison

**Banish Misfortune**  
O' Neill's Dance Music of Ireland:  
1001 Gems (1907) No. 59

1  
5  
9  
13  
17  
21  
25



## Banish Misfortune Sections I and II



Musical score for Banish Misfortune Sections I and II, written in G major (one sharp) and 7/8 time. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 7/8 time signature. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a five-measure slur (5). The third staff starts at measure 9 and includes a five-measure slur (5) and two first/second endings (1. and 2.). The fourth staff starts at measure 13. The fifth staff starts at measure 17 and includes a five-measure slur (5). The score concludes with a double bar line.

## Banish Misfortune Section III



Musical score for Banish Misfortune Section III, written in G major (one sharp) and 7/8 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 20 and includes a triplet (3) and a five-measure slur (5). The second staff starts at measure 24. The third staff starts at measure 28 and includes a five-measure slur (5). The fourth staff starts at measure 31. The score concludes with a double bar line.

## Banish Misfortune Section IV



Musical score for Banish Misfortune Section IV, consisting of five staves of music in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The score includes measure numbers 37, 41, 46, and 50. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some passages marked with a '5' indicating a quintuplet.

## Banish Misfortune Section V



Musical score for Banish Misfortune Section V, consisting of three staves of music in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The score includes measure numbers 54 and 58. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some passages marked with a '5' indicating a quintuplet.

# Banish Misfortune Section VI



## Banish Misfortune Potts Version: Phrase Breakdown

### Intro Bars 1-2

#### Section I bars 3-10

I A  
I B  
I C  
I D

#### Section II bars 12-19

II A  
II B  
II A1  
II C = variant of I D

#### Section III(a) bars 20-27

III A  
III B  
III C  
III D = variant of I D

#### Section III(b) bars 28-35

III E  
III F  
III C= variant of III(a) part C  
III D= variant of I D  
Complete variant of PIII(a)

#### Section IV(a) bars 36-43

IV A  
IV B  
IV C  
IV D = variant of I D

#### Section IV(b) bars 44-52

IV A= variant of IV(a) A  
IV B= variant of IV(a) B  
IV C= variant of IV(a) B  
IV D= variant of I D

#### Section V bars 53-59

V A  
V B  
V C  
V D = same as I D

#### Section VI bars 60-67

VI A = III E  
VI B = III F  
VI C = III C  
VI D = III D = I D

# Banish Misfortune Potts Version



## ‘Musician’s Perspective’

- What did I Learn?
- Interpretation of Process
- Rhythm, Structure, Variation
- Application of Learning

The Man of the House  
O' Neill's Dance Music of Ireland:  
1001 Gems (1907) No. 642

The Man of the House



## Section I



## Section II



## Section III



# The Man of the House

## Potts Model

The Man of the House  
Tommy Potts Model

## Jenny's Beaver Hat

### O' Neill's Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems (1907) No. 40



# Jenny's Beaver Hat

## Potts Model

The musical score is written in treble clef, 8/8 time, and the key of D major (indicated by two sharps). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff starts at measure 5 and ends with a double bar line. The third staff starts at measure 9 and contains two measures with a '5' above the notes, indicating a fifth finger fingering. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and also contains two measures with a '5' above the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

## Performance

- 'Banish Misfortune'
- Reels: 'The Man of the House'/'The Abbey Reel'/'Tommy Peoples'
- Jigs: 'Jenny's Beaver Hat'/'The Cliffs of Moher'



# Conclusion

- Summary
- How Will I Draw on This?

“... when I play the music that’s the only satisfaction I can get in my heart ... ”

*Tommy Potts*



## Recital 2 Programme Notes



Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Dhún Dealgan

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Barra McAllister

**Performance Recital 2**

**in partial fulfillment of the degree of**

**Master of Arts (by Research) in Music Performance**

**Fr McNally Recital Room**

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2018**

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**Running order**

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Sporting Paddy/The Abbey Reel/Tommy Peoples                | Reels          |
| Taz Dance  | Other          |
| Corny is Coming/Sams' Life                                 | Reels          |
| The Return from Fingal/The Cook in the Kitchen             | March/Jig      |
| The Trouble/The Knife/The Stage                            | Jigs           |
| Easter Snow  | Air            |
| The Lads of Dublin   | Reels          |
| The Butterfly  | Slip-jig       |
| The Morning Thrush   | Reel           |
| The Sweet Flowers of Miltown/The Hares Paw/Tully's Shuffle | Hornpipe/Reels |

## Introduction

In this recital I will endeavour to connect with the past and look forward to the future using methods and techniques which I have acquired during my time both as a Dublin musician and an M.A. student. The purpose of this recital is to showcase the use of technology and tradition, having encountered creativity through research and my desire to express it. This programme hopes encounter Dublins creative heritage by engaging with protagonists from the past such as Barney McKenna, Tommy Reck and Tommy Potts, but also moving forward with compositions from Tom Doorley and my own self-compositions I hope to showcase the far reaching aspects of music in the capital.

## Sporting Paddy/The Abbey Reel/Tommy Peoples (Reels)

‘Sporting Paddy’ is a well-known reel in the A dorian mode. It can be found in *O’Neill’s Waif’s and Strays of Gaelic Melody*, (1922), numbered 246 with the title ‘Irish Pat’. It has been recorded by performers such as, fiddler James Kelly (*b.* 1957) on his album *Capel Street* (1989). The first version which is where I learned the tune, is the *D’ Flute Album* (1995), by Kevin Crawford (*b.* 1967). It may be heard played as highland in areas such as Donegal. The melody is simple in nature with room for subtle variants in regards to melody, for example switching a long E note at the being of the A part in for the short E, A roll. The B part of the tune has a strong emphasis on the repeated G, E roll and the tune overall is an excellent vehicle for the execution of long and short rolls and ornaments. I will also use the simple structure of the tune to insert double-triplets and triplets within the melody.

The second tune in this set is another common session tune and flute favourite, also in the mode of A dorian. It has been played in differing keys and indeed styles by many performers. The ‘Abbey’ was collected by Brendán Breathnach (1912-1985) and features in his collection of tunes made in conjunction with the Clare county board of Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Eireann, *Tacar Port*, (1961, no. 3.6) as Ríl uí Roideachán. In this collection the well-known Sligo/Dublin accordion player Sonny Brogan (1906-1965) is credited with the tune and the first two tunes in this set were played by Brogan. The name translated in english means Redican’s reel which gives rise to the theory that it may have been composed by Larry Redican (1908-1975) who emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1928 and had strong Dublin connections, and may have composed many other well-known tunes such as ‘The Galway Rambler’.

The final tune in this set is known most commonly as ‘Tommy Peoples’ and is called such by Tommy Peoples (1948-2018) on his album *Waiting for a Call*. This G major tune was attributed its name by Frankie Kennedy (1955-1994) and Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh (b. 1959) on their album *Ceol Aduaidh* (1983), although the piping great Liam O’Flynn (1945-2018) pondered that he had ‘no name associated with the tune’ on the sleeve notes for his album *The Pipers Call* (1999). The tune itself is again a very common session tune which is simple in its melodic nature and gives plenty of space for variation within it. I will vary the first part between the more common GBGCGBG first phrase and a long G roll which leads into a BC giving the tune rhythmic variance. In the second part a long variation based around a long G roll may be heard with an influence from the groundbreaking flute player Seamus Egan (b.1969) of Pennsylvania being heard.

### **Taz Dance (Other)**

This tune was composed by Tom Doorley (b.1972) and recorded on an album by the short-lived band *Púca*. The band consisted of brothers Shane and Daire Bracken and Tom and Eamon Doorley and, with only one release, the band along with a contingent from Waterford helped to shaped one of the most successful bands of its era, *Danu*. The tune is a heady mixture of styles and influences which draw from eastern European and western folk music most distinctively, using differing time signatures throughout the tune. In this piece I will endeavour to use some of the skills which I learned during the preparation for my previous lecture recital on Tommy Potts (1912-1988), my willingness to engage in compositional elements brought me to this version.

### **Easter Snow (Slow Air)**

This slow air is one of the most melodically beautiful in the canon of Irish traditional music. Many performers have tested themselves with this piece of music, most famously played by Séamus Ennis (1958-1982) which appears on the *Return from Fingal* (RTE, 1997) compilation album. The art gallery in the Séamus Ennis arts centre in Naul Co. Dublin shares its name with the tune as it is synonymous with the Dublin piping native. This G ionian tune suits the flute extremely well as the higher register is used throughout with the addition of repeated melodic lines in the lower register. A version of the tune may be found in the *Complete Collection of Petrie's Irish airs* (1905, No. 1123), and the Donegal piper Tarlach Mac Suibhne recorded the tune for the Evening Telegraph newspaper during the first Feis Ceol held in Dublin. It is thought by some that the tune originates from an area of north Roscommon called Estersnow, a name given to the area through anglicisation of the Irish

Disert Nuadhain. It is a firm favourite of the great flute player Matt Molloy (*b.* 1947), and was recently recorded by Dublin fiddle player Liam O' Connor (*b.* 1983). The Doherty Family of fiddle players from Donegal also played an air with the same name but a different melody. The lyrics below feature on Paddy Tunney's (1921-2002) *The Stone Fiddle* with these words attributed to his mother Brigid.

### *EASTER SNOW*

*At twilight in the morning as I roved out upon the dew  
With my morning cloak around me intending all my flocks to view  
I spied a lovely fair one she seemed to be a beauty bright  
And I took her for Diana or the evening star that rules the night*

*I being so much surprised by her it being the forenoon of the day  
To see that lovely creature coming o'er the banks of sweet Loughrea  
Her snow-white breast lay naked and her cheeks they were a rosy red  
And my heart was captivated by the two black eyes rolled in her head*

*Fair maid I cried, your love I crave for Cupid is a cruel foe  
I'll roll you in my morning cloak and I'll bring you home to Easter Snow  
Go home, acquaint your parents and indeed kind sir, I'll do the same  
And if both our parents give consent neither you nor I will bear the blame... (from the singing of Mrs. Brigid Tunney).*

### **Corny is Coming/Sams' Life (Reels)**

The first of these reels is in the mode of D mixolydian and can be found in *O'Neill's Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems* (1907, No. 762). The provenance of the name on this tune varies as with most tunes in the aural tradition of Ireland, but a version may also be found in the Sottish tradition with Bremner's *A Collection of Scots Reels or Country Dances* (1761) with the name 'Knit the Pocky'. The tune has been recorded by the band Planxty on their self-titled 1973 album. The tune is interesting in its modality and the arrangement will rely heavily on repeated melodic lines from the keyboards as a hook to underpin the modality of the piece. As the tune weaves around the mode of D mixolydian the simple but surprising melody along with counterpoint from the keys and a strong beat, nod to influences from electronic dance music.

The second of these tunes is a self-composed reel which I wrote after the birth of my nephew. The first and third parts are in A major with the second part finding a slightly less

straightforward melodic avenue. The melody itself was an attempt by me to write something which would stretch the boundaries of my own performance practice with jumps to and from the G sharp which takes a degree of dexterity to master. Once more, the use of keyboards will be prevalent in this piece and used in a different way to the first piece, this may add to the experience of uncertainty in the melody. When writing this tune I wished to express the uncertainty of life but with the belief that there is always hope, hence the modality within the melody and the major third part.

### **The Return from Fingal/The Cook in the Kitchen (March/Jig)**

The first of these two celebrated tunes is the E dorian March ‘Return from Fingal’ which was most famously performed by master piper Séamus Ennis (1958-1982), and features on the brilliant compilation album of the same name. It was also recorded by Séamus’ father James Ennis with The Fingal Trio on *Piping Rarities* (Oldtime Records, 2009, Vol. 3.). The main attribute of this piece which, is said to have been sung by the men of Brian Boromhe on their return from Fingal where the Danes had settled, is its simplicity and power. Its simple rhythmic and melodic form and the AABB structure lends itself to an attacking style which will be accentuated with the addition of strong biting fiddle.

‘The Cook in the Kitchen’ is a punchy jig in G mixolydian mode which will again feature the fiddle. It is recorded in *O’Neill’s Music of Ireland*, (1907, no.1042) as having no F naturals in the first part, but most recordings which I have encountered use the F naturals including a brief clip of Barney McKenna (1939-2012) and Tommy Reck (1921-1991) from the RTE archives ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auuaYV\\_gkC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auuaYV_gkC8)). The clip inspired the choice of tune because of the pride which I felt in hearing Dublin musicians play with such a unique vigour and technical ability.

### **The Trouble/The Knife/The Stage (Jigs)**

This self-composed set of jigs references different stylistic interpretations within the Irish traditional music idiom. The first tune was written in approximately nineteen ninety six, and during that period I was influenced greatly by performers such as Mike McGoldrick, Flook, Kíla, and Solas. Commercially successful performers of this period produced music which blurred the lines of Authenticity in many peoples opinions. The use of differing time-signatures and harmonic creativity within arrangements influenced me greatly during the composition of The Trouble. The tune which is in A dorian mode, uses syncopation with the

rhythmic emphasis changing in the second bar using the A note as an anchor. The guitar accompaniment in the arrangement also adds to the rhythmic variation within the tune. The Knife was written while uilleann piping was my main source of musical inspiration and the tune was influenced heavily by piping tunes but also piping technique. I tried to visualise piping technique during the first part with ‘hard’ D’s being played and the chanter popping for the octave jump on the F note in the second part. In the arrangement, the keyboard will take the place of the drones of the pipes with flute and fiddle leading the tune. This tune has more traditional elements in it and strikes a strong juxtaposition with the previous jig. The last jig in this set is a straightforward and simple melody designed for driving flute playing. The influence of Conal O’ Gráda may be heard here with strong biting G and D notes which serve to accentuate the hard style of this jig. The tune itself is a simple melody in G major, which is cyclical in form and references many traditional tunes in its construction.

### **The Sweet Flowers of Milltown/The Hares Paw/Tullys Shuffle (Schottische/Reels)**

The first tune in this set which I will play on the E flat low whistle is in the key of G sharp major. During my research of this tune I have encountered it being referred to as a schottische, a barndance and a hornpipe but sources from both the I.T.M.A. and the Comhaltas archive label it as a schottische. This simple but well developed tune uses long rolls, particularly around the G notes within it, and also uses the structure of a two note descending pattern in bar four of both the first and second parts. The first recording of the tune from the I.T.M.A. was performed by legendary flute player Tom Morrison (1889-1958) and was released by *New York: Columbia* in 1928. Conal O’ Gráda (b.1961) recorded it on his album *Top of Coom* (Claddagh Records, 1990) on the fife pitched in F, and that album, which had a major influence on my musical life, was where I first learned it. In an example of learnings taken from my research on Tommy Potts I will use an adaptation of the technique of ‘submerging the round’ and alter it slightly to facilitate the change from the schottische into the next tune.

The Hares Paw is a well known tune which has been recorded by some of the greats of Irish traditional music. The renowned flute player John McKenna (1880-1947) recorded the tune and it was included on the fine compilation album *The Buck from the Mountain* (John McKenna Society, 2014). It was also recorded by the great Pdraig O’ Keefe (1887-1963) and features on the compilation album *The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master* (1993). I will endeavour to bring influences from different aspects of my musical background and the arrangement and stylistic approach to the backing and melody playing serve to engender a ‘groove’ within the tune.



The last tune was composed jointly by the Lawrence O' Toole pipe band pipe major Alen Tully (b.1982) and myself. It was composed in two distinct parts with the the first being played on this occasion in B flat minor and the second in the key of G sharp major. The first part may be interpreted as a more stylistically modern sounding section and as we move into the second part there is a push into the major section where it stays. At the end of each B section there is a nod back to the B flat minor part which leads into the A part in a cynical fashion.

### **The Lads of Laois/The Dublin Lads (Reels)**

The first tune in this set of driving tunes featuring fiddle and flute is the E dorian reel 'The Lads of Laois'. Although it was compiled in Brendan Breathnach's (1912-1985) *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* Vol. 1, the origins of the tune appear to be Scottish with versions of it being called variously 'The lads of Leith' and 'Sir Adam Fergusons Reel'. The similarities are definitive enough upon listening to accept the lineage of the tune. The tune has also been credited to the great Tommy Potts (1912-1988) in traditional circles, with fiddle virtuoso Seán Keane (b. 1946) noting that he learned the tune from Tommy and crediting him with the composition on the sleeve notes of *The Fire Aflame* (Claddagh Records, 1996) album which he recorded with flute player Matt Molloy (b. 1947) and the late Liam O'Flynn (1945-2018). As I have shown in my previous research Tommy Potts was adept at using the basis of compositions for experimentation in melody and rhythm and on numerous occasions blurred the lines between composition and variation and this may lead us once again to question is it in fact a new composition by Potts.

'The Dublin Lads' is a strong tune in the mode of G ionian which is akin in style to other piping tunes such as 'Colonel Frasier's'. The tune is similar to another reel with the name 'Hold the Reins' with the first and third parts being close in melodic structure. It has been recorded by performers such as uilleann piper Tommy Keane on his 1991 album *The Pipers Apron*, and most notably the tune was compiled by uilleann piper and collector Pat Mitchell in the comprehensive collection *The Dance music of Willie Clancy* which was first published by N.P.U. in 1976 and the re-published in 1993 by Ossian.

### **The Butterfly (Slip-Jig)**

The Butterfly is a tune which has become incredibly well-known in Irish traditional music. So much so that it is a standard early-learning device used by many teachers when broaching the subject of slip-jigs with their students. The tune is accessible when simplified and played at a moderate pace and may also assist in the learnings associated with differing melodic patterns,

particularly in the second part. I learned this tune during my time as a student in Comhaltas and as with so many pieces it appears on my timeline of learning without any great clarity. In terms of influence the Bothy Band recording of the tune on the *After Hours* (1979) album is the version which resonated with me most, until my discovery of the Tommy Potts (1912-1988) version which was radically different from what I had previously heard. In the short documentary *Tommy Potts-Cerbh É* (Tg4, 2009) Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (b. 1950) explains that how Potts added a part to the tune which he had learned from his father ‘old’ John Potts (1871-1956). Tommy used a section of Frédéric Chopin’s (1810-1849) ‘Funeral March’ (*Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-Flat Minor, Op. 35: III. ‘Marche Funèbre’*), where he describes the ‘silver trumpets’ coming in. He then takes this chord and turning it on its side makes it linear and composes a new part for the tune through this process. I will attempt to play the tune in the style of Tommy Potts to again reinforce the learnings of my previous lecture recital. Endeavouring to play the tune in the style of Potts means that a strong triple-meter must be evident, with the tune being performed almost in the style of a slide. The evidence of Potts’ use of non-standard phrasing and non-conforming part patterns should be also be evident.

### **The Morning Thrush**

This D major tune was composed by James Ennis (1885-1965) the father of the famed collector and uilleann piper Seamus Ennis (1958-1982). In a video recording from a documentary made called *Hand me Down*, Seamus Ennis explains how his father came to compose this intricate piping tune in either 1913 or 1914 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLe9etQ0iwQ>). He recalls that his father regularly heard a thrush outside his bedroom window in the morning, and from the birdsong he took phrases with which he constructed the piece. Seamus found his fathers manuscript at home and learned the tune from it, which he states his father was ‘delighted to hear me playing it’. The tune has become a firm favourite among pipers and although not played too prevalently among other musicians it has been recorded by Noel Hill (b. 1958) on his album *The Irish Concertina* (Claddagh Records, 1988) and Matt Molloy on his *Shadows on Stone* (Venture, 1997) release. This three part tune has various elements of piping technique such as ‘back stitching’ and intricate closed fingering, but also uses a more legato style in parts. Both of these styles may be associated with Seamus Ennis as he was associated with this wide range of piping. He also remarked that he could hear some of the phrases of the tune from the thrush outside his own window ‘as I hear it’.

## **Lecture Recital 2 Mapping Stylistic Influences**

# Mapping Stylistic Influences and Sources of Musical Inspiration



1



## Introduction

2



## Section 1: Soloists

3



**Michael McGoldrick**

4



# Ornamentation

5

## The Green Mountain O' Neills Version

The Green Mountain  
O' Neills 1001

Traditional

Musical notation for the piece "The Green Mountain" in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The notation is presented in four staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 6. The third staff contains measures 9 through 12, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 12. The fourth staff contains measures 13 through 16, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 15. The piece concludes with a double bar line in measure 16.

6



# The Green Mountain

## McGoldrick Version

The Green Mountain

McGoldrick Version

Traditional

7



# Conal Ó Gráda

8

**‘For me, breath is the bedrock of flute-playing. It is the energy source from which tone, rhythm, articulation, phrasing and aural impact all flow.’**

*Conal Ó Gráda*

9

**‘It is also about how you use the air in your lungs to give your playing energy and expression. There is a subtlety to how your air is used that literally breathes life into your instrument and your music that you can only realise through an intimate familiarities with the possibilities.’**

*Conal Ó Gráda*

10



For me, the most recognisable stamp of a flute-player is not their fingering or their tunes. It is the unique way they use their breath to bring music alive in the most personal way.'

*Conal Ó Gráda*

11

# The Green Mountain

## Ó Gráda Version

The Green Mountain  
Ó Gráda Version

Traditional

12





## Section 2: Bands

13

### Daire Bracken: Influence of The Bothy Band

*Where are you from?*

*Dublin.*

*Really?! Ah, but where are your parents from?*

*Dublin.*

*Really?!!!*

14





# Repertoire and Tempo

17

## The Green Groves of Erin The Bothy Band

The Green Groves of Erin

The Bothy Band

Traditional

18



# The Flowers of Red Hill

## The Bothy Band

The Flowers of Red Hill

The Bothy Band

Traditional



19



The Green Groves of Erin/ The Flowers of Red Hill

20



Tóg É Go Bóg É

21

# Gwerzy

## Kíla

Gwerzy  
Kíla

Dee Armstrong



22

# Section 3: Performance

Farewell to Erin  
Gwerzy  
The Green Mountain/ Emer Mayocks

23

Dublin don't be scared, to change. Don't be scared!  
We're with you. Always. Dublin. My friend. My home.  
Mentioned 50 times in this poem. We live in you, My  
city, Mo croí, I love you, Most of the time, You see...  
Dublin you are,  
Me!

*Poem by Stephen James Smith*

24

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