

Nationalism and Music in Ireland

A Dissertation for the Degree of Doctorate in Philosophy

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**Presented through St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Department of Music
May 1991**

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ABSTRACT and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The course of music in Ireland in the last two centuries presents a depressing picture. The creative legacy furnishes little evidence of a race artistically inclined or culturally cognizant. Yet the large and exquisite store of folksong has earned the people the reputation as a musical nation, a standing enhanced by the pioneering dedication of the early collectors and the proselytizing work of Thomas Moore. Their industry was consistent with the growth in ethnic consciousness universally evident in the wake of the French Revolution. This novel pride was termed nationalism, and the phenomenon proved both pervasive and durable, exercising appreciable influence on all aspects of civilization.

This study seeks to draw together these various strands. Prompted by the discrepancy between reputation and realization in relation to Irish music, it proposes to examine this shortfall in the context of wider social and political issues, and employs an interdisciplinary approach to arrive at an explanation. It does not purport to be an history of music; but, rather, an examination of the art's progress in the light of a forceful determinant. It suggests that nationalism, that most protean of entities, has exercised a crucial influence on music, far greater than hitherto allowed, and has been responsible for its tardiness in responding to the cultural eclosion of the late nineteenth century.

The opening chapter establishes a definition of nationalism and argues for its potency. It also propounds an individual reading of the course of the movement. The following chapter illuminates the critical role of culture and concentrates on a particular version of musical nationalism: the picturesque, as represented by the works of Bax and Moeran. Chapters III and IV focus on the separate musical traditions on the island and on the consequences of failure to forge a united expression. The succeeding three chapters form the empirical core of the study, examining the responses of individual composers in the period 1800 to 1950. The concluding chapter offers an assessment of the interaction between music and nationalism and proposes that the latter is in large measure responsible for the jejune chronicle of the art in Ireland.

A great attraction of this project was that it concerned an area largely innocent of scholarship; accordingly, direct secondary sources are rare, which meant that the assistance proffered by the many individuals and institutions who contributed to the realization was of crucial importance. I am indebted to those who generously shared their memories and perspectives either through submissions or by interview. Included in this number are Miss Rhoda Coghill, a leading executant who recalled the middle decades of this century with clarity and humour; Mrs Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, another eminent performer and daughter of Professor John Larchet - a principal player in this drama - who was ever ready to clarify points and to make available her father's work; Mr Michael Bowles, conductor, administrator, and teacher who has so willingly given so many hours discussing issues and recounting memories; Mr Éimear Ó Broin for his memories of Arthur Duff; Professor Aloys Fleischmann, composer, teacher, and an important link with the period central to this study; his colleague, Professor Brian Boydell who shared his ideas and papers willingly; Professor Anthony Hughes, long-serving head of the music department in University College Dublin, who recounted his impressions of his teacher and precursor, Dr Larchet, and his memories of Frederick May; Mr J.P. Flahive who addressed the state of the profession in the middle decades of the century; Professor Risteard Mulcahy who happily told me of his father, General Mulcahy a forceful member of the first government of the Irish Free State; Master Terry de Valera who recounted his experiences of learning music as a child in Dublin; and Colonel James Doyle for sharing his first hand experience of opera in Dublin and music in the army. It was a pleasure to share an evening with the very Revd Canon W.G. Grattan Flood talking of his father who was a celebrated, if nowadays largely superseded, historian. Mr Oliver O'Brien was another who amiably discussed the work of his father, the conductor and composer Dr Vincent O'Brien. Dr Gerard Victory is in my debt for sharing his personal recollections and estimation of many of those featured in this work. Appreciation is due also to Professor Seoirse Bodley who allowed me read a rare score of O'Brien Butler's opera Muirgheis. I hope that the many others who contributed will not take it amiss if I thank them collectively; the encouragement that I received was one of the most pleasurable aspects of the undertaking.

Among the institutions that readily supplied assistance were the National Library of Ireland whose staff were unfailingly courteous, as were their colleagues in the State Paper Office. I am beholden to the music librarian of Trinity College Dublin for facilitating my research there and also to the library of Queen's University Belfast. Much of the work was undertaken in University College Dublin and I am especially grateful to the library staff there. The same college also unhesitatingly provided more specialized help through their Archives Department and through the Special Collections section. Particular mention needs be made of the support I received from the staff of the Department of Irish Folklore and its archives in UCD, most notably Mr Jackie Small. I am profoundly appreciative of the facilities made available to me by the music department of the college; the professor of music, Dr Anthony Hughes, and his staff have more than earned my gratitude. Thanks are due also to the arts administrator of the Royal Dublin Society, Miss Eveline Greif, who kindly accommodated my request to read the files in the archives there. Particular mention must be made of the trouble taken by Eve O'Kelly and Debbie Metrusty of the Contemporary Music Centre in Dublin to facilitate my search for scores. I wish also to record gratitude to the library staff of my parent institution, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Due attention has been accorded the seminal role of the broadcasting service in this study. No organization has exercised a greater influence on the course of music in the country during this century. This commitment was echoed in the willing cooperation which I received from the agencies of the service. I acknowledge the assistance of Mr John Kinsella and of his successor Mr Cathal MacCabe. The libraries of the two station orchestras are an especially important resource for the study of music by composers in Ireland and the librarians of both the National Symphony Orchestra and the Concert Orchestra provided not only assistance but also advice and even, when necessary, a working area. Similarly, I owe thanks to their colleagues in Sound Archives, the Reference Library, and the Broadcasting Museum, and to the many individuals within Radio Telefis Eireann who facilitated this undertaking.

Even in an area as uncharted as that of music in Ireland, one is conscious of the obligation to those who have gone before. This

applies both to the creative artists and to the commentators who recorded their endeavours. This investigation is, not least, a tribute to those who laboured in less favourable times.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the debt I owe to my research supervisor, Professor Gerard Gillen. He has supplied encouragement and guided this project from its very inception. The gentle manner in which he furnished judicious regulation over the course of its gestation is much appreciated.

In conclusion, I record my gratitude to Miss Valerie Harrison for her friendship and constant support, and for advice regarding all aspects of the work.

Joseph J. Ryan
May 1991
Dublin.

Author's Note

Punctuation and spelling employed in this study follow British usage. However, quotations are given in unaltered form except in the case where the original contains obvious typographical errors. Where -ize is appropriate as a verbal ending it is preferred to the more common -ise. Numerals are employed in the text with the exception of numbers between one and ten, at the beginning of sentences, and in sequences where their use would be inconsistent. A restrained approach has been adopted in the matter of hyphenation; hyphens are employed only when necessary or where collocations are in an attributive position before a noun. Likewise, capitals are used sparingly. Reference notes are indicated by Arabic numerals and the corresponding entries will be found at the close of individual chapters.

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CHAPTER I

Nationalism

Although nationalism is the most powerful political force in the modern world, it is a subject that has received surprisingly little attention at the hands of social scientists. Nationalism unites individuals with different class interests into a solidary group on some kind of cultural basis.¹

Thus does Michael Hechter commence a reappraisal of his earlier influential socio-historical analysis of the persistence of regional consciousness in the British Isles.² Despite the brevity of the quote, it reveals much that is typical of the current studies of nationalism. There is the acceptance of the importance of the phenomenon, a view not universally held by scholars until recently. There is the admission of surprise that such a force has engaged so little academic consideration. There is evidence of the tendency to approach the area from a particular and defined viewpoint be it historical, economic, political, cultural, or sociological, as in Hechter's study. That such concentrated approaches designed to formulate particular theories of nationalism should predominate attests to the complexity of the area. Although in their infancy, these pioneering studies have revealed the richness of the doctrine as a province for investigation and have opened further areas of research. They have also convinced a small but growing number of scholars that a full understanding of nationalism will be gained only through a multi-disciplinary approach. Also from the above quotation can be noticed a central question faced by all investigators in this area: that of definition. Again it is indicative of its novelty as a subject for scholarly analysis that there is yet debate over the precise definition of nationalism and attendant terms such as 'Nation', 'Nationality', 'State', 'People', and 'Culture'. Finally, Hechter suggests in the extract through his use of the adjectives, political and cultural, the further question of whether nationalism is at core motivated by ethnic or pragmatic considerations, or indeed by some complex combination of both. There is consensus that the doctrine is greater than the aggregation of its parts:

Nationalism makes more of the nation than a mere political or cultural community. Its realization becomes the supreme ethical goal of human beings on earth; it is depicted categorically as the most important thing in life; it becomes the be-all and end-all of man in his search for security.³

No humble claim this. It provides evidence of the significance ascribed to nationalism; for whatever differences exist between scholars of the phenomenon, there is broad agreement on its importance. It is increasingly accepted that nationalism has proved a major catalyst in the affairs of modern man. However, commentators are divided in the prominence they ascribe to the cultural basis of nationalist movements.

This investigation commences with a brief examination of this compelling movement and seeks to validate the claims made for it by a number of observers. The remainder of the study is predicated on the basis of the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and the artistic life. Especial attention will be devoted to the cultural component, and it will be a purpose of the study to demonstrate that cultural revival plays a momentous part in the furtherance of a specific strain of nationalism, and that it had a particularly prominent role in the development of the Irish nationalist movement. Most important, it is intended to show that the whole development of music in modern Ireland was critically subject to the influence of nationalism.

Nationalism and academic interest

The very complexity of nationalism is averred to by, and in part explains, the fact that only in the past few decades has it attracted a measurable degree of philosophical attention despite being widely regarded as the most potent force for social, political, and cultural change in the last two centuries. This scarcity of treatment is noted with surprise by some current leading commentators, among them Anthony Smith who, like Hechter, approaches the topic from a sociological viewpoint.

Plainly, nationalism is important - both as a social and political phenomenon, and as an object of sociological investigation. Add to this the obvious and critical role that nationalist movements have played in recent history - their impact on the political map, their utilisation in major and minor wars, the impetus they have given to social and economic development, and so on - and one can only be amazed at the comparative lack of sociological interest and research in this field.⁴

In a subsequent passage Smith proffers class differentiation as a reason.

... the classical emphasis on stratification within societies diverted attention from the vertical differentiae which create national solidarities.⁵

Another foremost commentator, Ernest Gellner, focuses more precisely on the paucity of interest in nationalist ideology. This he ascribes to the fact that nationalism is a group response to fundamental changes in the shared social condition.

It is not so much that the prophets of nationalism were not anywhere near the First Division, when it came to the business of thinking: that in itself would not prevent a thinker from having an enormous, genuine and crucial influence on history. Numerous examples prove that. It is rather that these thinkers did not really make much difference.⁶

Gellner's argument is valid. Nationalism cannot boast any consequent philosophical tradition. But that is not to say that some of the greatest thinkers of the past three centuries have not lent their ideas, albeit often unwittingly, to the development of the nationalist ideal. This is the protean character of nationalism; the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, to harness to its own ends leading contemporary ideas. It is this variety, the ability to accommodate, that is a central strength of the doctrine. This allows it to develop along a path not predetermined by a consistent ideology. Indeed this type of creed, or the dominating presence of a single or group of guiding philosophers, is incompatible with such a mercurial

movement. It can be argued that the mutable nature of nationalism made it an unrewarding area for academic research and it helps explain why the subject is so often approached from a particular and limited perspective.

A further factor which may have influenced the level of critical interest could be the fluctuating public perception of nationalism. This has ranged from opposition through indifference to passionate commitment. The contrast between the predominantly positive view of the movement in the nineteenth century and the negative twentieth-century perception is noticeable. A further confusion is occasioned by the overlapping relationships with the more focused ideologies of Marxism and, especially, Fascism. Current negative views of the latter have adversely affected the perception of nationalism.

Definitions

Any investigation of nationalism will first encounter the problem of terminology. Terms such as 'Nation' and its derivatives 'National' and 'Nationalism' have had different meanings throughout history and in different countries. Many writers have therefore felt it necessary to preface their studies with an explication of what they intend when employing these words. It is telling that there is large measure of divergence in the understanding of these terms by the foremost commentators. The word 'Nation' provides the prime example. Frederick Hertz in his study of the term reveals that the term natio meant a backward, exotic tribe in contrast to gens which was employed for a civilized people or populus as in Populus Romanus for the Roman bearers of sovereignty.⁷ The term nation later acquired a further pejorative association when it was employed to signify any community of foreigners. Medieval universities were divided accordingly into 'nations'; Elie Kedourie cites, for example, the four nations of the University of Paris.⁸ This use of the word as a collective noun persisted into the eighteenth century when it came to be understood, albeit imprecisely, as a body of people united by cultural and political ties. The most celebrated definition is that of the French scholar and critic, Ernest Renan (1823-92), who saw the nation as a 'plebiscite de tous les jours'.⁹ While alternative definitions are

frequently suggested there is general consensus on the necessity to distinguish between it and 'State'. The seminal report of the Royal Institute of International Affairs published in 1939 makes precisely this point:

But the implications of 'nation' are never precisely those of 'State', since 'nation' calls attention to those persons who compose a political community, 'State' to the sovereign power to which they owe an allegiance and which holds sway over the territory which they inhabit.¹⁰

It proceeds to develop further the significance of the term 'Nation':

'Nation' is also used to denote an aggregation of individuals united by other, as well as political ties - ties commonly of race, religion, language, or tradition. The individuals are possessed of common institutions and a common culture which give unity to the group and foster a spirit of sympathy between the members.¹¹

The relative agreement on the difference between 'Nation' and 'State' can be decomposed by the addition of the term 'People'. The Royal Institute report is not so precise here allowing the term to mean more than 'Nation' and 'State', being

in addition an apt name for any aggregation of individuals which cannot be described by the other terms.¹²

This contrasts with an earlier study by Handman in which the term 'People' is almost synonymous with the Royal Institute's understanding of 'Nation':

People: A group of individuals who by means of similar language, folkways, and institutions are able to communicate with each other directly and easily.¹³

As will be seen in Chapter II, this concept is compounded further by consideration of the word 'Volk'. One of the leading contributors to the discussion of this concept is Max Weber (1864-1920), a founder of modern sociology and pioneer of interdisciplinary scholarship. In his

great didactic thesis, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft (1968 [1922]), Weber is in no doubt as to the political complexion of the nation.

Time and again we find that the concept 'nation' directs us to political power. Hence, the concept seems to refer - if it refers at all to a uniform phenomenon - to a specific kind of pathos which is linked to the idea of a powerful political community religion, or common customs or political memories; such a state may already exist or it may be desired. The more power is emphasized, the closer appears to be the link between nation and state.¹⁴

Within this study, however, the terms 'Nation' and 'State' are employed in accordance with the interpretations set out in the Royal Institute report: nation carries ethnic and cultural implications whereas state implies a political and military unit of organization.

The remaining word which, for the purposes of this study, requires definition is that of 'Nationalism' itself. It is in the understanding of this central term that one notices the greatest measure of critical disagreement. There is confusion for instance between nationalism per se and national sentiment or consciousness. The Royal Institute report defines the former in terms of the latter:

Nationalism is used generally of a consciousness, on the part of individuals or groups, of membership in a nation, or of a desire to forward the strength, liberty, or prosperity of a nation, whether one's own or another.¹⁵

A similar entanglement is evident in the following definition by a leading student of nationalism, Louis Snyder:

Nationalism is a condition of mind, feeling, or sentiment of a group of people living in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, being attached to common traditions, and, in some cases having a common religion.¹⁶

Halvdan Koht, academic and former Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, goes even further in his description of the doctrine confusing it with national sentiment and xenophobia.

The common elements of it are evident. Everywhere we observe a juvenile pride in one's own nation as contrasted with others, and the pride is mostly concentrated upon the warlike virtues of the nation, in several cases also upon the superiority of their own civilizations. Thus, this early nationalism includes a hatred or a contempt of other nations.¹⁷

Such complication is readily understandable as the concepts are empirically related. For analytic purposes the terms need to be distinguished precisely. This does however lend a pragmatic coldness to the definitions of those who exercise the distinction.

Nationalism is the belief that each nation has both the right and the duty to constitute itself as a state.¹⁸

A foremost contemporary theorist, Elie Kedourie, moves beyond the realm of belief and identifies personal commitment as the essential attribute.

National self-determination is, in the final analysis, a determination of the will; and nationalism is, in the first place, a method of teaching the right determination of the will.¹⁹

Commitment, to be effective, requires direction; and Kedourie raises here the crucial association between nationalism and education. The coterminous expansion in both is no accident; there is a marked preoccupation with instruction among the agents of nationalism, many of whom were cast unwittingly in this role, including some Irish musicians who advocated the creation of a distinct musical expression. Kedourie is also wholly consistent with the tenor of Renan's essay Qu'est-ce qu'une nation (1882). When focused upon in this precise manner, nationalism, independent of its counterpart, national sentiment, reveals itself a movement of action, a guise particularly appealing to those who see it as a political phenomenon.

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.²⁰

Such a political reading is characteristic of the younger generation of commentators among whom is numbered John Breuilly. He describes nationalism as a collection of

political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments.²¹

There is the danger that such definitions lose something in their objective concentration. Gellner, Breuilly, and others of like mind would doubtless reject this criticism refusing to admit any distinction between cultural and political nationalism. But the definitions can still be criticized on the grounds that they concentrate only on the final active stage of a complex and long developing phenomenon, and that much of that development is not, at least consciously, political in motivation. Consequently this study employs the term in accordance with the definition proffered by Smith in his Theories of Nationalism which, while political in intent, has the distinction of being inclusive. It is, he claims,

an ideological movement, for the attainment and maintenance of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' like others.²²

History

The disparity evident in the understandings of terminology extends also to the origins of the phenomenon. A doyen among the pioneering students of the subject, Carlton J. Hayes, sees nationalism as an ever-present constituent of the human social condition.

From anthropological studies it is obvious that the tribalism which consists among primitive people today and which presumably flourished generally before the dawn of recorded history is a kind of nationalism. Each tribe has normally a distinctive speech or dialect, a peculiar pattern of social organization and cultural and religious

observances, a special set of oral traditions and a particular manner of initiating its useful members into the full life and lore of the tribes and of inculcating in them a supreme loyalty to it.²³

This creed has found little support among later commentators. Nor does it conform to Smith's definition adopted for the purposes of this study, confusing as it does the questions of elemental local loyalty and the complex composite of tradition, culture, and polity that comprise the modern phenomenon. There is general consensus that it is a Western doctrine of more recent derivation with a majority subscribing to the view that it originated in the eighteenth century. This author is sympathetic to this reading but is disposed to the view that nationalism has its roots somewhat earlier being an indirect consequence of the establishment of the Protestant churches of Central and North-Western Europe. The Reformation marked not only the great rupture of a united church but was a watershed in Western civilization being the culmination of the gradual separation of political theory from theology which had taken place over the preceding centuries. The contrast can be made with the Middle Ages where the temporal power of the Church was the focus of individual loyalty providing a cosmopolitan polity. The Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor ordained decrees and enacted laws, both divine and natural, and together symbolized a concord which transcended provincial allegiances throughout civilized Europe. The contemporaneous influence of the Church is verified by none other than Machiavelli who, despite his avowed intention to change the existing order, shows remarkable diffidence to the ecclesiastical principalities in Il Principe. He records that they are ruled by

the only princes who have states and do not defend them, who have subjects and do not govern them; and yet taken away from them, and their subjects, though not governed, do not complain, and neither can nor will leave their allegiance. And so these are the only secure and happy principalities in the world. But since they are ruled by a higher authority, beyond the reach of the human mind, I shall say little about them; for as they are exalted and maintained by God, only reckless and presumptuous man would venture to discuss them.²⁴

This constraint notwithstanding, Il Principe written in 1513, is one of the earliest precursors of nationalism. Directly addressing the dedicatee, Lorenzo de Medici, in the final chapter, Machiavelli exhorts him to deliver a united Italy out of the hands of the barbarians.

I cannot describe with what love he will be received in all the provinces which have suffered from the foreign invasions; nor the eagerness for revenge, the firm loyalty, the religious zeal, and the tears that will greet him. Where is the town that would not throw open its gates to him? What people would not obey him? Who would oppose him out of envy? What Italian would refuse him allegiance? This barbarian tyranny stinks in everyone's nostrils. Let your illustrious house, therefore, undertake this task....²⁵

This desire to drive foreign usurpers from Italy was not incompatible with the ultimate authority of Pope and Holy Roman Emperor. The real threat came from the machinations of individual rulers anxious to emancipate themselves from central dominion. They were quick to seek justification for their designs in the growing secular theory of the Renaissance and in particular in writings such as Machiavelli's. It is one of those historical antimonies that this growing secularism should have been furthered by the crucial religious attack on central authority. The Reformation was the harbinger of the new order and was the catalyst which led to a novel independence of thought. From its appeal to the individual conscience to its adoption of the vernacular, the Reformation promoted a religious and linguistic pluralism in opposition to the cosmopolitanism of the old order. This replacement of universalism by a celebration of diversity was the decisive first step in the development of nationalism. It found a musical representation in the widening division between sacred and secular music and particularly in the change from Renaissance to Baroque, a change in which, as Bukofzer noted

The hitherto unchallenged unity of style disintegrated, and composers were obliged to become bilingual.... Thus the renaissance stands out as the last era of stylistic unity, and for this reason it has been glorified as the paradise lost of music.²⁶

This point is further developed by Blume in his comprehensive comparative study of the music of the Renaissance and Baroque,²⁷ and the shift toward a diverse and distinct style consciousness is even more notable in later artistic periods. It is wholly consistent with this thesis that the first flowering of nationalism took place in England where the Reformation had succeeded so spectacularly. English nationalism is closely connected with the concern for religious freedom and personal liberty. Imbued with this spirit of independence, leading English philosophers furthered these concepts through their writings. The radical and long-lived Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) rejected the ecclesiastical politics of medieval Europe and advocated in its stead the theory of political absolutism. This predicated that the sovereign was the source of all power and was above the civil law. By espousing the notion that might is right, Hobbes was proposing a community independence at the expense of individual liberty. His younger contemporary, the poet John Milton (1608-1674), also contributed to the development of nationalist doctrine especially in his prose writings. Both men experienced the Puritan Revolution but Milton's republicanism and belief in individual liberty was at variance with the rational and materialistic approach of Hobbes.

The most salient contribution to the philosophical development of the first phase of nationalism was made by John Locke (1632-1704) whose most influential writings appeared after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Contrary to Hobbes he opposed absolutism and his ideas on democracy and on the freedom, happiness, and dignity of the individual were in accord with the egalitarian reign of the House of Orange. His two Treatises of Government published in 1690 one year after the accession of William and Mary lay the foundation for the advancement of the nationalist doctrine within the liberal framework of the eighteenth century. Locke's teachings also underlie the positive perception of this first phase of the phenomenon.

A further advance in the theoretical basis of the doctrine was made by the Prussian philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In recognizing the dualism between appearance and consciousness, Kant moved toward the consideration of practical reason and ultimately to the belief in the importance of a free will. This led him to support

the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth century as republicanism was the only political creed consistent with the freely expressed will of the citizen. With the support of Kant's teachings, belief in the self and in the efficacy of self-determination became central tenets of the second phase of nationalist development. Kant also proposed that religion was a quest, an endless search, rather than a settled dogma; in individual terms this meant the struggle for self-realization. But this could only be fulfilled by absorption in the universal consciousness, by identifying with the group, which quickly translated to state. This reasoned approach to the management of human affairs, with the individual finding true freedom through assimilation in society as a whole, lay at the heart of the Enlightenment. The relationship between individual free will and the 'general will' is a preoccupation of the later writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). The subject dominates Du contrat social (1762) where Rousseau focuses on the question of social organization.

The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the social contract provides the solution.²⁸

The solution he proposes is in keeping with the philosophy of Kant:

the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others.²⁹

All of these writers furthered the course of nationalist ideology in what this author has described as the primary and secondary phases of nationalism. It is emphasized that theirs was an inadvertent contribution; the majority were concerned essentially to formulate a measure of social equality. Among them all it was Rousseau, with his attention to culture and to the natural simplicity and quality of peasant life, and with the consideration he gave to the role of education notably in Émile (also 1762), who did most to dictate the

direction of the movement. The concatenation of the pastoral with nationalism, which was to find a distinct musical voice in the early decades of the twentieth century, can be said to be a legacy of Rousseau.

Both England and France can be contrasted with the central European states in that they possessed a large measure of national awareness in the centuries preceding 1789. This can be accounted for by the fact that each possessed a unity of language, a degree of central authority, a consolidated cultural tradition, and had clear geographical boundaries. English nationalism, which equates with the first phase described above, was realized with the Glorious Revolution.³⁰ It was religious and political in nature, liberal in outlook and development, and aristocratic in its leadership. French national awareness had risen in the eighteenth century in inverse proportion to the decline in national prestige experienced under the sovereignty of the House of Bourbon. It proved more revolutionary and democratic in spirit than the earlier English manifestation. The second phase of nationalist development reached its apogee in the French Revolution (1789-1792) when the fusion of national sentiment with the growing desire for an altered social order found violent expression.

Many leading commentators would dispute this reading. Kohn, Kedourie, and Minogue all support the conventional wisdom that sees the French Revolution as the genesis of modern nationalism with the movement spreading first in Europe and then, in the twentieth century, throughout the world. This case is stated most succinctly by George Gooch when he described modern nationalism as 'a child of the French Revolution'.³¹ To argue against this is not to deny the significance of the insurrection but to see it as a partial consequence, rather than begetter, of nationalism. The reading does, however, find support in Conor Cruise O'Brien's recent essay 'Nationalism and the French Revolution'.³²

The numerous studies of the French Revolution which appeared during its bicentenary attest to its crucial influence on the subsequent shaping of human affairs. To attempt to elucidate this

influence in a concise manner is to risk gainsaying its significance. Its importance is far greater than that of the American Revolution which predated it by some 14 years. The latter was a sui generis insurgency on the part of opportunistic individualism led by Puritan colonists against a patrician and, more important, distant centralized imperialism. This was essentially the opposition of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century ideas; it had nothing of the reasoned social content of the French Revolution. The nationalist element in the French Revolution consisted in portraying the nation as sovereign in place of an absolute monarch or dynasty. It also condoned the use of violence in pursuit of its goal and bequeathed this legacy to all ensuing movements. The equation of national pride and defence with military strength was to remain an element of the doctrine. So too did the notion that a nationalist movement, whatever its origin, inevitably required to find political expression in order to be successful. In this respect the 'ism' forming the substantive represents an excess, indicating an absolute and militant principle.

The emancipation of the middle classes was another consequence of the increased democratization wrought by the French Revolution. Henceforward, nationalism had to accommodate growing industrialization and the effects of modernization. Scholars have identified one group in particular, the intelligentsia, whose role proved crucial in the continual process of adjustment to fast-changing social circumstances. A delineation of this collective is offered by John Hutchinson in his thought-provoking investigation into cultural nationalism.

It should be noted that I do not use the term intelligentsia as it was first employed in mid-nineteenth century Eastern Europe to designate a unitary educated stratum, which, placed in an intermediate position between the power establishment and all other social classes, claims a socio-political mission to transform the community. I denote instead an occupational and vocational group that forms from the modern professions and tertiary educational institutions. Of course, some members of the intelligentsia may also be intellectuals. But whereas the latter are defined by their preoccupation with more abstract questions, the former, trained as knowledge specialists, are vocationally more

concerned to serve the practical needs of the
community.³³

In practice, the intelligentsia, which was ever to the fore in developing nationalist movements, was no longer confined to artists, scholars, and writers but, in response to the growing educational opportunities, was broadened to comprise additionally those such as technicians, economists, and social workers. It diversified to the extent that an economist, Friedrich List (1789-1846), could play a salient role in the progress towards the reunification of Germany. In his influential Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie (1841), List rejected the liberal laissez-faire approach of Adam Smith and advocated in its place a protected Zollverein for those states or confederations not yet sufficiently strong to compete on an equal footing. Nationalism was becoming increasingly more centralized. For the first time the doctrine and the intelligentsia to whom it appealed initially became almost exclusively urban based. This was to have a major impact on the evolution of cultural nationalism and will be examined in the following chapter.

The reaction of contemporaneous writers reveals much about the difference between the first and second phases of the nationalist doctrine. Edmund Burke (1729-97), the Irish-born statesman and one of the leading political writers of his or any age, had supported the American Revolution but was ag^oast at the French rebellion. He regarded it as an uncontrolled attack on law and order which irrationally rejected all that generations of experience had constructed.

The fresh ruins of France, which shock our feelings whenever we can turn our eyes, are not the devastation of civil war; they are the sad but instructive monuments of rash and ignorant council in time of profound peace. They are the display of inconsiderate and presumptuous, because unresisted and irresistible, authority.³⁴

Yet Burke, through his respect for national history and culture, became one of the greatest apostles of nineteenth-century German nationalism. His style of measured response, along with his imagery, is also evident in the English liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century of which

the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was the leading figure.

The more we become enlightened, the more benevolent we shall become; because we shall see that the interests of men coincide upon more points than they oppose each other. In commerce, ignorant nations have treated each other as rivals, who could only rise upon the ruins of one another. The work of Adam Smith is a treatise upon universal benevolence, because it has shown that commerce is equally advantageous for all nations - each one profiting in a different manner, according to its natural means; that nations are associates and not rivals in the grand social enterprise.³⁵

The ideals of Rousseau, Voltaire (1694-1778), and the philosophes, and the ambitions of 1789 were if not soured, at least tinged, by the Terror of 1793. The third phase of nationalism which may be said to start at the beginning of the nineteenth century evinces the complex reaction to the French Revolution and its aftermath. The prophets of the new phase were in sympathy with the teachings of Kant and Rousseau but were highly critical of the reality and especially of the excesses of the Terror and of the imperialistic designs of France under Napoleon. Indeed, as Smith points out elsewhere, such an acquisitive form of nationalism was self-contradictory.³⁶

The third phase of the doctrine is of particular importance in this study as it had a profound bearing on the character of Irish nationalism. Its novelty lay in the accent on culture and it was imbued with the prevalent romanticism. The phenomenon in the nineteenth century was initially concerned with movements of unification, most notably in Germany and Italy. They are especially responsible for the positive image enjoyed by nationalism at this time. The liberal tenor of the age allied to the growing cultural awareness also generated the first of a succession of separatist movements which reached a culmination in the widespread insurrections of 1848. Among the most authoritative voices of this period was that of the Italian patriot, Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72), who was himself much influenced by English liberal nationalism as typified by Bentham. A republican and democrat, Mazzini was the active apostle of Italian unity. His life's

work was directed to irredentism although his writings were employed in support of many European separatist movements including that of Ireland; as we shall see, it was an endorsement taken out of context. He viewed the French Revolution as negative in its excess of concentration on the individual whereas the Italian revolution would, in Mazzini's vision, concern itself with the freedom of the nation. Mazzini was prepared to advocate drastic measures in order to achieve that goal. Writing of the adversaries of Italian unity he reveals his fervent style.

Above all, they forgot the principle that no peoples ever die, nor stop short upon their path, before they have achieved the ultimate historical aim of their existence, before having completed and fulfilled their mission.³⁷

The universal waning of the liberal spirit towards the last two decades of the century revealed the doctrine in an opportunistic and negative light. Many of the larger states including England, France, Germany, and Italy employed the growing national pride to further imperialistic aims. These states were adept at justifying such campaigns which were essentially motivated by the prospect of economic gain and were infused with intolerant militarism which led inevitably, one could argue, to the carnage of the Great War.

Reasoned analysis reveals the contrast between the negative image of aggressive imperialistic nationalisms and the positive perception of unifying or separatist nationalisms. But the uncritical view of the doctrine is often coloured by its most recent manifestation. Thus the current negative perception is in large measure a legacy of the Second World War. It also evidences the lack of distinction between nationalism and Fascism. It is precisely this vulnerability to confusion and its polymorphous nature that for long made nationalism an inhospitable area for scholastic consideration.

It is a contention of this thesis that nationalism is a more venerable phenomenon than is usually allowed and that it has had the most profound influence on the political and cultural shaping of the modern world. Its great strength lies in its protean quality, and its

flexibility; the survival of the doctrine has been ensured in no small part by its aptitude to ally itself to the great historic movements and to employ these to its own ends. This has allowed it to respond to the varying demands of successive ages, to alter course and yet be true to itself. For this reason the doctrine is often described as Janus-faced. Nor has its sedulity in any way dissipated. Even at this time of writing, much of the unrest in the world has its origin in the petitions of smaller nations desiring to achieve statehood. The many instances of sedition occasioned by such demands give the lie to commentators such as Mommsen and Breuille who claim that the age of nationalism has passed.³⁸

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CHAPTER II

Culture

In a celebrated description, Max Weber defined the state as

a human community which successfully claims within a given territory the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force.¹

The state, as we have seen, is not synonymous with nation but Weber's definition can arguably be altered in order to make it apply to the latter by replacing the concept of the monopoly of violence with that of an embracing culture. That this is possible suggests the pivotal position of culture in the third phase of nationalism. The intellectual energy of the nineteenth century was directed primarily towards historicism and revival; towards, in short, a renaissance, not of the great centres of civilization, but of the peculiar and the parochial; and the fruits of this endeavour were employed to further the foundation of independent polities within a community of nations. An elementary distinction therefore between the third phase of the doctrine and its predecessor is the exchange of culture for reason.

The history of the first three quarters of the nineteenth century was much influenced by the high regard for variety in human affairs; the prevalent diversity in matters both individual and communal being consistent with the dominant Romantic ethos. In this milieu, increasing importance was afforded to culture, which was regarded as a manifestation of diversity and the embodiment of the spirit of a nation. The vision of the early philosophers of the period was of a community of independent nations, large and small, each distinctive, and each contributing through its innate genius to a brotherhood of nations; the reawakening of interest in the past, the exaltation of the natural and traditional, the virtual obsession with philology, and the creative endeavours of artists were all focused with pride on the unique. The proclamations of distinctiveness which marked the dawn of this anti-cosmopolitan period were, at first, egalitarian and positive. But there was quick transformation toward an insular vision with

individual communities pursuing their own aims, very often at the expense of their neighbours. This sequence leads out of the realm of culture and into that of politics. It lies outside the purpose of this study to chart minutely the reasons underlying the shift from ethnic sentiment to political nationalism:² suffice it to say first, that the course frequently necessitates violence; second, that nationalism being, as was argued in the previous chapter, a fusion of culture and polity, it needs by its very nature to find political expression; third, some discussion of the concatenation can be found in the following chapter where Irish nationalism and culture are examined in more detail. By the final quarter of the century the wheel had turned full circle. Diversity was still praised, but it was essentially a lip-service; the great European powers were competing at this time in their imperialist designs which contradicted the ideal of a free association of independent nation-states. This inevitably led to a clash between the colonial culture and the imposed import, which in turn often resulted in a narrow focus for the indigenous version as it sought to achieve a simplicity sufficient to allow it to be employed as evidence for an independent polity. Thus had culture altered in the century from its initial manifestation as an embracing ideal to being just one element in a complex, additionally including economic, political, and military concerns.

Definition and emergence

Despite the acknowledgement of the centrality of culture in the direction of the newer nationalism, most commentators experience even more difficulty with its definition than with the more political designations described in the first chapter. The majority, indeed, elect not to attempt a definition, while Gellner, who does face up to the problem, is forced to the conclusion that

definitions of culture... in the anthropological rather than the normative sense, are notoriously difficult and unsatisfactory. It is probably best to approach this problem by using this term without attempting too much in the way of formal definition, and looking at what culture does.³

The Oxford English Dictionary in its entry on culture draws attention first to the religious derivation of the word, indicating as it did a form of worship. This active concept was later extended to the care of plants and animals in the sense of tillage and husbandry. In the anthropological sense it signifies

the training, development, and refinement of mind, taste, and manners;... the intellectual side of civilization.⁴

But even this reveals less than the full story. In his stimulating study Culture and Society, Raymond Williams notes that in common with some other words, culture came into regular use and acquired a new meaning at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵ Fundamentally, it altered from being employed to signify the culture of something to being a true substantive, or in Williams' phrase 'a thing in itself';⁶ and throughout the intervening years it has become increasingly burdened with meaning.

It is a contention of this thesis that the contemporary concept of culture not only shaped modern nationalism but that it is itself a corollary of the doctrine's early development. Inevitably, the interdependence of the two exercised a profound influence on creative artists, including composers; this poses the question as to whether it was constrained by this influence, ironically at the very time when it was experiencing increased freedom in the wake of the decline of feudalism and patronage.

The emergence of culture as an influential ideal originates from the dawn of the nineteenth century. It is the paramount characteristic of the third phase of nationalism. Its eclosion was a direct result of the French Revolution and, with apologies to Weber, of the democratization of thought; this was signalled by the increasing moral authority exercised by individual creative artists. This authority was given powerful expression at the beginning of the period by Wordsworth (1770-1850) in his preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads (1802). In this seminal document, Wordsworth propounds questions regarding the role of the poet, the nature of poetry, and the relationship of poetry to science, which together confidently assert

the new-found centrality of artistic enterprise. In posing the question, 'what is a poet?', Wordsworth proposes an answer applicable to all concerned with the creative imagination.

He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.⁷

This level of assurance in creative authority was characteristic and was even surpassed by Shelley in his Defence of Poetry (1821) where he states that the poet

ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men.⁸

Wordsworth's claims for the substance of poetry, which could equally apply to any other artistic genre, are also confident and peremptory.

Its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried

alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature.⁹

In addressing the relationship of poetry and science, Wordsworth was anticipating a debate which encompassed the association of man and nature, imitation and imagination, art and science, relationships which were central to the Romantic ethos. Wordsworth's comments illustrate that these areas are complementary, which is characteristic of early nineteenth-century thinking. The antinomy which developed between these pairings was a child of the late Romantic age. Speaking of the poet he says that

He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature.... The knowledge both of the poet and the man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.¹⁰

It was Wordsworth's companion in the publication of Lyrical Ballads, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who further developed the notion of the crucial and correlative role of artistic endeavour in an increasingly utilitarian society. While conscious of the benefits of the industrial movement, he argued that material improvement alone could not make for a greater humanity; social well-being depended on an higher truth to which he gave the name cultivation, which was to become synonymous with culture.

The permanency of the nation... and its
progressiveness and personal freedom...

depend on a continuing and progressive civilization. But civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health, and a nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people, where this civilization is not grounded in cultivation, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity.¹¹

There was, however, the danger that, in pursuing such ambitious claims for the nature of art and for the role of the artist, a dualism would be created between art and reality, with art being perceived as an alternative form of experience and, moreover, as something better and beyond mundane actuality. In other words, there was the danger of the equation of art with culture to the exclusion of all else. However, as the century progressed, art became just one, albeit important, component of a multifarious culture which came to represent a whole way of life; which is very much the sense in which the term is employed by twentieth-century anthropologists and sociologists. The place of art and its appreciation in this synthesis is assured. Original imagination and its conceptions have passed forever beyond the province of refined entertainment, and their precise nature and relationship with culture were to exercise critics throughout the period. One of the greatest of these explications in the English language is Culture and Anarchy (1869, revised 1879) by Matthew Arnold (1822-88). The significance which Arnold attributes to culture is shown clearly in the subtitle 'An essay in political and social criticism'. The purpose of the tract is set out in the preface.

The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically.¹²

Quoting and accepting the views of the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689-1755), Arnold recognizes that underlying the pursuit of culture is a scientific passion, 'a desire to augment the excellence of our nature'.¹³ But his understanding goes beyond this to encompass his own religious views.

There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it, - motives eminently such as are called social, - come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part.¹⁴

This understanding posits a unity of human experience; it recognizes no division between civilization and cultivation. It develops the notion of a 'liberal education' as delineated by Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-90) in his series of discourses The Idea of a University delivered in Dublin in 1852. Culture was for Newman the ultimate goal of such an education when the cultivation of the intellect moved beyond the merely useful.

...as regards intellectual culture, I am far from denying utility in this large sense as the end of education, when I lay it down that the culture of the intellect is a good in itself and its own end; I do not exclude from the idea of intellectual culture what it cannot but be, from the very nature of things; I only deny that we must be able to point out, before we have any right to call it useful, some art, or business, or profession, or trade, or work, as resulting from it, and as its real and complete end.¹⁵

Education is inextricably linked to culture, a connection neatly encapsulated by Arnold when describing the latter as 'the study of perfection'.¹⁶ He enlarges on this and places it within a tradition of belief by quoting Swift (1667-1745):

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light.... Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet

greater! - the passion for making them
prevail.¹⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century, aestheticism was increasingly advanced as holding a central position in the evolution of human experience. Such attention imparted significant authority to the artist, and made his art the subject of great attention and debate. This preoccupation has survived into this century. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, T.S.Eliot (1888-1965) gave a series of talks to a German audience on 'The Unity of European Culture'. It was, given the location and timing, a courageous subject, but one also to which minds had been so forcibly focused over the preceding years. In the final lecture of the series, Eliot addressed the meaning of the term culture.

By 'culture' then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomised, as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than an assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs.¹⁸

Eliot was considerably to expand these views in his Notes towards the Definition of Culture published in 1948. Like Arnold, he views culture in its comprehensive context, and his understanding is also coloured by his religious sensibility.

The first important assertion is that no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of culture.¹⁹

Eliot recognizes no division between culture and religion, the former being the incarnation of the latter.

Yet there is an aspect in which we can see a religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture.²⁰

This leads Eliot to the conclusion that while we can identify individual and group cultures, culture in its essence can only be found in the pattern of society as a whole.

His profound devotional intuition notwithstanding, Eliot's writings bring us to an understanding of the term culture. Recognizing, as he does, the distinction between individual, group, and social or whole culture, we, like him, are moved to concentrate on the latter, the form which equates with Weber's Kultur. An inclusive definition is made impossible by the subjective element inherent in the term, but this has not precluded the growth of an agreed perception. This presents culture as a complex accumulation of the inherited traditions, beliefs, values, and the complete store of knowledge and creative endeavour of a given social group, allied to the total of its activities and the shared memories, real or apocryphal, of past glories and sufferings. Moreover, born of this, and in addition to it, is the sense of belonging, which moves the term beyond a substantive into the realm of the abstract. This understanding clearly offers a place to the creative imagination; it also reconciles the dualism between art and reality encountered earlier. The artistic sensibility is here posited as a crucial constituent of culture. Not only does art offer 'sweetness', a record of achievement, and, in Wordsworth's phrase, an 'image of man and nature', but also it offers a vision and, most important, a sense of value. It is consistent with his complex understanding that the term 'culture' is employed in this work.

Culture: an historical perspective

Creative artists across the whole spectrum of endeavour were moved to forge a novel relationship with society in post-revolutionary Europe. Increasingly released from the constraints of patronage, artists found themselves addressing a much larger audience. Furthermore, being in the main among the most literate and progressive members of society, many resorted to prose to elucidate further their

ideas of creativity and, as we have seen, of culture. Not only did these writings afford to culture a central place in human affairs but also they placed the artist in a position of moral leadership; the artist was no longer occupied solely in serving the demands of his society, but was concerned with fashioning its very conscience. The fruits of creative imagination offered to a changing society the comfort of continuity in human affairs. The fact that this continuity was not to be universal but parochial and exclusive was realized by the end of the eighteenth century.

A nation is not an idea only of local extent, and individual momentary aggregation; but it is an idea of continuity, which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space. And this is a choice not of one day, or one set of people, not a tumultuary and giddy choice; it is a deliberate election of the ages and of generations; it is a constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice, it is made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil, and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time.²¹

The author of this passage, Edmund Burke (1729-97), was sufficiently enlightened to recognize that some measure of cross-fertilization between peoples of different traditions would occur. In what was an unconscious, but practical, affirmation of this belief the pioneering members of the German idealist school of philosophy turned to Burke as a guide in their formulation of a cultural response to the humiliating defeat suffered by the many German states at the hands of Napoleon in the early years of the nineteenth century.

Herder

The pivotal figure in this counter-revolution, and the man who crucially influenced the character of the third phase of nationalism, was the philosopher, critic, and a primary figure of the Sturm und Drang, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Consistent with many of the philosophers cited in connection with the development of the doctrine, Herder could not be described as a nationalist; there is then something of irony in the fact that his ideas inform the modern

development of nationalism. Like so many leading historical figures, Herder stands not merely at the beginning of an epoch, but he represents in addition the culmination of a progressive movement; his ideas on the independence of national character can for instance be traced back to Montesquieu's De l'esprit des lois (1748) and to Wincklemann's Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums (1764). Herder's philosophy was also influenced by the religious movement known as Pietism. Inaugurated in the late seventeenth century and developed through the following century, Pietism's sectarian emphasis was on the lower classes where it advocated a simple enthusiastic expression and repudiated dogmatic and authoritarian religion and its elaborate formalities. One of the practical consequences of this movement was the adoption of the vernacular for devotional purposes. This imparted a heightened standing to local languages at a time when the French language and manners were the currency of polite society throughout Europe, a fact that is attested to, with compunction, by the Russian prose writer and historian, Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826).

...but I feel I must scold many of our readers who, being better acquainted with all the works of French literature than the Parisians themselves, do not even deign to look at a Russian book.... It is our loss that we all insist on speaking French instead of toiling over our own language; is it commendable that we are unable to express certain nuances in Russian conversation?²²

The Pietists also endorsed religious toleration which was an essential prerequisite for the unification of the German states, especially in the wake of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). Along with religious sufferance, the Pietists also emphasized the importance of the individual which was to be one of their legacies to the Romantic age. In this they paralleled Rousseau's organic theory whereby the individual finds his ultimate expression as a vital component of his community.

Many of the central pillars of Herder's thought can be traced to Pietism: the accent on the common man; the respect for community; the emphasis on language; and a large measure of toleration and regard for those of other traditions. From these elements, Herder constructed his

celebration of diversity which has underpinned successive separatist movements since 1800.

Herder's concentration on the common man not only consisted in eulogising the wholesomeness of his simple life-style but also in establishing for that life-style a continuity of tradition. This involved research into the past which did much to awaken historical awareness. It was primarily due to Herder's work that Historismus became a central tenet of cultural nationalism; this evolutionary view of history was to influence all the arts including music. The spirit resulted, for example, in the renewed interest in Palestrina and the glories of sixteenth-century music; in Mendelssohn's 1829 revival of St Matthew Passion and the consequent renewal of interest in Bach; and in some of the early accounts of older music of which Burney's four volume History of Music (1776-89) is a prime example. Herder was actively involved in historical research and as a folksong collector he published two volumes of Volkslieder (1778-9). He was equally desirous to see local folklore preserved as is shown in this passage where he is speaking of the Slavonic peoples.

Since many fine and useful contributions have been made to the history of this people for several of its regions, it is desirable to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the others as well. The dwindling remnants of their customs, songs, and legends should be collected, and finally there should be painted a history of the family as a whole, a history appropriate to the canvas of mankind.²³

The pivotal position afforded to historicism by Herder and his adherents derived from their conviction that it represented far more than the satisfaction of academic curiosity, and that it moved beyond the realm of antiquarianism; on the contrary, the study and appreciation of folksong and folklore, and the wider dissemination of ethnic beliefs and traditions, offered the most valuable insight into the character of a people. History, through its examination of these areas which embodied the true racial spirit, became the key to the sensitive comprehension of a community. This concentration naturally advanced the sense of ethnicity which was fundamental to the age.

The related notion of Volk is a cardinal concept in this third phase which equates with the age of cultural nationalism. The term is subjective in nature and is difficult to translate satisfactorily. It suggests an extended family, united through culture and transcending political boundaries. It is almost spiritual in essence, offering as it does a continuity of imagination and tradition in place of the rational and political virtues of the previous century. In its practical elements, Volk comprises unity of race, common tradition and customs, a shared language, and a collective awareness of historical continuity. But, being a subjective issue, it goes beyond even this; there is also a consciousness of rational sensibility. Even a sociologist such as Weber is cognizant of this sensibility to which he gave the name Volksgeist.

This concept 'Volksgeist' is treated... not as the result of countless cultural influences, but on the contrary as the actual source from which the particular manifestations of the people emanate.²⁴

The rise of historicism allied to the notion of a Volksgeist posed critical questions for the creative artist. At core was the character of the culture one inherited: was it a stable, unchanging, defined or at least definable, entity?; or was it a mutable concept, a compound of all the experiences that the race has undergone, an ever-changing agglomeration? Furthermore, does a culture take account of external influences, the inevitable residue of travel and trade, and of human intercourse; or is culture a quintessence shorn of all extraneous flavour? One response is as valid as the next to such subjective questions; as we will see, Irish composers furnished differing answers to these two central issues and the discrepancy between views lies at the heart of a divided musical culture. And complications attended whatever answers were proffered. The most chauvinistic view, electing for a delimited and fixed culture, encountered the predicament of establishing the period at which such an expression might be frozen. Similarly, the same camp, wishing to exclude foreign influence, faced a second dilemma; could an indigenous music be isolated from the confirmed influence of the broader tradition?; would, for instance, the Lutheran chorale, that pillar of the Germanic, and therefore also the European heritage, have nothing to say to the Irishman? Essentially

Irish musicians and all concerned with the artistic life of the country confronted the problem of establishing a balance between diversity and divorce.

Herder's primary contribution has been described above as the celebration of diversity. Showing himself to be a true disciple of Rousseau, he argued passionately for the free development of the myriad of independent European cultures. His humanitarian vision suggested that harmony could best be achieved by allowing free expression to every culture, and he clearly regarded each as being equally valuable.

Like the geological layers of our soil, the European peoples have been superimposed on each other and intermingling with each other, and yet can still be discerned in their original character. The scholars who study their customs and languages must hurry and do so while these peoples are still distinguishable: for everything in Europe tends towards the slow extinction of national character. But the historian of mankind should beware lest he exclusively favours one nationality and thereby slights others who were deprived by circumstances of chance and glory. From the Slavs too the German learned: the Welsh and the Latvians could perhaps have become Greeks, if their situations had been geographically different. We can be very happy that the Huns and the Bulgars did not occupy the Roman world, but a noble, chaste and loyal people like the Germans. It would however betray the ignoble pride of a barbarian, to therefore regard the Germans as God's chosen people in Europe, destined by its innate nobility to rule the world and to enslave other peoples. The barbarian rules and dominates; the educated conqueror educates.²⁵

Language

It is necessary to emphasize that Herder's egalitarian ideals were free of any covert political programme. But culture in this construction proved too subjective and nebulous to allow for demarcation; thus it was that in Herder's own lifetime, and to some extent because of his own writings, the possession of a language became the decisive factor in determining the legitimacy of any claim to

cultural nationalism. In short, language became the badge of diversity. Any people aspiring to have a claim to a separate cultural nationalism recognized would be severely handicapped if it was not in possession of a native tongue. It is in this that one discovers the central discrepancy between the vision of cultural nationalism postulated by the German school and the universal understanding of culture set out above; the German school and all who concurred in the desire to bind culture to a political agenda stressed ethnicity and particularly its expression through language. Weber was of the opinion that a common language was the most important objective factor in entering a claim for national consciousness.

Today, in the age of language conflicts, a shared common language is pre-eminently considered the normal basis of nationality.²⁶

This was a view endorsed by the Royal Institute of International Affairs as recently as 1939:

A nation which possesses over any period of time a distinctive language is likely to develop a culture of its own, which will become one of its possessions and contribute in no small measure to the growth of national feeling. How far a common and distinctive national culture can grow up in the absence of a corresponding language it is somewhat hard to say.²⁷

Much of this finds its source in Herder's essay of 1772, Über den Ursprung der Sprache (Treatise upon the Origin of Language), in which he outlines his organic view of linguistic development. Language is a mode of thought, a peculiar expression embodying the spirit of a people; much more profound than a method of communication, it is the criterion by which a nation is recognized to exist. The fact that this notion was seized upon and simplified by later writers caused others such as the historian Arnold J. Toynbee, a declared critic of nationalism, to attack the linguistic basis of cultural nationalism and particularly those who found 'the criterion of Nationality in the shibboleth of Language'²⁸.

Herder's humanitarian espousal of the principle of variety in human affairs led him to respect equally all language groupings

regardless of size or political influence. But his disciples were more narrow in their focus. Being of a younger generation, they had experienced the humiliation of Napoleon's conquest and their reaction was to construct a more limiting version of cultural nationalism which was intolerant and even xenophobic in its concentration. Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) was typical of this generation, rejecting as he did the universalism of Goethe and Beethoven and substituting in his prose and verse an insular view of a united Germany which informed that country's political thinking until the middle of the twentieth century.

Where is the German's Fatherland?
Is't Swabia? Is't the Prussian land?
Is't where the grape glows on the Rhine?
Where sea-gulls skim the Baltic's brine?
O no! more great, more grand
Must be the German's Fatherland!

Where is the German's Fatherland?
Name me at length that mighty land!
'Where'er resounds the German tongue,
'Where'er its hymns to God are sung.'
Be this the land,
Brave Germany, this thy Fatherland!

There is the German's Fatherland,
Where wrath the Southron's guile doth brand,
Where all are foes whose deeds offend,
Where every noble soul's a friend.
Be this thy land,
All Germany shall be the land!²⁹

This attenuated view was given political expression in the celebrated Addresses to the German Nation (Reden an die deutsche Nation, 1807-8) of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) which Conor Cruise O'Brien describes as 'the Bible of the New Nationalism'.³⁰ These addresses set the agenda for the course of German nationalism and also acted as inspiration for all succeeding nationalist movements.

Our present problem... is simply to preserve the existence and continuity of what is German. All other differences vanish before this higher point of view.... It is essential that the higher love of Fatherland, for the entire people of the German nation, reign supreme, and justly so, in every particular German state. No one of them can lose sight of the higher interest without alienating everything that is noble and good....³¹

Herder's respect for the significance of the particular had prevented him from supporting a single German state; on the contrary, he was quite critical of the imperialist tendencies of dominant Prussia. It is a measure of the degree of change wrought by the Napoleonic wars that Fichte would write in 1807:

The distinction between the Prussians and the other Germans is artificial, founded on institutions established arbitrarily or by chance. The distinction between the Germans and other European nationalities is founded on nature.³²

Any movement which aspires to engage popular attention and support must present its aims in a readily understood manner. Thus it was that philology was focused on as a prime indication of cultural nationalism. It is easy with hindsight to discover the fallacy of this argument, but it found wide favour when first advanced. Language was never the only component of a cultural consciousness, merely the most prominent and tangible. But the other elements such as race, tradition, religion, custom, folksong and folklore, sensibility, et cetera, had all to find a simplistic symbolism, much of it spurious. Cultural nationalist movements tend to engage in elaborate ceremonial of a commemorative nature and to employ evocative images. In Ireland this has produced the wolfhound, the shamrock, the Irish harp, and the round tower set in lonely perspective; in Scotland, the tartan and the stag at bay. However calculating these images may be, they point to the close connection between cultural nationalism and German romanticism in the concerns with the renaissance of a past golden age, the imagination, the solitary, the natural, and the mysterious. They further confirm the link with the pastoral as expounded by Rousseau and later exploited by so many early twentieth-century composers. Literature in particular and art in general gave expression to both romanticism and cultural nationalism. Accessibility demanded, at least initially, that the modes of expression be referential; thus the novel became a primary vehicle of cultural nationalism. Opera was a standard-bearer for music. A performance of Auber's La Muette de Portici in Brussels in 1830 contributed, it is said, to the insurrection which created the independent Belgian state.³³ The libretto, based on a struggle for

independence in seventeenth-century Naples, provoked a riot which developed into full revolution. The fear of similar occurrences doubtless motivated Italian censors' demands that Verdi alter the texts of his operas La Battaglia di Legnano (1849) and Un Ballo in Maschera (1859).

Music

The extraordinary role that music plays in movements seeking ends beyond the artistic is a factor of the very character of the art. The musicologist, H.H.Stuckenschmidt, draws attention to this in his intriguing essay entitled 'The music of commitment'.

At all times musicians and non-musicians have disputed whether music has an autonomous existence of its own. One side has argued that music lives its own life as a formal world governed solely by its own laws. The other maintains, with good reason, that music necessarily serves a higher, or at least extra-musical, end.... Music is fundamentally non-representational. True, it can touch on the realms of physical objects or ideas, but only in a very few cases can it hold up a mirror to them. Musical forms have almost no parallels in the physical world.... Music cannot expound beliefs. It can, however, reinforce the expression of a belief and make it more emphatic and persuasive.³⁴

Rising educational standards, inexpensive and efficient printing presses, and the referential nature of the written word ensured the dominant place of literature in the development of cultural nationalism. But the other arts too made salient contributions to the epoch. The paintings of the Nazarene school, which consisted of a group of early nineteenth-century German artists living in Rome, exhibit the same concerns upon which the literature of the age concentrates. The most outstanding feature of the school's output is its concern for tradition and especially for a romantic medievalism. Music occupied itself in like manner as is attested to by the burgeoning interest in historical studies and by the growing collections of folksong. Two of the leading philosophers of the age, Rousseau and Herder, were sufficiently active musically to be considered as something more than mere dilettantes. As an occasional

composer and particularly as critic, Rousseau exercised considerable influence on French music, while Herder, in a passage such as the following, reveals himself not so much a cultural nationalist as an archetypal romantic:

Music rouses a series of intimate feelings, true but not clear, not even perceptual, only most obscure. You, young man, were in its dark auditorium; it lamented, sighed, stormed, exulted; you felt all that, you vibrated with every string. But about what did it - and you with it - lament, sigh, exult, storm? Not a shadow of anything perceptible. Everything stirred only in the darkest abyss of your soul, like a living wind that agitates the depths of the ocean.³⁵

The political and social turmoil of late eighteenth-century France found correlation in the contemporaneous revolution in music education. As Westrup records in An Introduction to Musical History:

A further consequence of the French Revolution was the establishment of the Convention Nationale in 1795 of the Conservatoire National de Musique, a successor of the Ecole Royale de Chant founded in 1784.³⁶

The Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation of Paris was the earliest specialist music school founded outside Italy. It was to become one of the most distinguished academies of its type, and was to influence the growth of others throughout Europe. Again, some credit must be accorded to Rousseau for this development occurring as it did so shortly after his detailed exposition of a novel scheme of musical training in Émile (1762). Its creation also owed something to the chauvinistic writings of the 'théophilanthropique' Jean Baptiste Leclerc (1755-1826). In an essay calling for the establishment of the conservatoire, he clearly sets out the association between nationalism, music, and education, and recognizes, in an unconscious pre-echo of the Irish situation, that the creation of an ethnic expression might offer a solution to the rupture between the music of city and country.

There comes an opportune time for the establishment of an institution: once this is passed, that institution will prosper only with the greatest difficulty. The time is

almost ripe, perhaps, for the establishment of a national music.... Although the constitutive laws of modern society take no account of music's influence, music is no less powerful than it was in ancient times; we believe that it plays a much greater part in modern politics than is generally supposed.... The problem that must be solved then is this: the restoration of an equilibrium between the townsfolk and the countryfolk, or rather the discovery of a half-way point at which music will serve to restrain the former and advance the latter.... In doing so we must look for a moment at the state of contemporary music. In the final analysis we will find that it is of two distinct kinds. One corrupts and is already too decadent to be regenerated. The other is still pure enough to deserve protection. If prudence does not allow us to banish the first, at least there can be no objection to abandoning it, so to speak, to its unhappy fate, whilst the second will be preserved for the welfare of the community.³⁷

Following the example of Rousseau, other educationalists turned their attention to the nature and form of music education; most notable in this context is Pestalozzi (1746-1827) who advocated the use of national songs for the development of character.

The prominence of music in the cultural life of the nineteenth century is not in question. Even in writings as idiosyncratic and speculative as those of the English critic and composer Cecil Gray (1895-1951) music's place is affirmed. In his rather too tidy survey of artistic endeavour, which proposes a sequence of the arts whereby each comes to the fore during a different century, Gray states:

Music was the archetypal art of the nineteenth century, the one to which all the other arts aspire.³⁸

Jack Westrup counsels against giving too much credence to Gray's method³⁹; but this in itself does not invalidate Gray's thesis in respect of the nineteenth century. Indeed his general approach receives substantial support, and Irish support at that, in an essay by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford where he proceeds by quoting a

conversation with a friend with whose views the composer was in full sympathy.

He laid stress on the historical position of music in the various countries of Europe from the fifteenth century on, pointing out the fact that each nation had in turn enjoyed a period of commanding superiority, the Netherlands, the Italians, the English, and after them the Germans; the periods of the first three named being about equal, but the Germans, thanks to Luther, having reigned for double the time allotted to the others. The English period was, in his opinion, cut short by the influence of the Puritans, who discouraged music as much as Luther encouraged it, but who, by abstaining from interference with painting, enabled the art to go on its way developing up to this day.⁴⁰

Gray's opinion that the Romantic age was a prime era of musical endeavour finds further sustenance in the oft-quoted account of the coeval writer E.T.A.Hoffmann (1776-1822). Speaking of music as an independent art, he states:

It is the most romantic of all the arts - one might almost say, the only genuinely romantic one - for its sole subject is the infinite.⁴¹

This passage may be misleading if it is not stressed that Hoffmann was here solely considering instrumental music, 'scorning every aid'.⁴² But the non-referential character of pure music left it a less useful vehicle for cultural nationalism; thus it was that music of a more definite nature, through association with text, such as opera and song, became initially the favoured medium for composers wishing to contribute to a distinctly localized enunciation. Bereft of such aids, music would not recommend itself as a medium for a pragmatic crusade. The corollary is that stable political entities best support a flourishing musical life; dispossessed nations with aspirations were more inclined to sponsor a propagative culture with an explicit orientation. The limitations of certain types of music were early apparent to some who espoused a nationalist sentiment. One, James Beattie (1735-1803), who from 1760 held the chair of moral philosophy at Marischal College, Aberdeen, wrote an Essay on Poetry and Music

which concluded with 'Conjectures on some peculiarities of national music'.

Music however would not have recommended itself so effectively to general esteem if it had always been merely instrumental. For if I mistake not, the expression of music without poetry is vague and ambiguous, and hence it is that the same air may sometimes be repeated to every stanza of a long ode or ballad.⁴³

Consideration of the role that the Männerchor movement played in the pursuit of German unification provides support for this within a nationalist framework. While association with a text represented the obvious solution allowing for more explicit orientation, other avenues of expression followed: programme music offered itself once the programme was popularly understood; also available was the use of indigenous idioms such as characteristic melodic curves, intervals, rhythms, dance forms, and so forth. A further method lay in direct quotation from the growing store of known folksong or indeed any reference to autochthonous music. But reliance on a recognizable ethnic sensibility without reference to the aforementioned expedients was not designed to succeed as such sensibility is, by its nature, subjective. Herein lies the especial difficulty resulting from music's contribution to cultural nationalism; for music to be indentured to such a cause it was necessary for the composer to employ selective devices and to work within a limited range of forms; in short, the creative artist had to be willing to forego complete artistic freedom in order to serve a particular end. And the range of options open to the composer was even more limited because the strength of a statement was related to its accessibility; nationalist ideology thrived on a simple and readily understood symbolism, and cultural contributions proved no exception. Excepting the occasional genius, composers were faced with the fact that such work would have limited currency and would be constrained to a particular time and place with little relevance outside those boundaries. Furthermore, and this is especially pertinent in the case of Ireland, the cosmopolitan musical instruction offered to European composers was often at variance with the autochthonous tradition which they were now to explore, and the

presentation of the latter in the clothing of the former was frequently to prove uneasy and occasionally controversial.

This in turn leads to a more profound consideration, and one fundamental to this thesis: that a major consequence of the age of cultural nationalism has been the loss of a universal culture and its replacement by a collection of ethnic expressions. To put it at its simplest, the compositions of the greatest masters of the Classical and early Romantic ages are available to anyone cognizant of the Western musical tradition. Haydn, for instance, could be appreciated equally well in Oxford and Vienna. This same level of easy universality is not apparent in Haydn's twentieth-century successors. This is not because the composers of this century are in any measure inferior, nor is it because the age of genius has passed, indeed to subscribe to this view would be to support the simplistic thesis propounded by Gray. It is, rather, a consequence of the passing of the pan-European era which has inclined composers to look inwards for both inspiration and audience. Culture is now an ethnic concept; there is no longer a single culture, but an assembly of individual cultures, often hostile to the very cross-fertilization necessary for their survival. Thus in spite of the vastly improved communications network and of the availability of various media, the number of universal composers appears to have diminished. Nor is the argument confined to personalities, it applies equally to the forms and structures of the art; the general agreement on such matters evident throughout the Classical and early Romantic ages has given way to an increasing array of divergent views on the construction, the forms, and the application of new technology to the creation and performance of modern music. Rarely before can the future course of music have been so much in doubt, and this uncertainty has disposed many to find even greater affinity with music of past ages. This current state is, in large measure, a product of the loss of a universal culture. Particularly important too, in the context of this work, is how this situation affected the outlook of the individual Irish composer. He was as likely as not trained in the European idiom, but yet because of the new cultural division he was not to have a European audience but a predominantly Irish audience which demanded of him a distinctive Irish expression. Thus the Irish composer faced two central difficulties: first, his training and the mode of his

expression were often antithetical; second, deprived of a universal, or at very least European, voice, he was dependent on the artistic sensibility of a national audience which in turn was subject to the general level of musical education available.

The picturesque: Arnold Bax and Ernest Moeran

Before proceeding to examine the educational situation, mention needs be made of one potent consequence of the break with a universal musical culture. An investigation of artistic development in a small country seeking to achieve political autonomy will inevitably discover a defensive posture antithetical to external influence. The dangers inherent in such a stance were readily apparent to those able to take an objective view. The American composer Roger Sessions (1896-1985), writing of the restrictions on music in Germany following the rise of the National Socialists, noted:

An artificial shutting off of 'foreign contacts' will not therefore necessarily deepen the indigenous ones, nor will it give roots to those who have not got them. If a healthy art cannot absorb 'foreign elements' it will throw them off spontaneously, and without external and self-conscious pressure.⁴⁴

Such dispassionate analysis was more readily available to those confident of their heritage. Composers from nations secure in their distinctive personality went so far as to cultivate the exotic, consciously seeking out the idioms of other cultures. One thinks of the attraction that Spain held for generations of French composers; Chabrier, Debussy, and Ravel following in the footsteps of Auber and Bizet. Similarly, Hungary has traditionally been a source of inspiration to German composers. Many of those fired by Ireland and its culture were of Irish extraction: in this category are the Parisian, Augusta Holmès (1847-1903), the Americans, Edward MacDowell (1861-1908) and Henry Cowell (1897-1965), and the English-born Elizabeth Maconchy (b.1907). The works by such artists which find their inspiration in a particular culture are indubitably the fruits of increasing national consciousness. While they represent a peculiar response to ethnic sensibility, they cannot be dismissed as less

sincere than the more regular fruits of the nationalist harvest. Arnold Bax (1883-1953) would not have countenanced the notion that his creations, born of a love of the Irish countryside and culture, were either flippant or condescending in comparison with the music, say, of Stanford.

The account of Bax's commitment to Ireland causes the observer to reflect on the diversity of cultural responses to nationalism. For Bax was no musical tourist; his affection for Ireland went exceeding deep. One is never far from literary considerations when focusing on this enigmatic figure, a reserved man with a passionate expression. His interest in Ireland was enkindled through an encounter with the poetry of Yeats, as was that of his younger brother, Clifford, who was to achieve considerable if transient fame as a playwright. According to the composer's testimony as disclosed in Farewell, My Youth, a short volume of reminiscences which reveals its author to be a percipient observer with a keen sense of humour, it was reading 'The Wanderings of Oisín' (1889) that persuaded Bax 'to follow the dream'.⁴⁵ The literary interest demonstrates that Bax's embrace of Ireland had a more profound motivation than a mere attraction to native folksong. In 1902 Bax paid the first of what was to be a succession of visits to Ireland and some of his earliest work was infused with the initial throes of this infatuation. Evidence for this lies in the preparation of an opera Deirdre, a project which was never realized. The towering influence of Yeats is apparent in the tone-poem Cathleen ní Hoolihan (1905). This and sketches for the aborted opera were in turn to shape later works notably the tone-poem Into the Twilight (1908) which is representative of Bax's early style. It is one of a trilogy of such pieces, its companions being In the Faery Hills (1909) and Roscatha (1910), the latter being the Irish name for a battle hymn. Into the Twilight can be accused of being technically uneven, but it has an endearing quality and it reveals Bax writing 'Irishly', to borrow his own adverb.⁴⁶ It exhibits that tendency toward the large orchestra which was to become a hallmark, although his request for a quartet of trombones to play for just four bars is extravagant even by his expansive standards. They add to the great climax towards which the whole course of the work is directed from its tentative opening (Ex.1). The work demonstrates that flair for good melodic writing, and the sensitivity of its final

resignation bespeaks a mature vision. The work was given its première in 1909 by Thomas Beecham and then lay unpublished and unheard until it was resurrected in Ireland in 1971 from among his papers deposited in University College Cork.

Ex.1

Clar.

In the Faery Hills, dedicated to H.Balfour Gardiner, is even more assured and was the only one of this trilogy to be published. According to the composer's testimony, as revealed in a programme note, this was an attempt 'to suggest the revelries of the "Hidden People"' and owed its genesis to the writings of his literary paragon:

The middle section of the work is based to some extent on a passage in W.B.Yeats's poem 'The Wanderings of Oisín'. In this he tells how the Danaan host give the human bard a harp and bid him sing. The latter sings a song of human joy, which the mortals claim to be the saddest thing they have ever heard. One of them, weeping, snatches the harp from Oisín's hand and flings it away into a pool, whereupon the host surround the harper and whirl him away into a tumult of laughter and dancing.⁴⁷

The sparsely scored opening conjures up that mood of mystery while the characteristic harp supplies the elfin feel that pervades the work (Ex.2). The horn calls rendered first by the clarinets act as a unifying device, and the melody presented by Oisín on cor anglais is reminiscent of folk melody in its free rhythm and decorative turns.

Ex. 2

Tempo moderato

Clars *p* 3
Flute *p* 3
Harp *p*
3

Trpts. *pp* 3
p Fgs 3

These tone-poems can be viewed as the first of a succession of works that eventually led to the creation of The Garden of Fand (1913) which ranks as the surpassing achievement of this early commitment to Ireland and her people.

While Bax was profoundly appreciative of the quality of indigenous Irish music, he did not seek to employ the airs directly, as he said, 'it never seemed worth while to write Carlow or Cavan rhapsodies'.⁴⁸ He was critical of those composers who attempted the marriage of folksong to Western harmonic procedure.

The Irish for their part can point to C.V.Stanford, Charles Wood, and Hamilton Harty. Unhappily, these three undoubtedly proficient musicians were assiduous and dutiful disciples of the nineteenth century German tradition, even whilst clothing their native melodies in all too conventional dress. They never penetrated to within a thousand miles of the Hidden Ireland.⁴⁹

Bax was primarily concerned to absorb the spirit of the nation and to have this inform his creativity. This initially took a literary form and many who regarded him as an aspiring man of letters were unaware of Bax the musician. He was soon accepted into Dublin's literary circle and in the years preceding the Rising of 1916 he was closely acquainted with James Stephens, Thomas MacDonagh, and Seamus O'Sullivan, the latter being a pseudonym adopted by James Starkey. Bax was closer again to George Russell (AE), and the latter's mysticism and pantheism found echo in the musician although Bax admitted to finding AE's empyrean monologues tiresome.⁵⁰ For a period of two years from 1911, Bax would frequently make the short journey from his rented home on Bushy Park road to AE's house in Rathgar avenue to be part of one of those sociable evenings which were so much a part of the city's cultural life until the middle of this century. It was there he met and formed an especial friendship with the poet Padraic Colum, 'the purest and most generous nature I ever had the good luck to encounter',⁵¹ and with his wife, Molly. Bax was to set a number of his friend's poems including a group of three in 1922. The first of these, 'Cradle Song', is a gentle lyric which had earlier attracted a response from Hamilton Harty and Herbert Hughes. Bax's reading reflects well

the mood of the poem and stands as a testimony to the respect between the two artists.

Moving in this circle of free thinkers and committed activists served to intensify Bax's sympathy with the nationalist movement. He immersed himself in things Irish with a will.

I worked very hard at the Irish language and steeped myself in history and saga, folk-tale and fairy-lore.⁵²

Bax produced plays and poems under assumed names chosen to authenticate his Irishness. He wrote first as Dermot McDermott and later under the more enduring Dermot O'Byrne. Under this pseudonym he published A Dublin Ballad, his emotive response to the insurrection of 1916 which earned the wrath of the censor who adjudged it subversive.

O write it up above your hearth
And troll it out to sun and moon,
To all true Irishmen on earth
Arrest and death come late or soon.

Some boy-o whistled Ninety-eight
One Sunday night in College Green,
And such a broth of love and hate
Was stirred ere Monday morn was late
As Dublin town had never seen.

And God-like forces shocked and shook
Through Irish hearts that lively day,
And hope it seemed no ill could brook.
Christ! for that liberty they took
There was the ancient deuce to pay!⁵³

These opening stanzas from a long and acerbic poem marked an unpropitious introduction to the establishment for a future Master of the King's Music. The Easter Rising also elicited a number of musical responses from Bax. The first of these was completed on 9 August 1916. It is a short score which survives in original manuscript being one of a pair of pieces from this time donated by Harriet Cohen to the library of University College Dublin in the years after the composer's passing. The first is a tone-poem, In Memoriam, which is too detailed even to the extent of intended orchestral configuration to be described as a sketch. It bears the dedication 'I gcuimhne ar bPadraigh macPiarraig', a testimony both to Bax's understanding of the language and of his

sympathy for the executed leader of the rebellion. Bax was later to recount in Farewell, My Youth the lasting impression that his single meeting with Padraig Pearse had had upon him. Some 200 bars in length, the tribute opens with a wandering melody delivered by double reeds (Ex.3).

Ex.3

Ex.3 shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'cor ang.' and the bottom staff is labeled 'oboe'. The music is in G major (one sharp) and common time. The top staff begins with a quarter rest followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff features a melodic line with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking and a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking, with two '5' fingerings indicated below the notes.

A turbulent central section heralds an expansive and heroic melody in violins and violas (Ex.4) which Bax was later incongruously to recall in the score for the film Oliver Twist (1948).

Ex.4

Ex.4 consists of three staves of music. The top staff begins with a dynamic marking of 'f' (forte). The music is in G major (one sharp) and common time. The bottom staff includes a triplet marking '3' over three notes.

In Memoriam concludes with a resigned horn figure which finally anchors the work in B major (Ex.5).

Ex.5

The same pervading sentiment informs the second of these pieces which is a song for baritone and piano written 'in memory of certain Irish patriots'.

Though your eyes with tears were blind,
 Pain upon the path you trod:
 Well we knew, the hosts behind,
 Voice and shining of a god.⁵⁴

Thus opens the short poem by AE entitled 'A Leader' which Bax employs as the text of his song. This is the selfsame song which the Bax scholar, Lewis Foreman, records as lost in his fine study of the composer.⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that Bax must have relied on memory because he inverts the nouns in the first line (Ex.6).

Ex.6

Again this short work of 52 bars is too detailed to be described as a draft. The passionate piano introduction illustrates the detail with which the composer conceived this song which stands as the shortest but one of the most sincere affirmations of Bax's espousal of Irish nationalist sentiment (Ex.7).

Ex.7

Softly but heavily

The image shows a musical score for a piano introduction, labeled 'Ex.7'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system is in bass clef and includes a '3' marking. The second system is in treble clef and includes 'sfz' and 'p' markings. Above the first system, the instruction 'Softly but heavily' is written. Below the first system, there is a bracketed section labeled '8vb'. The score is written in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 3/4 time signature.

Yet another testimony to the profound attachment to Ireland is provided by An Irish Tone Poem for two pianos which was completed and first performed in 1916. For Bax, this was an evocation of the pleasant plain of Irish mythology and accordingly it also bears the title Moy Mell which suggests 'the gaiety and radiance of the visionary other world'.⁵⁶ In this impressive work of some ten minutes duration one senses the final shift in interest from the immediate and political to the mythical and the natural. Bax was moving from the music of commitment and embracing in its stead a more pantheistic approach to Ireland. He was to retain his love for the country but increasingly it was to centre on the natural beauty of the western seaboard. Ireland appealed to the romantic in Bax, and to appeal to the romantic in Bax was to appeal to his soul. This attraction was equally evident in

respect of his compatriot and companion, Ernest John Moeran (1894-1950). Jack Moeran, as he was known to close friends, had first come to Ireland in more prosaic fashion. He arrived in Boyle, County Roscommon for a period of convalescence following a severe head injury sustained in May 1917 while serving with the British army in France. Moeran was never fully to recover from this wound, and it is the opinion of the Irish conductor, Michael Bowles, who knew the composer well, that what was later adjudged crapulence was, at least in part, a legacy of this injury.⁵⁷

While the two Englishmen became good friends, and Moeran's empathy with Ireland echoed that of Bax, yet they were quite contrary in character. Bax was confident and forthright as a musician, given to the large gesture. Moeran was the opposite: quieter by nature, almost diffident as a musician; in compositional terms a miniaturist and one whose works readily betray the many influences to which he was susceptible. Among these can be discerned folksong, either of Norfolk or Ireland, the music of Delius which in early works is so powerful as to submerge any sense of individuality, and not least that whole revival of interest in the golden age of Elizabethan music. The latter influence was nourished through friendship with his exact contemporary Philip Heseltine (1894-1930) who employed the pen-name Peter Warlock. Moeran's attractive Whythorne's Shadow (1931), based on a partsong by the little known Elizabethan composer Thomas Whythorne, is of a style with Warlock's Renaissance based Capriol Suite (1926).

Even prior to writing Whythorne's Shadow Moeran was engaging in composition with a distinct Irish flavour. In 1929 he completed Seven Poems of James Joyce, a setting of texts taken principally from Chamber Music (1907). These gentle pieces show that Moeran was not concerned with a music of commitment, neither here nor elsewhere; he did not respond to a social or political environment; his attention focused on matters less immediate, the beauty of the country and fecundity of its expression. The songs capture well this preoccupation. The simple syllabic melody of the fifth song 'Donnycarney' with its characteristic flattened seventh is set against a transparent but rich piano accompaniment (Ex.8).

Ex. 8

In easy time

O, - it was out by Don- ny-

-car -ney when the bat flew from tree to

tree, My love and I did walk to- geth- er;

mp

3

3

Moeran was at this time planning a more substantial work, his Symphony in g minor. Large-scale enterprises always posed him problems; he had been commissioned by Hamilton Harty in 1924 to write a symphony but it took some 13 years to complete the task. Written primarily in his beloved Kerry, it clearly demonstrates the influence of Ireland and its success established his reputation. It also engendered the confidence to embark on another extensive work, the Violin Concerto, which remains one of his crowning achievements and the greatest tribute to his adopted land. According to Geoffrey Self:

It was an Irish concerto that Moeran intended to write, a concerto which saw Ireland as a haven.⁵⁸

A theme such as that announced by flutes in the first movement with the dance rhythm, the closing decorative turn, and the reiterated tonic at the phrase ending demonstrates how deeply folksong had permeated his imagination (Ex.9).

Ex.9



The very spirit of Ireland and especially of Kerry is evident in the central rondo which evokes the gaiety of a fair day in Killorglin and thereby provides a neat comparison with the scherzo of Hamilton Harty's Irish Symphony. It is precisely this sincere attempt to see from within that frees Moeran from the charge of writing pastiche. Not only is the concerto a fine work, far surpassing the later Cello Concerto, it is also a work with a warm eye and a kind heart, one which presents picturesque nationalism as a positive entity.

But despite having an Irish father - the Revd J.J.W.Moeran was born in Dublin - Moeran was not more inherently attached to the Irish idiom than was Bax. For both it was an occasional voice. One can readily understand the assessment of Aloys Fleischmann that 'Moeran

was, properly speaking, Irish' while at the same time refuting it.⁵⁹ Later substantial works such as the Sinfonietta (1944) and the Serenade in G major (1948) show Moeran writing free of any debt to Ireland. The dexterity with which he could assume diverging styles is evidenced by the settings of texts by the Irish poet Seamus O'Sullivan made in the same year as the Sinfonietta. The Six Poems of Seamus O'Sullivan stand with the settings of Joyce as his principal contribution to the accompanied song repertoire. The melody of the second of these songs, 'The Poplars', demonstrates how readily Moeran could imitate the character of folksong (Ex.10). And he was to return to the Irish mode for one of his last undertakings, the setting of Songs from County Kerry. Completed in the year of his death, this collection of seven songs which he had gathered over a period of years remains as a parting tribute to the area he treasured.

Ex.10

Andantino

mp

As I went dream- ing by the grey pop- lar trees, They
bent down and whis - pered words like these

Bax and Moeran are treated here separately because their responses to the influence of nationalism were individual. In an age made inward looking through the suffusion of heightened ethnic sentience their contributions remain singularly courageous and prescient. They embraced not just aspects of the tradition but, to employ Eliot's phrase, the whole way of life. The Irish mode was not for them some ephemeral exotic, but was more profound without being central to their creative personalities. While those works with which we are here concerned reflect the personalities of their authors and do not contribute to any broader school of writing and are consequently outside the mainstream of Irish composition, they yet serve to

demonstrate the variety of response elicited by the nationalist movement. They also supply a valuable point of reference against which native Irish composers, both those who had preceded and those who followed Bax and Moeran, may better be seen in perspective. Likewise both musicians deserve credit for espousing in such a thorough manner what was initially an unfamiliar culture and for remaining constant in that affection through an insular age. While they laboured aside from the central current, their generous embrace of Irish culture was welcomed by their Irish counterparts because it strongly suggested that beneath the inflated praise regularly called forth by this heritage there lay a quality of tradition that was noble and distinct.

Education

Music, it is often stated, is an international language. Regional dialects obtain but yet, so the argument goes, the language transcends all boundaries. Accounts of Bax and Moeran and their involvement with Ireland would appear to corroborate this argument. However, as suggested above, they were exceptional; such confidence in an inclusive expression had been subverted throughout the Romantic era as the preoccupation with diversity grew. Not even the award of the Prix de Rome and the necessary period of study there could prompt Berlioz to an appreciation of the Italian perception of music. His reminiscences, employed here precisely because of his passion for travelling and his opinionated nature which taken together might suggest an open and cosmopolitan perspective, demonstrate that a musician of sensibility was unmistakably conscious of a degree of difference more profound than mere vernacular variation.

In general there is no denying that the Italians as a nation appreciate music solely for its physical effect and are alive only to what is on the surface.... Music for the Italians is a sensual pleasure and nothing more. For this noble expression of the mind they have hardly more respect than for the art of cooking.... I confess I would as soon sell pepper and cinnamon in a grocer's shop in the rue Saint-Denis as write for the Italians.⁶⁰

A later composer, also not averse to occasioning controversy, Ralph Vaughan Williams, commenced his examination of national music with a consideration of this proposition of music as the shared language, and concluded that the notion is spurious.

But unfortunately for the art of music some misguided thinker, probably first cousin to the man who invented the unfortunate phrase 'a good European', has described music as 'the universal language'. It is not even true that music has a universal vocabulary, but even if it were so it is the use of the vocabulary that counts and no one supposes that French and English are the same language because they happen to use twenty-five out of twenty-six of the letters of their alphabet in common. In the same way, in spite of the fact that they have a musical alphabet in common, nobody could mistake Wagner for Verdi or Debussy for Richard Strauss. And, similarly, in spite of wide divergencies of personal style, there is a common factor in the music say of Schumann and Weber.⁶¹

Such views are representative of the accord, perceptible in the post eighteenth-century period, that music was fundamentally an ethnic expression with nationality being the sole common factor. It is interesting in this regard, despite the loss of a universal culture, to see how the art has largely retained its cosmopolitan instruction through the third phase of nationalism. Despite the decided views of Vaughan Williams, the fundamentals, structures, and technique of music translate with ease across the boundaries of race and politics, just as basic academic texts can travel widely through the barriers of language with no loss of relevance. But other disciplines, history provides an example, present a separate experience; there is equally considerable divergence in the spirit of what is being taught; and it is this very difference that points the pivotal place of education in nationalist ideology. As Peter Alter notes

National consciousness is mediated by education in the widest sense of the word.⁶²

The philosophers whose writings contributed to the first flowerings of the third phase of nationalism were conscious of the decisive role of education. The primus inter pares in this respect was

Rousseau who numbered educational theory among his catholic range of interests, and he was to exercise considerable influence on the subject. He regarded education as the most important business of the state and pursued this idea through Émile and other writings. In A Discourse on Political Economy (1755), Rousseau argues that the state rather than parents should be responsible for the education of the young because 'education is of still greater importance to the State than to the fathers'.⁶³

Should the public authority, by taking the place of the father, and charging itself with that important function, acquire his rights by discharging his duties, he would have the less cause to complain, as he would only be changing his title, and would have in common, under the name citizen, the same authority over his children, as he was exercising separately under the name of father, and would not be less obeyed when speaking in the name of the law, than when he spoke in that of nature. Public education, therefore, under regulations prescribed by the government, and under magistrates established by the Sovereign, is one of the fundamental rules of popular or legitimate government. If children are brought up in common in the bosom of equality; if they are imbued with the laws of the State and precepts of the general will; if they are surrounded by examples and objects which constantly remind them of the tender mother who nourishes them, of the love she bears them, of the inestimable benefits they receive from her, and of the return they owe her, we cannot doubt that they will learn to cherish one another mutually as brothers, to will nothing contrary to the will of society, to substitute the actions of men and citizens for the futile and vain babbling of sophists, and to become in time defenders and fathers of the country of which they will have been so long the children.⁶⁴

One issue united those who valued education for its importance in personal and social development and those others who saw it as a means to an end: the fact that the state was the only organ capable of providing such a programme. The English writer, historian, and social prophet, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), supported Rousseau's views, and his positive concept of the state's responsibility foreshadowed the

opinions of many who followed. He argued that the chief duty of the state was

To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet who could in that case think: this, one would imagine, was the first function a government had to set about discharging.⁶⁵

During the nineteenth century the importance of education in engendering national sentiment was even more fully appreciated. In concurring with this view, the report of the Royal Institute of International Affairs states:

Even where the curriculum is not deliberately designed to stimulate national feeling, the system inevitably tends to produce that result. However much discretion may be left to the individual teacher, no State will tolerate teaching subversive of the principles on which its existence is based. The young, by being taught to respect the traditions of their country, are steeped in a common environment which ensures from the outset a large measure of uniformity and a definite mental background. History text-books will justify and extol the national point of view at the expense of that of other nations. Portraits of members of royal families or, in republics, of leading statesmen will be prominently exhibited. National festivals will be celebrated. Emphasis will be laid on the duties and functions of citizenship. It is only the exceptional mind which will later emancipate itself from this early and unconscious moulding.⁶⁶

Weber, speaking as a sociologist, would have agreed with this, believing as he did that a national identity was a fundamental pillar of the modern state; he would add that the state was the context for the fostering and promotion of this Kultur through the medium of a centrally-planned curriculum. For this process Weber coined the term 'the democratization of culture'⁶⁷, which had been the goal of the generation of German philosophers following Herder, although in its pursuit they sacrificed much of his altruistic vision. Rudolf Rocker, the American political commentator, recognizes the pivotal position

afforded education in the work of one member of this generation.

Speaking of Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation Rocker states:

Their kernel is the national education of youth - according to Fichte the first and most important preliminary measure for the liberation of the country from the yoke of the foreign ruler, and the creation of a new generation familiar with the sacred mission of the nation.... Fichte raised national education to a systematic cult. He wished even to remove children from the home so that their national development would be exposed to no counter currents.⁶⁸

Fichte's advocacy of étatisme, and the role of education in support of this are borne out by his own writings which are representative of the age.

In a word, it is a total change of the existing system of education that I propose as the sole means of preserving the existence of the German nation.... The new education must consist essentially in this, that it completely destroys freedom of will in the soil which it undertakes to cultivate, and produces, on the contrary, strict necessity in the decisions of the will, the opposite being impossible.... The education proposed by me, therefore is a reliable and deliberate art for fashioning in man a stable and infallible good will.⁶⁹

This is emblematic of the calculating and manipulative approach to education adopted by some nationalist commentators of the early nineteenth century. There was ever present the danger that such thinking would be applied to the whole culture; that creative artists would surrender a measure of creative freedom and would instead be encouraged to contribute to the development of an (often artificial) high culture predetermined by the state, or aspiring state, and designed to promote or sustain a political programme. It follows from this that if culture is made a distinguishing feature then language will be given primacy of place. This was precisely the German experience: faced with forging a union comprising some hundreds of independent states with their own traditions, structures, and loyalties, and divided in religious allegiance, it was natural for the pioneers of the nationalist movement to emphasize the obvious bond of

language. It is this very motive that gives rise in the parallel Italian movement to the term 'irredentist'.

The function ascribed to education in this third phase has been central to Ernest Gellner's publications on nationalism.⁷⁰ Gellner's consistent thesis is that with the onset of industrialization and modernization and the accompanying urbanization and disruption of the social order, culture assumed the axial responsibility of providing a point of reference; it offers to all, even to those experiencing migration or class mobility, a sense of fellowship, to the extent that citizenship and a shared culture become synonymous. But this presupposes a common culture which necessitated the imposition of a centrally-planned high culture to replace the myriad parochial low cultures. The retention of local mores in place of a communal culture would have inhibited migration and mobility and consequently restricted modernization and its practical benefits. To ensure such a high culture - and the term equates with prevalence, with no connotation of value judgment - the state must rely on its education system which offers to each of its citizens the same basic schooling with specialization being introduced at a relatively late stage thus affording a greater possibility of interchange and, more to the point here, fostering through this shared experience a kinship.

Culture is no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce.⁷¹

Just as education is fundamental to national cohesion so too is it central to the dignity of the individual and to his prospects of social advancement.

A man's education is by far his most precious investment, and in effect confers his identity on him. Modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture.⁷²

The intelligentsia proved critical in this new-found focus on education. This enlightened group felt itself at some cultural remove from the ruling establishment and engaged in the research designed to establish a distinct identity. It was an involvement fraught with incongruity, as is well demonstrated in the Irish situation. As was the case with so many nationalist eclosions, the intelligentsia in Ireland was primarily concentrated in the major cities, ironically with individual members often finding employment within the government service. Yet, despite position and education, this group engaged in a celebration of the simple rural life, presenting it as a natural continuity embodying the true and ideal character of the nation. Bax and Moeran were thus at one with this formative body in identifying with the primitive and the natural.

Nationalist movements are all urban-based, though, as in China, they may fail to secure sufficient support and enlist the peasants. At the same time, they originate in the town. And yet their imagery is full of nostalgia and idealisation for the countryside and folk virtues.⁷³

Moreover, the intelligentsia saw in the rural community the constituency for its beliefs. But, as it was dealing with a widespread community which enjoyed limited educational opportunities, it had, perforce, to engage this constituency with a culture that was accessible. Hence the reliance on evocative symbols. The culture engendered by nationalism was as variable as every other aspect connected with the phenomenon. That it was initially not profound is a consequence of the requirement for a populist expression; one looks in vain for great art in the nascent phase of nationalism. However, as the movement matured, there was less need for a simplistic propaganda; a seasoned ethnic sentiment furnishes a more challenging and rewarding artistic enunciation. This is certainly evidenced in the Irish situation where composers of later generations worked with more freedom from a constricting commitment to espouse an obviously national voice. The role of the intelligentsia is associated with the early phases where it took upon itself a proselytizing mission to communicate its findings to the wider nation through an educational system which increasingly recognized native values and traditions. Its influence

confirmed the critical role of education in the propagation of the national ideal.

The foregoing accords with the necessarily foreshortened version of Gellner's theory, and it raises a number of questions which have a direct bearing on the correlation of Irish nationalism and music. The enquirer is again confronted with the issue of whether nationalism is an evolutionary or a forced process; but on this occasion the enquiry centres on the degree to which the cultural movement is indentured to statecraft. The answer to the question when set in this particular context must be sought for on a national basis. But those who subscribe to the view that nationalism and its cultural expression are malleable are naturally inclined to consider education an instrument of policy, a fact only too apparent to Eliot.

There is also the danger that education - which indeed comes under the influence of politics - will take upon itself the reformation and direction of culture, instead of keeping to its place as one of the activities through which a culture realises itself.⁷⁴

Gellner would argue that this is not just the danger, but is the practice. He would carry the argument further to state that the whole culture was deliberately calculated to sustain a particular polity, for which process he devised the memorable term 'cultural engineering'.⁷⁵ It behoves us to examine whether such a process can be discerned in the Irish context. Are there the facts to support the existence of an high culture in nineteenth-century Ireland? If so, was it a consummate aggregation of the community's tradition, beliefs, and expression, or was it rather, in whole or partly, a contrived even meretricious agglomeration designed to authenticate a particular national image? It follows from this to question whether the artists, historians, antiquarians, and anthropologists of the age pursued their labours free of any conscious or subconscious adherence to a foreordained and determinate objective. One could also ask in this context whether it is legitimate to consider the quality of a culture, and, if so, whether the degree has any bearing on the prospects for success of the attendant nationalism. Further lines of enquiry relate specifically to Ireland, and to whether its history, the resultant complex social

fabric, and its relatively isolated geographical position combined to make it a unique case among West European nationalisms. A similar exercise will be necessary to establish the character of the nineteenth-century Irish cultural revival. This will involve, consistent with Gellner's theory, some investigation of the Irish education system with special reference to the arts. Third, and of prime importance, are questions relating to music's contribution to nationalist sentiment and the influence which the doctrine exercised on the course of musical development in the country.

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The divergence in taste which asserts itself in all the various nations that take any pleasure at all in art has the greatest influence on musical judgment, not only as regards essential matters, but still more regards accidental ones.

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CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER III

'Our father's sons'

The Irish experience of nationalism has attracted considerable interest from scholars, both native and foreign, because of its unique character and because of its perceived status as the first successful Western nationalism of the twentieth century. It will be the purpose of this chapter to trace the emergence of the doctrine in Ireland, to examine the manner in which Irish developments differ from those of neighbouring countries, and to assess the appreciable cultural impact and its legacy. In so doing it will be necessary to take into account two fundamentally different schools of historiography. First, there is the traditional approach evident in the writings of the years preceding and following the establishment of the Irish Free State. Second, there is the revisionists' approach prevalent in the last four decades which propounds an alternative reading of Irish history. Following a survey of both these approaches, it is proposed to offer a novel reading of the progress of Irish nationalism with particular emphasis on the reasons underlying the cultural efflorescence of the Celtic Revival, and to furnish an assessment of the attention afforded music within this renaissance.

Irish nationalism: the traditional approach

The most frequently voiced criticism of the traditional reading of Irish history relates to its central trait: its Anglocentric obsession. According to this school of thought, a cohesive native sentiment was a corollary of English domination. In essence Irish nationalism was a positive retort to a negative situation; it was an inevitable reaction to the imposition of alien rule, one which was at variance with, and unsympathetic to, the indigenous mode. The many historians who subscribed to this view were, consciously or subconsciously, proposing that the Irish experience of nationalism was in many ways unique, as befitted an island isolated on the edge of Europe. The influence of the French Revolution and of the nineteenth-century age of nationalism was accepted, but Ireland was not seen as part of this movement.

Native commentators frequently stressed the fact that Ireland alone had escaped the homogenizing influence of Roman civilization; Douglas Hyde (1860-1947), a leading nationalist, sometime professor of modern Irish at University College Dublin, and first president of independent Ireland, was one who proudly gave voice to this fact:

We alone of all the nations of Western Europe escaped the claws of those birds of prey; we alone developed ourselves naturally upon our own lines outside of and free from all Roman influence; we alone were thus able to produce an early art and literature, our antiquities can best throw light upon the pre-Romanised inhabitants of half Europe and - we are our father's sons.¹

This opinion was supported by another leading academic, Michael Tierney, whose career also focused on University College Dublin. His reading is notable for the concatenation of a venerable nationalism and Christianity.

The origins of Irish nationalism must be sought far back in history, in the existence of a distinctive Irish civilization, which was itself produced by the impact of the Christian Church upon a much older native pagan culture.... Ireland, unlike England, Germany or the Latin States, was Romanised only to the extent that it was Christianised.²

Likewise, Ireland was largely unaffected, at least directly, by the Reformation. One of the leading apostles of revolutionary nationalism, Padraic Pearse (1879-1916), argued that had the Irish heritage been rediscovered some three centuries earlier, Europe may have witnessed a Celtic rather than a Greek revival,

or rather the Celtic would have become the classic and the Gael would have given laws to Europe.... Now I claim for Irish literature, at its best, these excellences: a clearer than Greek vision, a more generous than Greek humanity, a deeper than Greek spirituality. And I claim that Irish literature has never lost those excellences: that they are of the essence of Irish nature and are characteristic of modern Irish folk poetry even as they are of ancient Irish epic and of

medieval hymns. This continuity of tradition amid all its changing moods (and the moods of Irish literature are as various as the moods of Irish climate) is one of the striking things about it: the old man who croons above a Connacht hearthplace the songs he made in his youth is as definitely a descendant of the elder bards as a Tennyson is of a Chaucer.³

Art and architecture provide further evidence of Ireland's relative isolation as the classical scholar W.B. Stanford records:

Those who look for signs of strong classical influence in early Irish art are likely to be disappointed. The naturalism of the Graeco-Roman styles found no favour among early Irish artists. No doubt Ireland's remoteness from the centres of classical art was partly to blame for this....⁴

If there was consensus on Ireland's relative isolation, there was less agreement on its positive effects. The poet, painter, and journalist, George Russell (AE, 1867-1935), friend to all aspiring artists including as we have seen Arthur Bax, considered the negative consequences attending the lack of an architectural tradition in a characteristically long question.

How much have we not lost culturally and economically because our architecture did not evolve naturally from ancient models: that a national school of design, starting from tradition and applying freely and modifying its form, had not given our arts and crafts a distinction of their own: that our folk music was not built upon by modern composers: that our culture in fact has not been recognisably our own, shaping our architecture, the furnishings of our houses, giving character to our industries, wherever art can be applied to industry?⁵

There is more modern evidence too of Ireland's insulation from prevailing European trends. The Irish countryside demonstrates little of the great Gothic, Baroque, and Classical architectural heritage evident throughout the landscape of its European neighbours. The traditional school will quickly and correctly point to the obvious

reasons for this, and the argument is underlined by the fact that some exception is provided by the East coast, which was most influenced by the English connection. Thus the architectural inheritance offers visible evidence of the failure of the prevailing European artistic endeavours in all fields to make any impact on Irish life. The commentators saw in this not a cause of regret, but a positive sign of the purity of the native legacy. They proudly pointed out that Ireland's monuments were of a far older vintage. This situation was interpreted to demonstrate not neglect nor indifference, but that the country was the final bastion of an unadulterated culture, one so venerable that it placed upon succeeding generations a burden of responsibility for its preservation. Implied in this reasoning was an assumption that found wide currency among traditionalists: that the true Ireland was rural Ireland, and that the only pure indigenous culture was that found away from the eastern littoral. A distinct divide resulted between urban and rural cultures with the latter being valued as having been least influenced by English custom; this was an example the negative approach to disparateness which was later to find a cultural counterpart. The unsophisticated peasant from the most westerly province of Connacht, which Bax was to refer tenderly to as 'that ultimate seaboard',⁶ was accordingly celebrated as the ideal exemplar of the untainted tradition. Bax's close friend, the poet Padraic Colum (1881-1972), is the exemplar of the artist who romanticizes the peasant. His work extols the unquestioning simplicity of the rural Irish man, such a one as the 'Poor Scholar of the Forties':

And what to me is Gael or Gall?
Less than the Latin or the Greek,
I teach these by the dim rush-light,
In smoky cabins night and week.
But what avail my teaching slight?
Years hence, in rustic speech a phrase,
As in wild earth a Grecian vase!⁷

This point is also averred by Tierney in his essay on the origins of Irish nationalism where he focuses on the achievements of the Gaelic League.

...it rediscovered the typical Irishman in the Gaelic-speaking peasant of the west, who had still kept alive the language, poetry,

music and dance, the characteristic outlook on life and mental idiom of the national past when they were only a remote memory elsewhere. Through him, and the living tradition he embodied, which was made clearer and more significant by the intense study of Irish literature, the concept of the Gael became an abiding national ideal and was to have a powerful influence on the politics of the future.⁸

That such talk of the 'typical Irishman' represented a constricted view is not doubted by the critic Richard Loftus, whose summation of the nationalist tenor of Colum and his associates and their promotion of peasant realism is uncompromising:

The 'lowest common denominator' of Irish life is exalted as the ideal toward which the Irish nation must strive.⁹

The distinction between urban and rural cultures, accentuated by this growing 'cult of primitivism',¹⁰ was apparent also in music. Urban musical taste in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most especially that of Dublin, was little different from that prevailing in London.

Dublin musical taste reflected that of London, the mainstay of its concert programmes being drawn from the current European tradition, especially that of the baroque composers of the Italian school such as Handel, Corelli and Vivaldi. The native music that was so much a part of the life of the Gaelic community flourished outside the metropolis and provincial cities.¹¹

Thus writes Brian Boydell who has made the music of eighteenth-century Ireland his special study. In an essay for A New History of Ireland, he also discusses this divide.

Furthermore, though the capital, Dublin was not the cultural focus of the great mass of the population. The split between Gaelic and Anglo-Irish, and between catholic and protestant, was more marked than ever before. If Haydn had perchance been born in some country district of Ireland rather than in a provincial Austrian village, the recognition of his budding genius by a musical traveller

could not have resulted in such marvellous opportunities for training as he found in Vienna.¹²

The consociation between the music of the capital and the cosmopolitan tradition identified with British practice was itself sufficient for many traditionalists to dismiss the urban culture as irrelevant. It effectively precluded the involvement of the majority in art music, but musical taste founded on such an evaluation had more to do with cultural allegiance than with objective critical judgment. These antithetical traditions persisted from the eighteenth century through the great age of nationalism and into the twentieth century. As will be seen, much of the musical enterprise particularly in the second half of this period was directed toward achieving a synthesis because composers, trained in and conversant with the European tradition, had little option but to confront the indigenous practice during such an age.

· Associated with the celebration of the peasant and his rural environment was a rejection of modernization and of the changes wrought by materialism. This rejection was to inform the approach to both economic and cultural strategies in the early years of the Free State.

Inherent in this approach was the danger of adopting a negative criterion of what constituted the pure tradition; true culture could be recognized only by the absence of foreign influence. In this respect it was occasionally easier to distinguish what wasn't Irish culture rather than what was. The term 'foreign' was employed extensively to describe that which did not conform to the accepted norm. Thus the differentiation between the true Irishman and the settler was shown by the designation of the latter as 'foreigner'; as D. George Boyce points out, the term foreigner 'applied to anything which followed the Normans in 1169'.¹³ Therefore, the nationalist movement expended considerable energy identifying and attempting to expel the uncharacteristic rather than devoting its undivided attention to the preservation and cultivation of the indigenous.

A further aspect of the traditional approach was the immense pride in past achievements, a pride not always based on the soundest premiss.

The historian, W.H.Grattan Flood (1857-1928), provides a musical exemplar of the tendency to allow enthusiasm to guide judgment. The ardent nationalism of Daniel Corkery (1878-1964), long-time professor of English at University College Cork, is also evident in his scholarship; his claims for the origins of Irish learning are characteristic:

But one searches Europe in vain for the equivalent of our bardic school system. In this regard, then, European civilization was less varied than Irish civilization.¹⁴

Fundamental to this school of thought was the belief that Ireland's passage represented a course unique in European history. Geographically situated on the periphery, it was inevitable that the primary external influence was that exerted by Ireland's nearest neighbour. The concentration of this relationship was intense to the degree that other outside associations were of only minor or occasional import. It thus became the practice to assess Ireland's welfare, political, economic, and cultural, solely in terms of its standing vis-à-vis England. Even that element of broader European influence which reached Ireland came primarily through this powerful neighbour. Consequently, the interpreters of this school considered Irish nationalism a response to the primacy of this connection. The major cultural repercussion was the increased focus on those characteristics which were most distinct from the dominant English mode. The consequence for music was even greater differentiation between the art music of the urban areas and the traditional expression chiefly associated with rural areas.

A corollary of the Anglocentric view is the belief that Irish nationalism originated from the initial subjugation of the country at the hands of her nearest neighbour. Owen Dudley Edwards is representative of those scholars who, like Tierney, differ from the accepted European view and propose much older roots for nationalism in Ireland.

...we should avoid the danger of becoming stereotyped in our view of nationalism... we cannot be happy to remain the prisoners of our periodization and hence assume that

nationalism could not exist in a feudal world, or that commitment to a universal religion, such as Roman Catholicism, was impossible for a nationalist... we cannot be content to believe that nationalism did not exist until the emergence of its fully-fledged, self-conscious ideologues. We who have known only modern nationalists are too prone to imagine nationalists can only be so-called if they go according to our modern rule-book. The nation-state, let us remember, is a product of medieval Europe.¹⁵

Edwards proceeds to argue for the early existence of a linguistic and cultural unity in Ireland which predated any corresponding political unity. Other scholars developed this idea contending that cultural awareness and cohesion were the inevitable result of the imposition of alien manners. Political expression was, perforce, a natural consequence. The traditionalists perceived the succeeding development of Irish history, particularly in the century and a half preceding independence, as a catalogue of alternate political and cultural endeavour, marked by the occasional pinnacles of abortive rebellions culminating ultimately in the Rising of 1916. Such a reading confers a neat unity of purpose. Political and cultural energies are focused inexorably on a single goal: a measure of political self-determination sufficient to allow for the celebration of a distinct and noble culture.

Irish nationalism: the revisionists' approach

The term 'revisionist' was coined to denote a school of Irish historical writing evident since the close of the Second World War. It was first employed pejoratively, particularly by ardent nationalists made uncomfortable by the new generation of scholars' tendency to challenge received wisdom. The revision concerned the interpretation of history rather than its factual sequence. In this respect, revisionism was born of a reaction to the cosy assumptions of the traditional view. The younger scholars regarded the older reading as not only Anglocentric but even Anglophobic in its attitude. Among its faults were that it had been too unquestioning in its acceptance of the eminence of Ireland's civilization prior to the Norman invasion of the twelfth century. In respect of a later age, it was too ready to

arrogate to England negative motivation in all her dealings with her close colony; the eight centuries of conflict were portrayed as a simplistic confrontation between forces of good and evil. Likewise, the traditional view was quick to overlook the complex composition of Irish society, and was ready to dismiss the contribution and claims of long-established settlers. Thus the very question of what it was to be Irish and what constituted the mother culture was conveniently reduced and made exclusive.

The revisionists questioned the notion that the Irish were racially pure and distinct and concluded that the race prior to the Norman invasion was as mixed, and had been as open to foreign settlers, as that of any of her continental neighbours. George Bernard Shaw anticipated this mood when he took delight in exploring the myth of Irish racial purity. In the preface to John Bull's Other Island, he poses the question 'what is an Irishman?'

My extraction is the extraction of most Englishmen: that is, I have no trace in me of the commercially imported North Spanish strain which passes for aboriginal Irish: I am a genuine typical Irishman of the Danish, Norman, Cromwellian, and (of course) Scotch invasions.¹⁶

Elsewhere he is even more caustic:

We are a parcel of mongrels, Spanish, Scottish, Welsh, English, and even a Jew or Two.¹⁷

Conscious of such criticism, the revisionists afforded greater attention to the diversity of cultural strands within Irish society, and this diversity was recognized as being at least as crucial to the development of affairs as was the English connection. It was not, however, uniformly accepted; Douglas Hyde is representative of the more closed tradition when, in his reading of Irish history, he skips across this question in rather glib fashion.

What we must endeavour to never forget is this, that the Ireland of to-day is the descendant of the Ireland of the seventh century; then the school of Europe and the torch of learning. It is true that the

Northmen [sic] made some minor settlements in it in the ninth and tenth centuries, it is true that the Normans made extensive settlements during the succeeding centuries, but none of those broke the continuity of the social life of the island.¹⁸

Consistent with this view is the image of Ireland as the great assimilator; Hyde's reading posits a unity of culture undisturbed by successive waves of immigration. The revisionists and their liberal predecessors countered this perception. In their reading four distinct cultures were identified and they are now widely accepted. First, the dominant English culture which, according to F.S.L.Lyons, had imposed itself

initially by conquest, establishing itself by successive colonizations, entrenching itself in law and government, developing new economic and social relationships, exercising a constant influence upon habits of thought and modes of life.¹⁹

English culture had indeed grown to the dominant position, but it had taken many centuries from the period of the initial colonization before it made an appreciable impression. Even in its eighteenth-century golden age, the age of Swift and Burke, its influence was geographically limited and was to a somewhat lesser extent restricted by class. The eastern littoral, and in particular an area around Dublin, was the heartland at this time when the capital, the second city of the Empire, enjoyed a level of artistic activity unrivalled at any other period. To this day there is a popular perception that music flourished in Dublin which proved sufficiently important a centre to attract Handel and the première of Messiah, and the twofold musical legacy of this eighteenth-century enterprise was first an enduring appreciation of European art music and, second, a deepening gulf between those subscribing to this appreciation and those for whom the only genuine musical expression was that provided by the indigenous tradition. The preeminence of English culture was assured during the nineteenth century by educational programmes, the growing level of literacy, the availability of newspapers and journals, and was confirmed by the later arrival of radio, and the cinema. Indeed, it

may be said that the past half century has seen an inexorable shift from an English, to an Anglo-American, culture.

The second cultural component is that most at variance with the dominant expression: the native expression which suffered in the modernization of society because it was primarily oral and linked to the Irish language. This was the strand celebrated by traditionalists as 'pure' native culture, principally on the grounds that it preceded the successive colonizations of the last millennium. It was highly prized for its ability to assimilate, as Hyde makes clear, but its advocates condemned as foreigners those impervious to absorption. Some would have narrowed this determinant even further by adding considerations of religion and language. The question of assimilation has proved contentious. The historian, James Anthony Froude, took a positive view when writing in 1872:

Irish Celts possess on their own soil a power greater than any other known family of mankind, of assimilating those who venture among them to their own image.²⁰

Some 30 years later another commentator, L. Paul-Dubois, took precisely the opposite view when he considered the Irish people.

There is no homogeneity in its ethnic origins; it includes descendants of the old Gaels, of the Danish invaders, of the Anglo-Normans, of the English of Elizabeth and of Cromwell.²¹

The degree to which the Irish could or could not assimilate has momentous cultural consequences. And the musical evidence would suggest that the dominant English tradition was not at all integrated. Tierney's conclusion is apposite.

This failure on the part of the native Irish to assimilate the Normans and the corresponding failure of the Normans and English to assimilate the Irish constitutes the great tragedy of Irish history.²²

A particular jewel in the crown of the traditionalists proved to be the native store of music which remained separate from the European practice sponsored by the descendants of immigrant communities in urban

areas and which was highly praised by scholars from both home and abroad. Increasingly musicians looked to this rich heritage as the basis for the generation of a distinctive style. Consistent with the move toward the creation of a synthesis, ventures to accommodate Irish practices within European idioms were a salient feature of many early twentieth-century compositions.

A third and important cultural strand was supplied by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy who were, according to J.C.Beckett,

the Protestant community that dominated Ireland in the eighteenth century and those who inherited and maintained its tradition in the changed and changing circumstances of a later age.²³

While this is here distinguished as a distinct cultural tradition, and the one which was to vie with the native heritage for supremacy, it was essentially a variation of the English praxis described above. In his masterly study, The Anglo-Irish Tradition, Beckett recognizes the central dilemma faced by this cultural pedigree:

The Anglo-Irish were caught between two conflicting influences: Irish by birth and circumstances, they lived in a cultural atmosphere that was essentially English.²⁴

The distinction between Anglo-Irish and English cultures is subtle, and indeed the nineteenth-century attempts of the colonial governing class to give voice to this difference proved a principal source of cultural endeavour. The artistic contribution of the group was out of all proportion to its relatively small size. While this contribution was made primarily through the medium of letters, the influence of this small community on musical affairs was also considerable.

The fourth and final element in the complex construction was provided by the final colonization in the seventeenth century, dominated by Scottish Presbyterians who were concentrated in the North-Eastern counties. Lyons listed their distinguishing characteristics:

a capacity for hard work, an incapacity for compromise, a hard common sense, a due regard for the importance both of religion and of money, a mordant turn of humour combined with a native kindness and a respect for the domestic virtues.²⁵

The geographical concentration of this group resulted in it exercising limited cultural influence on the island as a whole. Liam de Paor draws attention to the fact that the lack of a homogeneous community spirit among Presbyterians further circumscribed their influence.²⁶ However, the enormous political consequences of this final colonization indirectly influenced all artistic endeavour particularly in the twentieth century.

The differences between the two historiographical analyses are essentially ones of time and perspective. It is all too easy to be drawn to praise the one and denigrate the other. It must be conceded that the traditional view offered an easy target for criticism. But its adherents were writing at a time when the very existence of the state was in doubt and when there was need quickly to develop a national consciousness and pride. The musical activity of the time was influenced by this spirit. The luxury of a more inclusive vision could await a period of political stability. With the benefit of some distance, the revisionists were afforded a view which was more objective and complex.

Revisionism has made a salient contribution to Irish studies by being alive to the diversity of outlook and tradition on the island. It affirms that an understanding of history necessitates an appreciation of the tensions and even of the cross-fertilization that occurs between these symbiotic groups and, more important, that a critical historical survey which is exclusively based on the Gaelic tradition without attending to the comprehensive constitution of Irish society is, by its nature, illegitimate. Furthermore, it has placed emphasis on the modes of expression of each of the four traditions, and particularly on literary history, as so much of the cultural debate centred on language and literature. The religious divisions, and in particular the distinctive traditions of Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter, also attracted appreciable critical attention and continues

to do so. The different religious practices exercise considerable cultural influence not least on music.

It is perhaps best to regard revisionism as offering a new insight into the conventional reading. This is especially evident in the concentration on matters cultural and on the central position of the arts in Irish life. It also returned the European dimension to the equation. While recognizing the preeminence of the English connection and the country's peripheral position, no longer is it accepted that Ireland's development is an historical aberration. Circumstances meant that in certain aspects its progress was anomalous, but in the main it is both in accord with, and influenced by, general European trends.

Both these perspectives inform the following thesis on the evolution and disposition of Irish nationalism.

Precedents and credences

The genesis of Irish nationalism and its original mode of expression have been the subjects of debate for over a century. The topic calls to mind a lecture delivered in 1904 by Eoin MacNeill, a leading nationalist and renowned scholar, entitled 'When does Irish History begin?'²⁷ It is an intriguing title which cautions against confusing Irish history and Irish nationalism. However, there is consensus between the different historical readings that a national consciousness was first forged in response to the Norman invasion. But this should not be equated with nationalism as the author and journalist Seán O'Faolain (1900-91) indicates:

Nationalism as a force did not come into Ireland until the 19th century. The very idea had no effective existence until the 17th century, and then its effectiveness was limited. This does not mean that the idea of 'Ireland', and of racial distinctiveness did not exist long before the 18th century; but it does mean that the idea of unity did not exist in any effective form, and, obviously, without the idea of unity there cannot be an idea of a nation.²⁸

As we have seen, this was not an unchallenged view. Edwards held that nationalism antedated its political eclosion.

We are at least safe in affirming that a national self-consciousness had existed on a cultural level long before any sign of its political existence was visible.²⁹

While Edwards' contention arrogates to Irish nationalism an abnormally long gestation period, it is consistent with other European countries in the progression from cultural to political expression. Nationalism in Scandinavia, for instance, evinces a similar evolution. In an article describing this link, A.R.G.Griffiths states:

The whole pressure for constitutional change was, in both Scandinavia and Ireland, largely cultural in inspiration.³⁰

In each case, the argument goes, a major emphasis was placed on national culture and pride and on linguistic self-expression. Norway's search for identity was stimulated by the enforced union with Sweden in 1814. Inspired by the Romantic concept of language, an artificial tongue, Landsmål, constructed from a number of dialects was instituted as the new national language. As Kjell Haugland contends, this emphasis had implications beyond the cultural.

The activities to promote Landsmål were presented as part of a national mobilisation to defend Norway's integrity and to hinder political and cultural integration.³¹

The linguistic initiative was supported by a comprehensive educational programme concentrated in the Norwegian Folk High Schools, folkehøgskolane. The theatre also provided a medium for cultural protagonists. Henrik Ibsen's early work in Bergen, and in particular The Vikings at Helgeland, contributed to the rousing of national consciousness, although his emphasis on rural values was caustically described by Edvard Grieg as 'full of cow turds, Norse-Norsehood, and Be-to-thyself-enoughness'.³² The comment reflects the difficulty Grieg experienced in setting Peer Gynt and was made despite the fact that he was an ardent apostle of Norwegian nationalism.

Not all Scandinavian musicians were so reticent upon the nationalist cause. Jean Sibelius was much influenced by the national epic poem of Finland, Kalevala. Its importance, according to Matti Klinge,

was that it laid the groundwork on which to build the national continuity, or rather an illusion of it, of Finnish culture. The Kalevala as it were legitimises the aspiration for a new culture.³³

Its influence on Sibelius is particularly evident in the tone-poem Finlandia and in the Karelia overture and suite.

A further Scandinavian parallel is provided by Iceland's successful nineteenth-century campaign to foster its language and culture and to achieve independence from Denmark. The Icelandic case is exceptional in its concentration on cultural affairs and in that its success was realized peacefully and even amicably.³⁴

Research such as the foregoing fortified the notion that Irish nationalism was consistent with the doctrine in other countries in deriving from a cultural resurgence. And the analogy was not confined to Scandinavia. Suffice it to record here that scholars have paid particular attention to the similarities between Ireland and the separatist movements of Eastern Europe, such as that of the Czechs.³⁵

The acceptance of this argument has profound implications. It elevates culture along with the respect for indigenous tradition and expression. It offers the prospect of a new and enlightened order founded on honoured continuity and with the promise of a lasting commitment to the arts. It presupposes a popular awareness of this culture and a preference for its idiom, which in turn presumes that it is authenticated by scholarly research.

This author, however, questions the validity of this progression. Irish nationalism does deviate from other European forms but in a quite different manner. Cultural nationalism did not prelude the labours of statesmen, on the contrary, it arose in response to political failure. Ireland presents a reverse of the normal pattern precisely because of

the complexity of cultural strands on the island. This is not a novel argument; it has been propounded by scholars such as Alan O'Day and Conor Cruise O'Brien.³⁶ But they are concerned with the political implications; it is cultural and especially musical connotations which are of moment here. The Irish development reveals that waves of cultural expression arose in response to political and, on occasion, rebellious movements. For the greater part of a millennium the political situation produced a native art that was in some measure indentured to a cause. The contention here is that the heritage, or a particular version of the heritage, was often invoked to endorse political aspirations and was not always esteemed for its intrinsic quality. Culture was valued by some as a means to an end.

A more crucial dimension for the utility of culture is proposed by Jeffrey Prager who approaches Irish history as a political sociologist. He contends that social solidarity is fundamentally cultural:

...stability is held to depend not only on the development of the nation's institutional capacities but on normative or cultural achievements as well.... The principal problem faced by new nations has been to create a new sense of community corresponding to the new forms of social organization accompanying independence: to create new bonds of solidarity between members of the society consistent with the transreligious, transethnic, transregional, and transfamilial character of the new society.³⁷

Both these approaches imbue the heritage with weighty relevance, and both are agreed that culture and its artistic expression cannot be apolitical. This is neither to gainsay the quality of the heritage nor to doubt its centrality. But it does suggest that the respect shown through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was, a least in part, insincere. This valued and venerable inheritance notwithstanding, it further suggests that throughout the passage of history Irishmen have been consistent in their response to practical motivation. This perception is supported by D. George Boyce in his stimulating study of nationalism in Ireland:

The chief characteristics of nationalism in Ireland have been race, religion, and a

strong sense of territorial unity and integrity.... with cultural themes playing a significant, but essentially subordinate role.³⁸

Irish nationalism: a disquisition

There is evidence to support Edwards' claim that the Norman invasion stimulated the initial development of a cultural consciousness. The English crown was certainly aware of distinctions within the community; from the close of the thirteenth century a series of laws were enacted in order to frustrate the increasing Hibernicization of the Norman descendants. The most famous was the Statute of Kilkenny in 1366 which sought to prevent marriage and social intercourse between the distinct nations. It also incited the Old English, as the colonists came to be called, to preserve the English language which many were abandoning in favour of Irish.

...if any English or Irish living amongst the English use the Irish language amongst themselves contrary to this ordinance and thereof be attaint, that his lands and tenements, if he have any, be seized into the hands of his immediate lord until he come to one of the places of our lord the King and find sufficient surety to adopt and use the English language and then that he have restitution of his said lands by writ to issue out of the same place. In case that such person have not lands or tenements, then his body shall be taken by some of the officers of our lord the King and committed to the next gaol, there to remain until he or another in his name find sufficient surety in the manner aforesaid.³⁹

The language was the principal badge of distinction at this time and its connotations were increasingly serious as J.F.Lydon reports:

The fact is that officially the Gaelic race, and its language and institutions, indeed its whole culture, was regarded as at best second class, and often as depraved.⁴⁰

But the absorption of the colonists continued apace, official policy and its statutes notwithstanding. Such protracted effrontery was not to be brooked by Henry VIII as Tomás Ó Fiaich records:

The Tudor political advance and the suppression of the Irish language now went hand in hand. Irish was cut off from its patrons, the chieftains of both Gaelic and Anglo-Irish descent, who were decimated in a series of wars and confiscations. It was deprived of its poets and learned men.... It was destroyed in the pages of ancient manuscripts.... It was killed on the lips of children by the Court of Wards, which brought the sons of Irish noblemen to England, so that they might later return as loyal subjects, in language as in political allegiance.⁴¹

But such efforts proved only partially successful. Between 1169 and 1800 English civilization failed to establish itself as the sole civilization on the island; and from 1800 until the Rising of 1916 it was actually in retreat. The journalist, D.P.Moran, states this truism succinctly:

Where the English were dull was in their attempt to throttle Irish civilization instead of allowing it to grow and develop in all its native vigour.⁴²

Such a consciousness of individuality and attempted cultural suppression did not in itself establish a nationalism. Nor indeed did the emergence of religion as a second badge of distinction, although it did ironically further the bond between Ireland and the continent especially through the network of seminaries such as those at Salamanca, Louvain, Paris, and Rome.

Fittingly perhaps, in view of the subsequent unfoldings, the true precursor of nationalism was a political, rather than a cultural, event. The late sixteenth-century rebellion led by Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, is regarded as a watershed in Irish history. The O'Neill's surrender in 1603 to Lord Mountjoy and the subsequent flight of the earls marked the capitulation of the old Gaelic order before the English encroachment, which was further effected by the plantation of Ulster which followed the rebellion. Despite the claims of some later poets, O'Neill was the harbinger of nationalism and not its first apostle; his concerns were too localized, too concentrated on Ulster to warrant the description of nationalism.

The first full flowering of the doctrine in Ireland was in the final quarter of the eighteenth century, and it was sponsored not by the old Gaelic stock but by the Protestant colonial ascendancy. Again the basis was pragmatic and not sentimental: in question was increased legislative and economic independence not nationality. There was little consciousness of cultural distinction between the Irish Protestants and their English contemporaries. Indeed Beckett refers to them as a 'cross-channel society'.

...the Irish Protestants of the period, as a body, do not reveal any corporate sense of a distinctive and national cultural identity, such as certainly existed in contemporary Scotland.⁴³

The philosophical foundation for this nationalism had been laid by Dean Jonathan Swift, William Molyneux - particularly through his pamphlet The Case of Ireland's being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England Stated (1698) -, and indirectly through Molyneux by John Locke. Molyneux's protest against English economic domination resulted from the passing of a succession of acts such as the Navigation Acts of 1670 and 1671, and the Cattle Acts of 1666 and 1680 which regulated Irish trade in a manner designed to prevent its competing with England. Molyneux also offered a view of the Irish people which was to inform ascendancy thinking for the next century.

The great Body of the present People of Ireland are the Progeny of the English and Britains [sic], that from time to time have come over into this kingdom: and there remains but a mere handful of the Ancient Irish at this day, I may say, not one in a thousand.⁴⁴

Swift gave voice to another fundamental tenet when he pointed to the difference between the Irish, as defined by Molyneux, and the colonists. Some English ministers, he claims,

were apt, from their very high Elevation, to look down upon this Kingdom, as if it had been one of their colonies of out-casts in America.⁴⁵

Edmund Burke well appreciated the distinction. He had supported the American Revolution but would have recognized no parallel in a similar Irish insurrection. In his view, Ireland was no colony, it was as central to the Empire as was Britain itself.

I cannot conceive how a Man can be a genuine Englishman without being at the same time a true Irishman, tho' fortune should have made his birth on this side the water.⁴⁶

So convinced was Burke of the closeness of the relationship between the two countries that although he was a member of the Whig administration which granted legislative independence to Henry Grattan's parliament in 1782, he did so with great personal reservation.

Grattan's parliament, which survived just eighteen years, represents the first fruit of nationalism in Ireland. The people he led were a proud people, and this was their most glorious hour. One of their number, the novelist and medical doctor, Charles Lever (1806-72), opined that this was 'the most brilliant period of my country's history'.⁴⁷ He was Trinity-educated and representative of his class. They were the expatriates of a confident nation and strong ties remained; they continued to share family relationships, language, religion, and culture with the mother country. Even their beautiful capital, Dublin, with its public buildings and elegant squares was much of a kind with English cities of the period. It was, in J.C.Beckett's phrase, an 'Anglo-Irish city'.⁴⁸ But the ascendancy had presided over one central divergence. The very term 'Anglo-Irish' was first employed during the period of Grattan's parliament, and it signified the awareness of a singular people, quite distinct from either English or native Irish.⁴⁹ They had forged an economic independence and one so successful that the government in London attempted to curb it by legislation. Thus it was that despite Burke's views, the initial expression of Irish nationalism was pragmatical, was influenced by the American success, and was essentially founded on self-interest. It antedated the French Revolution and the contrast between the two is telling: this particular Irish experience, with its lineage from the English and American versions of the doctrine, made no universal statement, no commitment to the rights of man; it was concerned with precedence and material advantage. Its success was achieved through

statesmanship without recourse to violence. This institutional but independent strain consistently supported a nationalist movement for over a century. And the isolated, albeit powerful, position of the ascendancy compelled it to extensive cultural industry, in areas both of research and creativity, designed to adminiculate its political demands. Indeed this class of nationalism, which shall here be described as constitutional nationalism, found its greatest expression and success in the cultural field.

The primary reason underlying the government's abrogation of Grattan's parliament was fear aroused by the rebellion of 1798 led by Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-98) and his United Irishmen. Tone is something of an aberration within constitutional nationalism both because of his principals and because of his recourse to violence. It is precisely these features that have earned him a place of honour in the pantheon of nationalist heroes. When Tone introduced republicanism into the equation, he fathered a whole new strand of nationalism thus ensuring that the movement would remain inexorably divided through the remainder of its course. His declared aim was to seek a

brotherhood of affection and a communion of rights and a union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion.⁵⁰

In seeking an autonomous, democratic, and nonsectarian state, Tone revealed the degree to which his thinking had been influenced by the precepts of the French Revolution. He also sought to take advantage of the war between republican France and Great Britain. The egalitarianism of his vision has been celebrated by later generations as embodying the foundation for a union of all Irishmen. But few episodes in Irish history better illustrate the tendency for retrospective ennoblement. The reality was different. The rebellion began as a reform movement with limited aspirations and only later acquired a nationalist tenor. The insurrection was poorly planned; the unity which the movement espoused was sadly lacking and it degenerated into a succession of sectarian atrocities which cost more loss of life than any other single episode in modern Irish history.⁵¹

The rebellion marked the chaotic Irish imitation of the French Revolution. Ironically, it pointed to the fundamental divisions in Irish society. It was an exceptional event, and unlike other political actions it engendered no cultural movement. Tone had attended the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792 and his dismissive comment, 'strum, strum, and be hanged', is often quoted to demonstrate his lack of interest in the heritage.⁵² However, he did leave his mark. His Jacobinism did provoke the Act of Union (1800), and the epic account of Tone and his associates relayed by successive generations of historians was to influence future nationalists, not least in their willingness to pursue aims through violence.

That Tone did not set out to institute a distinct category of nationalism through his revolutionary movement is attested to by his own words:

For my own part, I think it right to mention that, at this time, the establishment of a Republic was not the immediate object of my speculations. My object was to secure the independence of my country under any form of government, to which I was led by a hatred of England, so deeply rooted in my nature, that it was rather an instinct than a principle.⁵³

But his stated intentions and legacy were at variance. Tone's bequest was unwittingly to sunder national allegiance, thereby creating two distinct strands each with a growing awareness of its separate cultural identity. Both his memory and some of his ideals were expropriated by a later generation who founded a radical nationalist movement with ambitions quite separate from those of the constitutionalists. The later movement found its constituency among Catholics. It invoked the spirit of 1789 although this was difficult in the face of the hierarchy's condemnation of the French revolutionaries' excesses; nor did Tone's deistical approach lend itself easily to a movement permeated with ultramontanist. The idealized image held more appeal than did the reality; 'the brotherhood of affection' was but one casualty of the transfer. While the succeeding campaign enjoyed Protestant inspiration and direct support on occasions, it became increasingly a Gaelic and Catholic separatist movement.

In his reading of the period, Tierney talks of

the alternative aims of the new nationalism: Repeal and the Republic. Indecision as between these two aims has been the great mark of Irish politics from that day to this.⁵⁴

But the divergence went beyond mere indecision. The contention here is that the period preceding the Act of Union galvanized the inherent scission in Irish society. Thus the account of nineteenth-century Irish nationalism is a tale of not one but two coeval movements, each with its cultural expression constructed to fortify its own vision of race and heritage. There was considerable cross-influence, both political and cultural, between the two strains, but they remained sufficiently detached to be regarded as distinct nationalisms. This fundamental duality is a principal reason underlying the singular course charted by nationalism in Ireland. The consequence of this division is apparent in the subsequent cultural life of the country and it had a decisive bearing on the musical situation.

If Ireland proved exceptional in first giving political expression to its nationalism, it balanced this with an expeditious cultural underpinning. The constitutional strain found its expression principally through literature and remained constant to this medium for over a century. Music proved too nebulous an art to a society in need of a referential mode. This attachment to the word is not surprising in a group so strongly identified with, and even isolated by language. Faced throughout the nineteenth century with the rising challenge of the Catholic majority and its attendant culture, the minority was increasingly compelled to establish a cultural base for its political claims. Ironically this exigency was to stimulate a concentrated period of unrivalled literary achievement culminating in the poetry of W.B. Yeats.

The younger nationalist tradition could boast the more venerable heritage; it was the embodiment of the oldest nation on the island. But the centuries preceding the Act of Union proved unpropitious to the indigenous race and its culture. The erosion of the old life and its representation through all forms of art ensued from the absence of

influence, lack of material wealth, and want of patronage. Despite social and political disadvantages, the older nation could claim that precedence and culture endorsed its claims and its moral authority. Thus this alternative tradition was motivated by the desire to establish its independence of both the prevailing English culture and of its colonial appendage. The correlation between polity and art had the unfortunate consequence of inducing radical nationalists to exalt those characteristics of Irish life and art deemed most distinctive; and distinction was too often defined as meaning at variance with the English mode. A corollary was the danger that only expression which conformed to a preconceived and limited pattern would prove acceptable. One direct consequence of this can be noted in the first half of the twentieth century, when more energy was expended attacking such restrictions than on creative endeavour.

The cultural traditions

In an article on the pre-revolutionary era of Grattan's parliament, J.C.Beckett states:

...it is from this era that any study of 'nationalism and culture' must start.⁵⁵

Three decided periods of cultural expression can be identified within the constitutional version of Irish nationalism. All three shared a common purpose: they sought to endorse the validity of the claim that the creation of the ruling ascendancy was consistent with the heritage. Each had a distinctive character and developed as a response to political events. The first occurred in the confident years following the achievement of legislative autonomy. The most potent symbol of the new-found assurance and cultural independence was the establishment in 1785 of the Royal Irish Academy, a body which was to exercise a guiding influence on the subsequent revival. Another notable expression was the 1789 publication of Charlotte Brooke's Reliques of Irish Poetry. This important collection of translations from the Irish gave the younger tradition its first access to the ancient Gaelic heritage. It is consistent in spirit with the earliest extant printed collection of Irish airs, A Collection of the most celebrated Irish Tunes (1724), published by John and William Neale of

Dublin. Brooke had been directly influenced by Bishop Thomas Percy's Fragments of Ancient Poetry (1760) and also by his Reliques of Ancient ^{English} Poetry the first volumes of which appeared in 1765. Doubtless inspiration was also provided by the burgeoning interest in Celticism provoked by the dubious research of the Scot, James Macpherson. Brooke's seminal work and the labours of other antiquarians established the conception of Ireland as a culturally distinct entity. Fictional representation of this is provided in the works of Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan.

Literature dominated, but music too made some contribution and in so doing helped link the first and second waves of expression. The awakening interest in the past revealed the serious decline in the degree and standard of harp playing. A revival was stimulated by a series of festivals held at Granard in the early 1780s. In 1786 the Dublin antiquary, Joseph Cooper Walker, produced his Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards which contained 43 airs, an important source not least for the music of the blind harper Carolan (1670-1738). This was followed some six years later by the important Belfast Harp Festival. These meetings were

promoted with the object of reviving the taste for Irish music, which had begun to decline during the Hanoverian period.⁵⁶

The festivals were both a celebration and a signal of the decline in the traditional practice. The prospectus for the Belfast meeting stated that

The Spirit and Character of a People are connected with their national poetry and music, it is presumed that the Irish patriot and politician will not deem it an object unworthy of his patronage and protection.⁵⁷

The festival was arranged by a group of public-spirited citizens and was designed to preserve the tradition, to which end they engaged the young Belfast musician, Edward Bunting, 'to take down the various airs played by the different Harpers'.⁵⁸ His labours provided the basis for his 1796 publication of 66 airs entitled General Collection of Ancient Irish Music. This work represents the first great collection of Irish

music, and it is afforded appropriate attention by Charlotte Milligan Fox in her Annals of the Irish Harpers.

In order to estimate the importance of Bunting's first collection, we must recollect that nothing approaching such a work had previously existed.... View it with regard to its after effect in popularising and saving Irish music, it must be classed as an epoch-making book.⁵⁹

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this collection and many musicians of later generations would find in this volume the very morning of a distinctive note in Irish music. Bunting followed this with a second volume in 1809, while his final collection, Ancient Music in Ireland (1840), comprised music collected in the first half of his life.

The festival of 1792 and Bunting's record provided the impetus for the foundation in 1809 of a Belfast Harp Society. But these endeavours proved too late for soon 'the old traditional manner of harping passed into oblivion'.⁶⁰

Thomas Moore

The first to be influenced by Bunting's work was the poet Thomas Moore (1779-1852) who, in collaboration with the musician Sir John Stevenson, produced his Irish Melodies in ten separate volumes between 1807 and 1834. Moore is exceptional within this tradition in the degree to which his poetry is politically charged. A close friend to the executed nationalist Robert Emmet, his Melodies are permeated with the prevailing Romantic spirit and nationalist fervour.

The national spirit and hope then awakened in Ireland, by the rapid spread of the democratic principle throughout Europe, could not but insure a most cordial reception for such a work.⁶¹

It was precisely the correlation between the mood of the chosen airs and the national sentiment of the poetry that earned Moore such wide acclaim; and the same association just as quickly brought disapprobation. He became, in Anthony Cronin's phrase, 'a bit of an

embarrassment'.⁶² The close divide between art and design is evident in lines such as:

Dear Harp of my country! in darkness I found
thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee
long,
When proudly, my own Island Harp! I unbound
thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom,
and song!⁶³

Moore also attracted criticism for his willingness to adjust the original airs in order to conform to metrical patterns or current fashion. According to a later critique by H.Halliday Sparling, Moore

unhappily tinkered most of the old tunes he used into drawing-room shapes.... they might have been written by an educated Cockney with an ear for music.⁶⁴

This was mild compared with the assessment of the pioneering revivalist Richard Henebry (1863-1916) who contended that the Melodies were

bad and debased from every point of view, [they] let loose a flood of false notions that can never be curbed God knows when, if ever.⁶⁵

Moore personifies the dilemma of the cultural duality of his age. But this has failed to secure him from continuing critical assault. The tradition of treating his reputation with asperity remains with us.

In Ireland his reputation is almost that of 'the' national poet, an Irish equivalent to Burns, among the plainer sorts of reader. Intellectuals and Nationalists have tended to see him differently, as a stage-Irish warbler who debased Irish airs and covered them in sugar for the futile delight of London Society; a versifier who sold his birthright for a dish of tea; a social climber of the nastiest sort who helped to distort the English view of Ireland. But this is to shoot a canary with a cannon.⁶⁶

Moore provoked the ire of both musical cultures: the traditionalists complained of his maladroit interference with precious originals, while critics of a classical disposition deprecated the subordination of art

to mission. However, in adopting the practice of amendment, Moore was not alone: Bunting too had altered airs in his collections. And Moore felt it far better to modify and disseminate than to ignore the airs and leave them 'with all their authentic dross about them'.⁶⁷ The collections do reveal his sensitivity to the original melodies and support his claim that

Music, is the only art for which, in my opinion, I was born with a real natural love; poetry, such as it is, having sprung out of my deep feeling for music.... [It is] the source of my poetic talent, since it was merely the effort to translate into words the different feelings and passions which melody seemed to me to express.⁶⁸

Moore's legacy is significant in a number of respects. His work was sufficiently radical to form a bridge between the two versions of Irish nationalism, this gave him a broad constituency. He also operated as 'our literary ambassador in England',⁶⁹ directing his work to a London audience which did more to propagate the nationalist cause than could any rebellion.

Tom Moore was the only writer who could demonstrate in an unforgettable way the potency of the combination of the old Irish with the contemporary English culture.⁷⁰

What is of particular moment here is that Moore endowed succeeding generations of composers with the constraining association between Irish music and a particular kind of national sentiment.

The publication of the volumes of Moore's Melodies spanned the years between the first and second expressions of constitutional nationalism. This intervening period had opened in 1800 with the Act of Union which signalled the first step in the ascendancy's gradual loss of privilege. It closed with the granting of Catholic emancipation in 1829 which was equally significant, being the first of a series of reforms won by the majority during the century. The drive for emancipation was led by Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) whose major achievement was to call into being a radical nationalism based on Catholicism, although his intentions were not initially nationalist. A younger nationalist, John Mitchel, recorded of O'Connell:

He was an aristocrat, by position and by taste; and the name of a Republic was odious to him.⁷¹

Mitchel's comment would have found favour with D.P.Moran whose own observation raises an interesting distinction.

Since Grattan's time every popular leader, O'Connell, Butt, Parnell, Dillon, and Redmond, have perpetuated this primary contradiction. They threw over Irish civilization whilst they professed - and professed in perfect good faith - to fight for Irish Nationality.⁷²

This is predicated on the basis that there is a true Irish civilization, an assumption that serves to illuminate the schism in perception. However Moran's view does point to the pragmatic basis of constitutional nationalism. The attitude to language provides a prime example. By the conciliatory measure of the establishment in 1795 of the Royal College of St Patrick, at Maynooth, the government had sought to dull the evolving agitation for emancipation by the provision of a national seminary. It is significant that the new seminary adopted English rather than Irish as its language of instruction. The consequence of the decision was not lost on Hyde who was critical of the Catholics for their abandonment of archaic Irish.

...nearly every one of fair education during the Penal times possessed [this training], nor did they begin to lose their Irish training and knowledge until after the establishment of Maynooth and the rise of O'Connell.⁷³

That this choice was made reveals much about the political and cultural balance of priorities. The hierarchy's choice would have met with sympathetic understanding from O'Connell. He was a pragmatic statesman, and while he was the first to give Catholics a political voice it was through the medium of English, even though he was reared a native Irish speaker. Concerning questions of language and cultural heritage, he was at best ambivalent.

I am sufficiently utilitarian not to regret its gradual abandonment. A diversity of

tongues is of no benefit; it was first imposed on mankind as a curse, at the building of Babel. It would be of vast advantage to mankind if all the inhabitants of the earth spoke the same language. Therefore, although the Irish language is connected with many recollections that twine around the hearts of Irishmen, yet the superior utility of the English tongue, as the medium of all modern communications, is so great that I can witness without a sigh the gradual disuse of Irish.⁷⁴

It was just this type of comment which led some to consider apposite Mitchel's pithy estimation of O'Connell: 'he led them, as I believe, all wrong for forty years'.⁷⁵ His immense political presence was not matched by any appreciable impression on the artistic life of the nation. Indeed, O'Connell's immediate cultural impact was his unwitting contribution to the band movement. Like another leading Catholic, Father Theobald Mathew (1790-1856), a prominent figure in the devotional revolution of the period, who pioneered temperance crusades from 1838, O'Connell realized the appeal of a band and was quick to encourage the attendance of bands at his rallies.

It is on occasions claimed that the Irish as a race exhibit an inferiority complex as a consequence of long political subjugation. It would be understandable if there were, at the opening of the nineteenth century, a consciousness of artistic insignificance especially when compared with the all too apparent glories of the English heritage. Hence the indispensable mission for the pioneers of Gaelic renewal was to identify the indigenous expression. Preservation was the next priority and only then could the matter of appreciation be entertained.

The emergence of Gaelic nationalism reveals the same pattern as did the earlier version: cultural expression following political success. From 1830 the initial radical cultural emanation was contemporaneous with the second cultural representation of constitutional nationalism. The decade and a half between emancipation and the Famine proved a period of great antiquarian research and cultural interest with each of the two nationalist strains exercising influence on the other. With hindsight one can contend that there were few periods more ripe for the 'Unity of Culture' of which Yeats

dreamed: the waning power of the ascendancy and the rising fortunes of the majority suggested the possibility of forging a balanced and lasting perspective.

The most notable of the early expositions of the Gaelic mode was James Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy published in London in 1831. Subtitled 'Bardic Remains of Ireland', it presented a collection of redactions of Gaelic originals. It is the new exclusivity that differentiates these two volumes from the earlier works of Brooke and her contemporaries. In the introduction Hardiman also gives voice to that inflated pride which was to become a hallmark of the radical tradition.

The historical importance of our annals has been acknowledged by the most learned men of Europe for the last three centuries. They are written in the language of the first inhabitants of Europe.... That this country, from an early period, was famous for the cultivation of the kindred arts of poetry and music, stands universally admitted.⁷⁶

But Hardiman's volumes are principally distinguished by their purpose, which illustrates the distinction between the two cultural perspectives. The intention was not to arouse interest in an undiscovered past and to make that heritage available to all, rather it was to draw attention to the state of the Irish language and to encourage renewed commitment to its use.

From the days of Henry VIII the English rulers were bent upon the total annihilation of our national language, but the time has shewn the folly of the undertaking.... Thenceforth it was banished from the castle of the chieftain, to the cottage of his vassal, and, from having been the cherished and cultivated medium of intercourse between the nobles and gentry of the land, it became gradually limited to the use of the uneducated poor.⁷⁷

Ferguson and Petrie

Hardiman's circumscribed vision of the Irish race, equating the Gaelic with the Catholic, spurred a liberal response through the person

of Samuel Ferguson (1810-86) who in 1834 contributed four articles to the Dublin University Magazine, which was the leading periodical of its generation, setting out his reaction to Hardiman's initiative. If Hardiman was claiming to furnish the genuine article, then it was not to Ferguson's liking; and he was not slow to employ Moore's name in making this point:

Those who have known the melodies of Ireland only in association with the delightful lyrics of Moore, will, we fear, be startled to find them connected with songs so marked as these are, by all the characteristics which distinguish the productions of rude, from those of refined society. Moore's melodies, indeed, present a combination of the most delightful attributes of music and poetry, unattainable otherwise than by uniting the music of a rude age to the poetry of a refined one.⁷⁸

Ferguson was consistent in his praise of Moore whose Melodies he considered 'the source of the purest delight'.⁷⁹ Music was important to him and it signalled, he believed, one of the crowning achievements of the heritage.

What have the Irish to boast of? The answer is short but comprehensive: their music and their architecture of the era of independence. Their music is wholly and exclusively their own, and is wholly beautiful.⁸⁰

This estimation tellingly encompasses both traditions: the refined architecture of the one and the free-spirited music of the other. The duality of Ferguson's position has been tellingly paralleled by M.A.G.Ó Tuathaigh with that of Sir Walter Scott;⁸¹ both advocated artistic pluralism within the framework of a united polity. In 1833 Ferguson set out the dilemma of his race in an article 'A Dialogue between the Head and the Heart of an Irish Protestant' which again appeared in the Dublin University Magazine. He was possessed of a commanding intellect and he combined cultural nationalism with his unionist politics. In this he was the epitome of the liberal outlook adopted by so many of his class. He could write, for instance, admittedly with tongue in cheek:

A am a loyal Orangeman
From Portadown upon the Bann;
My loyalty, A will maintain,
Was ever and always without stain,
Though rebelly Papishes may call
My loyalty 'conditional'.⁸²

But his love of country is authenticated by no less a figure than
Thomas Carlyle:

Sam Ferguson has been here on his way to the
Continent. He spent about four hours with us
on Sunday. Poor fellow, he looks very ill.
What a terrible feeling of doubt and
insecurity one gets about our true men.
Rome, I trust, will bring him round - not to
Romanism, but to health. He is going stocked
with introductions to cardinals, legates, and
other great dignitaries of the Church, who, I
hope, for the honour of religion, will treat
him well. I never happened to meet Ferguson
before, and I was excessively pleased with
him, and, with all my previous opinion of
him, was scarcely prepared to find him so
very national. He is hopeful beyond measure
for the country, says there is a strong manly
intellect growing up in Ireland, which will
trample the emasculated mind of England under
foot. God send - if it be true, it tallies
well with your grand scheme.⁸³

Ferguson exercised considerable influence through his writings
which, according to Boyd, 'set free the Celtic spirit'.⁸⁴ This
influence was more perceptible in later generations than in his own
day. He was a remnant of that cultured and unprovincialized
upper-class experiencing an inexorable decline in the wake of the Union
and subsequent reforms. The consequence of being rooted in the
constitutionalist perspective was that his work appealed to a dwindling
and deracinated constituency. He ventured to counter this isolation in
his great epic poem, Congal (1872), which sought to contrive a common
ground between the traditions by concentrating on an age that predated
division. According to a later man of letters, Alfred Perceval Graves,
the epic

is a great old-world tale of love and hate,
and ambition and jealousy, and craft and
courage - a splendid story of the last heroic
stand made by Celtic Paganism against the
Irish Champions of the Cross.⁸⁵

Both the intrinsic quality of the poem and especially its motivation found warm support from the leading literary voice of the subsequent generation. W.B. Yeats was generous in his praise, not only of the epic, but also of the earlier poem Deirdre (1880), and he regarded the older master as the precursor of the fin de siècle literary renaissance.

The author of these poems is the greatest poet Ireland has produced, because the most central and most Celtic. Whatever the future may bring forth in the way of a truly great and national literature - and now that the race is so large, so widely spread, and so conscious of its unity, the years are ripe - will find its morning in these three volumes of one who was made by the purifying flame of National sentiment the one man of his time who wrote heroic poetry - one who, among the somewhat sybaritic singers of his day, was like some aged sea-king sitting among the inland wheat and poppies - the savour of the sea about him, and its strength.⁸⁶

Interestingly, a later poet, Padraic Colum, informs us that Ferguson came to the Irish tradition through music.⁸⁷ An early admirer of his fellow-Belfastman Bunting, Ferguson wrote an introductory essay for the publication of Ancient Irish Music in 1840. The companion introductory contribution for this volume was provided by another leading representative of the Anglo-Irish tradition, George Petrie (1789-1866). Like Ferguson, he too was an antiquary, a favoured pursuit of this intelligentsia. But this was just one facet of a man of eclectic interests; he was also a painter, archaeologist, and a collector of Irish music. Petrie's objectives, which he shared with that small group which guided this second emanation, were delineated in an appreciative article by H.C. Colles.

...his object throughout his life was not only to increase expert knowledge but to raise the level of popular intelligence, that is, to improve the national life of the present by a better understanding of the national life of the past.⁸⁸

In his early years, Petrie had sent some airs to Thomas Moore including the plaintive 'Silent, O Moyle', which also bears the title 'The Song

of Fionnuala'. His nationwide travels as an official of the Ordnance Survey facilitated his enduring preoccupation with the native musical heritage, and in 1851 he helped found the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland. Its sole publication was Petrie's own Ancient Music of Ireland issued in 1855. But even such a seminal work could not shelter Petrie from the musical criticism of a leading spokesman for the broader tradition, Sir Robert Stewart.

The little I knew of George Petrie showed me plainly that of the laws of musical construction he knew nothing. That he could (as I have heard him often) play a slow air sweetly and in tune on the violin was no more proof of any real knowledge of the grammar of music than the fact of a man being able to sing a good song in English would be proof of his acquaintance with Lindley Murray. With regard to musical scholarship it is really one of the rarest acquirements. Very few persons who have had education in the art in this place can write down a piece of music correctly, and how far short of this the ordinary amateur - such as Petrie - must fall I leave you to guess.⁸⁹

Stewart voices one of the central criticisms of Petrie and the many collectors of Irish folksong. The great good they did in preserving the record of a threatened heritage was balanced by a view of a well-meaning but essentially amateurish coterie whose ambition to do the right thing often led them to meddle to the detriment of the airs. And this censure emanated, as we shall see, from both sides of the musical divide.

Petrie was not blind to the political connotations of his labours: he trusted that an acquaintance with the cultural glories of the heritage, and especially with the music, would move the more entrenched members of his own community toward a better understanding of their fellow Irishmen.

Could music penetrate their stony hearts, the melodies of Ireland would make them weep for the ill they were the means of perpetrating on this unhappy island, and they would embrace that ill-treated people with a generous affection, anxious to make reparation for past injuries.⁹⁰

Petrie's antiquarian interest was indicative of the growing cognizance on the part of both constitutionalists and radicals of the need to authenticate and to preserve the traditional culture. Petrie's society was but one of a number devoted to this end. Also deserving of mention are The Gaelic Society (1807), The Hiberno-Celtic Society (1818), The Archaeological Society (1840), and The Celtic Society (1845). Tomás Ó hAilín argues that these organizations

played no small part in the slow growth of a national awareness of the significance of the language and of its value to the Irish people.⁹¹

This appraisal is noteworthy in that it confuses the culture in toto with just one of its aspects. In this it is not exceptional; the condition of the native language was increasingly to become the focus of cultural endeavour.

The percipient members of such societies and their associates constituted an early intelligentsia whose researches were to prove the foundation for subsequent creative endeavour; the various groups collaborated well despite differences in emphasis and the fact that leading individuals came from the major opposing traditions. The increasing cooperation and closeness between the two perspectives is attested to by Petrie's warm relationship with leading Gaelic scholars such as John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, both of whom had worked with Petrie at the Ordnance Survey Office. O'Donovan and O'Curry were motivated by their love of the Irish language. Both were rural Catholics and native speakers, and O'Donovan had trained with Hardiman. They were both diligent scholars and had combined on the translation of the medieval chronicle the Annals of the Four Masters (1848-51) which had earlier been acquired for the Royal Irish Academy by Petrie. O'Donovan published his Grammar of the Irish Language (1845) separately, and with the works of another radical scholar, John O'Daly, he focused attention on the centrality of language preservation within the radical tradition. As a result, possession of the language was increasingly to become the decisive factor in designating the true Irishman. O'Daly took a similar view, but he was also a populist. He

appreciated the achievements of Hardiman but felt that his Irish Minstrelsy was

entirely out of the reach of the parties for whom such a work should be intended, I mean, the Irish peasantry.⁹²

In order to propagate the tradition, he planned to publish collections of songs at a nominal cost because he believed

every exertion should be made to restore, if possible, the sweet and pathetic Songs of Ireland - the songs written by the bards at the period of her bitterest woes, too long neglected, too long forgotten, and give them to the people and to the land they belong to.⁹³

Young Ireland

The work of such scholars evinces the noticeable tendency for cultural endeavour to become more political and populist during the 1840s. This found its clearest manifestation not in the radical expression, but in the liberal tradition, although the founders of The Nation would have argued strongly that they represented a united community. It was certainly the intention of the editors of this persuasive journal to cultivate a concordant allegiance. The publication represents the outstanding attempt in the nineteenth century to forge a common perspective through the medium of culture and it can be regarded as the climax of all the committed application of the many who had laboured through the previous decade. The preceding fifty years had delivered a veritable plethora of periodicals which were in the main polemical in tone. In her concise review of these publications, Barbara Hayley points to the fact that their limited appeal was a reflection of the inertia which followed the Act of Union:

Periodicals of all kinds comment on the country's emptiness and apathy; they regret that since the Union, Ireland has lost her identity, her life, her trade, and that her writers and intellectuals have all left Ireland for London, taking their 'absentee talent' with them to fill the pages of the English press.⁹⁴

Launched in 1842, The Nation differed from the majority of its precursors in that it was a paper with a purpose, and its success reveals much about the general mood of the age. It was influential because it was accessible; it did not present a profound or difficult vision, but was assiduous in its propagation of the popular view.

The Nation was the organ of the Young Ireland movement formed by an alliance of Protestants and Catholics. The name of the movement was conceived by an English journalist, but it fairly reflected the group's indebtedness to the Mazzini-inspired initiative which was arousing young nationalists throughout Europe. Giovine Italia was a secret society formed by Mazzini in Marseilles in 1831 with the purpose of preparing for the revolutionary liberation of Italy. By example it led to the foundation in Berne three years later of the broader La Giovine Europa. It was during this decade that Wagner came under the influence of Young Germany, and of the teachings of Laube, Heine, and Gutzkow, and it was under this spirit that he produced his early opera Das Liebesverbot (1836) in Magdeburg. Underlying Young Ireland's creed was the argument that a characteristic culture, one distinct and - here betraying the archetypal chauvinism - superior to that of England, conferred on Ireland a moral claim to political autonomy.

On the neutral ground of ancient history and native art, Unionists and Nationalists could meet without alarm.⁹⁵

Or in the words of the poet and teacher Seamus Deane:

To remain attached to London was a form of slavishness disguised as cosmopolitanism.⁹⁶

The purpose of leading members of this group, such as Thomas Davis (1814-45), was to eulogize the character of the Irish nation, which they conceived of as a single entity. According to the testimony of one of the founders of The Nation and another leading Young Irelander, Charles Gavin Duffy (1816-1903):

Davis desired a national existence for Ireland, that an old historic State might be raised from the dust and a sceptre placed in her hand, that thus she should become the mother of a brave and self-reliant race.⁹⁷

Davis sought further to close the division between constitutional and radical perspectives by espousing the claims of the Irish language.

A people without a language of its own is only half a nation. A nation should guard its language more than its territories.... To lose your native tongue, and learn that of an alien, is the worst badge of conquest - it is the chain on the soul.⁹⁸

An additional motivation was Young Ireland's rejection of what it perceived to be English policies of centralization and utilitarianism. In his reminiscences of the movement, Gavin Duffy extols the spiritual aspects of the awakening but pointedly notes that whereas other states encouraged artistic revival, 'in Ireland the State deliberately starved or suppressed it'.⁹⁹ In this persuasion, according to Edward Norman, the Young Irelanders 'enjoyed a town-dweller's rural romanticism'.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the consciousness of a reaction against materialism evident in England allied to a desire to preserve the simple rural character of Irish life was encapsulated in the motto of the journal which proclaimed it to be 'Racy of the Soil'. Such aspiration did not prevent the charge of naivety being increasingly levelled against the group. Its nonsectarian ideals did not survive growing attacks from the predominantly Catholic movement led by the ageing O'Connell. Young Ireland suffered a telling slight when none other than Mazzini declined to include it in his People's International League which was established in 1847 to act as a parent body for nationalist movements throughout Europe. He sympathized with Ireland's position, but maintained that its struggle was for better government; it had not established its claim to be accepted as a separate nation. The Irish, he stated:

did not plead for any distinct principle of life or system of legislation, derived from native peculiarities, and contrasting radically with English wants and wishes.¹⁰¹

This represented a damning criticism coming, as it did, from a father figure of nationalism, and it was one that pro-separatist Irish commentators had difficulty in refuting. Mazzini's comment implied that Ireland was too much of a one with English civilization, an

observation which served to emphasize the urgency of establishing a distinct culture. Individuals and organizations were to become increasingly determined to this end, and to deviate from this resolution was to risk censure. Both The Nation and various other Young Ireland publications which enjoyed wide circulation were later criticized as narrow and lacking in relevance beyond their time. Interestingly, these criticisms came initially from members of the liberal tradition.

The poets of The Nation, for all their intensity of patriotic feeling, followed the English rather than a literary value, and bears little upon the development of modern Irish verse.¹⁰²

Thus wrote one of the chief apologists of the liberal tradition, Ernest Boyd, who later expanded this argument.

Patriotic as was The Nation group, it cannot in the proper sense of the word be described as national. Davis and his followers expressed too narrow a phase of Irish life to merit so comprehensive a term. Mangan and Ferguson, on the other hand, were the interpreters of a wider and purer nationalism, existing independent of political sentiment. They lifted national poetry out of the noisy clamour of politics, and thereby effected that dissociation of ideas which was most essential to the existence of national literature, and which remains the characteristic of all the best work of the modern Irish poets. The substitution of a sense of nationality for aggressive nationalism is the factor in the poetry of Mangan and Ferguson which distinguishes them from all their predecessors, and brings them nearer to our own time than to theirs.¹⁰³

This analysis was a mild echo of the earlier critiques of W.B. Yeats who claimed that there were

... many who at that time found it hard to refuse if anybody offered for sale a pepper-pot shaped to suggest a round tower with a wolf-dog at its foot, who would have felt it inappropriate to publish an Irish book that had not harp and shamrock and green

cover, so completely did their minds move
amid Young Ireland images and metaphors.¹⁰⁴

Among the other publications sponsored by the Young Irelanders was a series of books dealing with history and heritage under the Library of Ireland scheme inaugurated in 1845. This direction was in keeping with the educative role assumed as a matter of course by such a nationalist intelligentsia, and Gavin Duffy was well conscious of the propagandistic nature of this work.

To enforce these new ideas new agents were needed. The leading articles in The Nation, it was remarked by a friendly critic, sometimes read like unspoken speeches of Grattan. But the national ballads probably produced the most marvellous results. The imagination of a Celtic race is an appetite almost as imperious as hunger, and in an old bardic land song had always been a common enjoyment of the people. Adepts can determine the date of Irish music by its pervading tone.... Moore had mastered both moods of the national harp, and his songs were sung in the drawing rooms of Dublin and Cork, and in mansions and presbyteries, but at fairs and markets, at wakes and weddings, in forges and 'shebeens', where the peasants recreated themselves, they were nearly unknown.... The young poets struck a different key. Historical ballads of singular vigour and dramatic power made the great men and great achievements of their race familiar to the people.¹⁰⁵

Gavin Duffy himself provided one of the earliest of this series with The Ballad Poetry of Ireland (1845). A similar publication, requiring frequent reprinting to satisfy demand following its initial appearance as a little sixpenny book in 1843, was the movement's primary contribution to music, The Spirit of the Nation, which comprised the ballads of Davis and other contributors to the journal. It was expanded and issued in two volumes in 1845; the preface to that first edition states:

The greatest achievement of the Irish people is their music. It tells their history, climate, and character; but it too much loves to weep.... Music is the first faculty of the Irish, and scarcely any thing has such power for good over them. The use of this

faculty and this power, publicly and constantly, to keep up their spirits, refine their tastes, warm their courage, increase their union, and renew their zeal, is the duty of every patriot.... Will not the temperance bands learn to play these airs, and the young men, ay, and the young women, of the temperance societies learn to sing our songs, and chorus them till village and valley ring?¹⁰⁶

The movement itself was sufficiently committed to establish both a band and choir to render these ballads which D.P.Moran was later to dismiss as 'sunburstry songs'.¹⁰⁷ The publication of 'genuine Irish airs, arranged for the popular bands' was intended, according to Gavin Duffy, to follow 'the example of Hungary, the Tyrol, and other countries aiming to be free'.¹⁰⁸ The 1858 edition of The Spirit of the Nation contains 22 old Irish airs and 17 original compositions, all of which are furnished with bland piano accompaniments. The interest is focused on the aggressive militaristic texts which reveal the ballads to be better propaganda than art. Seamus Deane's pithy comment is apposite: 'Davis had a good heart but a cloth ear'.¹⁰⁹ The appraisal of Charles Gavin Duffy, himself intimately involved in the publication, is again revealing:

those who are familiar with the facts will scarcely deny that the 'Spirit of the Nation' has influenced the mind of Ireland as deeply and permanently as the poems of Robert Burns influenced the mind of Scotland; a comparison however which does not imply any equality of intrinsic merit between the books.¹¹⁰

The process of cultural regeneration was checked by the Famine. Its Malthusian effects, as Tom Garvin points out, ensured that 'within two decades, Irish rural society had changed completely'.¹¹¹ A pattern of emigration and a depleted population were two of the results of this human and social catastrophe. The decades of recovery saw the slow development of a further upsurge in nationalist expression. This primarily took a political form with growing sectarianism reflected in the divergent paths taken by the alternative traditions. The Fenians represented the radical revolutionary tradition, and their appeal to emigrants and penchant for secret societies were to become characteristic traits of succeeding movements. The alternative

tradition persisted in the constitutional approach which found expression in the Home Government Association created by Isaac Butt in 1870. And it was this liberal method which exercised the greatest influence when the Home Rule movement came under the decisive leadership of Butt's successor, Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91).

The Irish Note and the Celtic Note

Parnell achieved in the political arena that which many in the cultural field had striven for previously: a broad unity of purpose. For a short period, especially during the mid-1880s, it appeared that all Irishmen had consented to pursue a common political programme. In truth the alliance he forged was an uneasy one comprising conservative members of the ascendancy, constitutional reformers, agitators for an egalitarian land policy, and republicans. Through skilful manipulation, Parnell placed the Irish question at the centre of the British political agenda, and he restored to the Irish people a measure of confidence sufficient to encourage a third, and glorious, expression of cultural nationalism.

However, cultural pursuits were not to the fore during the heady days of Parnell's leadership. Edward Norman's contention might be too simplistic but it does summarize the accepted notion about Parnell:

Of native Irish culture he knew little; nor was he disposed to interest himself in it. His knowledge of any form of culture was not extensive.¹¹²

However, by adroit management, Parnell had won the support of Gladstone and the Liberal Party which suggested that some measure of autonomy was close to realization, and this further concentrated attention on matters political. The Irish situation was also a subject of consideration abroad, and where Irish eyes were occupied with affairs of state, foreign scholars were increasingly attracted to the Irish heritage. The committed application of members of the German philological school ensured that Celtic scholarship flourished, and it corroborated the notion that such a venerable tradition bolstered the claim to a distinctive nationhood. A foremost example was provided by Johann Kasper Zeuss's Grammatica Celtica (1853). Among compatriots who

so contributed were Ernest Windisch (1844-1918), Heinrich Zimmer (1851-1910), Rudolf Thurneysen (1857-1940), and Kuno Meyer (1858-1918), the latter of whom was sufficiently inspired by the subject to open a School of Irish Learning in Dublin in 1903.¹¹³ This scholarship could be claimed by both nationalist factions; Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916), poet, teacher, and executed leader of the 1916 Rising, proudly quoted Meyer's statement that the remnant of Gaelic literature was

the earliest voice from the dawn of West European civilization, it is the most primitive and original among the literatures of Western Europe.¹¹⁴

Working also in this area was the Frenchman Marie Henri Arbois de Jubainville (1827-1910) who published extensively on Celtic subjects. It was another Frenchman, Ernest Renan who, in following Herder and Hegel in considering elements of a native culture as the embodiment of a people's Geist, especially valued the Irish race for its continuity of tradition. Speaking first of the people of Brittany he states:

The same contrast is manifest in the people: ... a timid and reserved race living together within itself, heavy in appearance but capable of profound feeling, and of an adorable delicacy in its religious instincts. A like change is apparent, I am told... when one buries oneself in the districts of Ireland where the race has remained pure from all admixture of alien blood. It seems like entering on the subterranean strata of another world, and one experiences in some measure the impression given us by Dante, when he leads us from one circle of his Inferno to another.¹¹⁵

This noble vision of the Celt was to exercise influence on Matthew Arnold's On the Study of Celtic Literature (1867). Arnold furthered the Romantic image of the creative and spiritual Celts who were for him immeasurably more attractive than the philistine and banaustic English middle class. His detachment and objectivity are illustrated by his ability to speak warmly of the Celts, 'with their vehement reaction against the despotism of fact, and with their sensuous nature, their manifold striving, their adverse destiny, their immense calamities',¹¹⁶ without leading him to alter his conservative political opinions. His study represents one of the philosophical pillars of the final phase of

constitutional nationalism. Inevitably those of the opposing camp rejected his inclusive vision, and MacDonagh was representative of this school when he rebuffed Arnold's 'Celtic Note' replacing it with the more exclusive 'Irish Note'.¹¹⁷

The concentration on philology had practical consequences. In 1876 an initial move was made to preserve Irish as a spoken language with the foundation of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language. This alteration from the passive to the active, which later led to the creation of the Gaelic Union and then to the influential Gaelic League, was fundamentally different from earlier interest which was chiefly antiquarian. The increased attention on language as the manifestation of culture partly accounts for the preeminence of literature over other arts at the turn of the century. The international scholars followed the lead of Arnold in conferring on the study a broader dimension through their celebration of a Celtic, rather than an Irish, mode. The terms were not quite synonymous, the later being more catholic, for which reason W.B. Yeats consciously employed it at this period as Peter Kuch notes:

By yoking the term 'Irish', with its connotations of the parochial and the political, with the term 'Celtic', with its connotations of the international and the cultural, Yeats hoped to suggest that his literary movement belonged to the mainstream of European thought.¹¹⁸

The conflict in terminology neatly encapsulates the distance between the open and the insular approaches evident through the whole course of nationalism in Ireland. Those who espoused the parochial vision were satisfied that the heritage was sufficiently rich to preclude the necessity for external ambience, while the broader focus did indeed place the Irish experience in the context of a wider and venerable European tradition. Both, however, were agreed in the pragmatic approach to the employment of the fruits of historical and artistic research in support of political ends, as MacDonagh's reference to Meyer's assessment, cited above, illustrates. The pride and confidence that resulted from esteemed scholars evincing such interest in the heritage was a factor underlying the third and most influential of the cultural revivals.

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He has brought once more the peasant mind
into Anglo-Irish poetry, which is thus
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CHAPTER IV

The musical traditions

The term 'Anglo-Irish' has been the cause of some controversy when employed as an adjectival compound, especially in relation to literature. Some critics use it freely; others regard it with disdain, adjudging it a derogatory epithet. A third school finds it too imprecise: at the heart of this reservation is the question of whether it is a geographical or a linguistic qualification. Less frequently analysed, but no less contentious, is the parallel use of the term 'Irish' in relation to music. The progress of music in the country over the past two centuries has been confounded by the question of what precisely qualifies as Irish music. The very posing of the question reveals that there was a perceived need for some characteristic musical expression. It proved far more difficult to arrive at a consensus on the nature of that expression. Was this 'Irishness' a factor of place, allegiance, style, structure, or instrumentation? The problem is more clearly seen in relation to composers. Can Stanford be regarded as less Irish than Carolan? On a different level, are the nocturnes of Field more Irish than the Violin Concerto of Moeran? Indeed can Moeran and Bax be considered Irish composers? Of course it must be conceded that in one sense such questions are spurious, being irrelevant to the intrinsic value of the music. But they serve to demonstrate the complexity of the subject, and the difficulty in delimiting an area more open to traffic in both musicians and influences than is sometimes allowed by scholars. Anyone proffering answers to questions such as these during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was likely to reveal more of himself than of any absolute truth. This was because there was no standard to which one could appeal; views on music were as subjective as those of any other area in a dichotomous society.

The preceding chapters reveal that underlying this thesis is the belief that a fuller appreciation of the position of music in Ireland is dependent on an understanding of political development and of the social environment. The complex composition of Irish society with its inherent social tensions is mirrored in two distinct musical

traditions. These became increasingly antithetical in response to growing political polarization. The first expression was that of the indigenous Gaelic culture which was, according to its apologists, a venerable oral tradition which survived free of extraneous influence as a direct result of Ireland's geographical position. The alternative musical tradition was that practised primarily in the urban centres. In essence this was the broader institution of art music. During the eighteenth century, music in Dublin, for instance, differed from that in London only in scale, as the Irish capital basked in the reflected glory of England's Augustan age.

Ireland was not immune to the general trend toward a national musical expression which came in the wake of the Romantic movement. Yet it is a contention of this thesis that the strain between these separate traditions has inhibited the emergence of a national school of music with a distinctive and recognizable character. This failure differentiates Ireland's situation; other European nations have successfully blended their native stores of folksong with the universal tradition of art music, and have done so without the divisiveness which has characterized the Irish experience. In this respect the Irish musical position can be viewed as a casualty, or even a microcosm, of the evolving domestic political situation. This had consequences for nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century practitioners and audiences, but most especially for aspiring composers. Caught between two antipodal customs which effectively deprived him of a tradition, the Irish composer was forced to create outside of any supporting context. The creative artist searching for a tradition was faced with an unenviable choice: to espouse the indigenous tradition to a degree sufficient to satisfy its most ardent supporters necessitated turning one's back to a large measure on the great and consistent glories of Western art music. To elect for the alternative would leave the composer open to the charge of attempting to be cosmopolitan; a term of disparagement in a chauvinistic age. Any attempt at a synthesis would run the risk of alienating both camps and of compromising the integrity of the composer. Furthermore, to embrace either option would inevitably be regarded by some as a political statement. This may appear a preposterous contention, but the remark of a young Irish composer, Aloys Fleischmann, made in the course of an article published

in the artistically torpid 1930s, indicates that such an inference was all too evident to the creative artist.

Unless his [the composer's] music is confined to arrangements of traditional tunes, or at most to sets of variations on these tunes, he may indeed risk being classed by the rank and file as Anglo-Irish, even as anti-Irish.¹

The confusion of art and polity was not easily avoided in Ireland. To find that art was indentured to a polity was not a peculiarly Irish phenomenon but, as the previous chapters have disclosed, the complexity in this case was that there were two distinct programmes vying for artistic abutment. It follows that the cultural chasm was a fundamental cause of the low level of musical activity which Ireland experienced at this period.

Pragmatic reasons also suggest themselves. Music is a social art; in order to flourish it requires some degree of political stability, adequate funding, and an audience educated to some minimal level of musical discernment. In all of these Ireland was to a greater or lesser degree deficient. In respect of education, patronage, facilities, and opportunities, Ireland could not bear comparison with England or indeed any other neighbouring country with a claim to an independent character. Even the smaller states of Eastern Europe, with their shifting borders and complex mix of cultures can point to greater musical achievements over the past two centuries. So too can Scotland and Wales which share Ireland's colonial history, notwithstanding the fact that neither can boast a particularly august nineteenth-century musical record. The revival of interest in folksong began in Scotland and Wales at much the same time as it did in Ireland. But, in contrast to Ireland, both benefited from the lower levels of political tension and were more favoured in the development of urban industrial centres. From these arose the choral groups, brass and military bands, and music societies which afforded the activity largely absent in Ireland. The strength of a nation's music is more dependent on the efforts of ordinary individuals than on the work of the occasional genius. In the words of Ralph Vaughan Williams:

Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only. A musical nation is not a nation which is

content to listen. The best form of musical appreciation is to try and do it for yourself; to get really inside the meaning of the music.²

Or, perhaps, in the more pithy statement of Gustav Holst:

if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing badly.³

But practical conditions cannot fully account for Ireland's relative musical inertia. This after all was the country and the period which produced a conspicuous literary efflorescence. To comprehend better the failure of music to respond to literature's precedent, it is necessary to examine the rival musical traditions.

The indigenous musical culture

The collections of Bunting may be said to have brought about the first revival of Irish Folk Music.⁴

We can confidently accept this assertion of Alfred Perceval Graves, made in the Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society, that the work of Bunting and his immediate successors signalled the emergence of interest in a hitherto unconscious and innocent culture. This burgeoning interest in traditional music was but part of the general cultural revival which occurred in three stages as outlined in the previous chapter, the ultimate eclosion coming in the politically dormant final decade of the nineteenth century. Revival carries connotations of resuscitation and, in connection with music, the first two stages cannot truthfully be described as a revival. These were, rather, periods of dissemination of a living tradition, albeit one without proselytizing aspirations, and one which, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, had been regarded by the political establishment as a subculture. Prior to the arousal of national political awareness, traditional music had survived free from examination and celebration as but one ingredient in the slowly evolving pattern of rural society.

That the Gaelic culture was in retreat at the outset of this period has been referred to already. The decision of the Catholic

Church and of O'Connell to pursue their work through the English language was ominous. The success of the National Board of Education in raising literacy levels in the first half of the century had the consequence of further undermining the native tongue and traditional practices. It is telling that nationalists even as ardent as the Young Irelanders should elect to promulgate their message in The Nation through the medium of English. Emigration was another factor in the decline. The decision to migrate was generally based on economic rather than on political factors. In a country with few industrial openings and with an agrarian economy largely based on tenant farming and smallholdings, the ambitious young often perceived emigration as the only option. The pressure to leave was even greater in a society accustomed to rearing large families; Ireland had recorded the largest demographic growth in Europe for most of the eighteenth century.⁵ Emigration not only depleted successive generations thereby upsetting the social balance, it also altered the evaluation of native culture. Possession of the English language became a necessity as Britain and later the United States were the favoured destinations for emigrants. Thus not only was English the language of domestic power, but the return of the successful emigrant and the remittances of others served to corroborate the association between foreign, and particularly English, culture and progress. The corollary was naturally the identification of the Gaelic culture and language with poverty and stagnation. Yet again this points to parallels with the experience of other European countries. While pride in a culture and in aspects of tradition was commonly articulated by a generally urban-based intelligentsia, its calibre and beauty were not so readily apparent to those at the rockface of that culture, especially when it was identified with relative material deprivation.

Emigration and population decline were further hastened by the mid-century famine. It is estimated that in the region of one million people perished in the calamity.⁶ Between 4.5 and 5 million people left Ireland in the period 1852-1910,⁷ and the total population decreased in the same period from 8.2 to 4.4 million.⁸ Principally affected by the catastrophe and the subsequent emigration were the western counties of Mayo, Galway, Clare, Leitrim, Roscommon, and Sligo. This was the area where the indigenous culture could claim to be at its

strongest and purest, being the most distant from the centres of English influence. The damage to the social fabric of such a stronghold was to prove a grievous blow to the culture. This after all was not an high culture capable of easy transformation; it was a living entity dependent on a measure of fixity in the local social environment. By the end of the century it survived only in isolated pockets, and was patently endangered. The commitment of those in sympathy with the old traditions was concerned as much to record the quality of the practice as to perpetuate it. Yet those scholars working at the turn of the century could with justice be described as labouring for a revival but, whatever the stated intention, the emphasis was no longer on recording a vibrant tradition, but on preserving the last of a moribund culture.

Aspects of the tradition

Any investigation of the native musical tradition must concern itself with the character and quality of the heritage, and then proceed to examine if and how this has been employed to produce a consistent and characteristic national school of music. The assiduity of the nineteenth-century collectors along with the publicizing dissemination of Moore created an awareness of, and a prevailing confidence in, the quality of Irish folk music. Many eminent commentators can be cited to support Sir Arnold Bax's oft-quoted assertion that

of all the countries in the world Ireland possesses the most varied and beautiful folk music.⁹

The charge that such claims are merely chauvinistic exaggerations loses its sting when the affirmation emanates from a visiting musician, even when the author is an avowed Hibernophile. Bax was a musician of considerable standing and his opinion commands attention. This evaluation echoes that of his compatriot, Sir Hubert Parry, who stated that

Irish folk music is probably the most human, most varied, most poetical in the world, and is particularly rich in tunes which imply considerable sympathetic sensitiveness.¹⁰

But the propensity to such averment may be damaging when there is not commensurate energy devoted to research and in the absence of sustained concentration on comparative musical folklore. The satisfaction with the excellence of the heritage was not sufficiently corroborated by objective analysis, nor could it be when the tradition was only just emerging for wider consideration. The conviction that the heritage was superior was, on occasion, employed as justification for eschewing other forms of musical expression. Indeed there were those such as the Revd Dr Henebry who condemned the cultivation of all 'modern music', believing its alien character, modes, and instrumental base capable of contaminating the indigenous tradition.

The more we foster modern music the more we help to silence our own.¹¹

It is a contention of this thesis that, unfortunately and ironically, the high estimation of Irish folk music strengthened the duality which ultimately restricted the development of a national musical expression.

Richard Henebry was a voluble supporter of traditional music and an advocate of an insular musical policy. He was educated at St John's College in his native Waterford and at Maynooth. Following ordination, he came to prominence when he secured the new Celtic chair at the Catholic University of Washington, a position established and endowed in 1895 by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the United States.¹² A series of disputes led to his resignation and return to Ireland where he ultimately became professor of Old Irish in University College Cork, a position he held from 1909 until his death in 1916. An archly conservative perspective on all matters pertaining to the life of the nation meant he was no stranger to controversy even to the extent of criticizing Pearse for too modernist an approach to the Irish language.¹³ Henebry's interest in music is attested to by his polemical writings and principally by his major studies, Irish Music (1903) and A Handbook of Irish Music (1928). He was also a vice-president of the Irish Folk Song Society from its inauguration in 1904. He was to music what the editor of the Leader, D.P. Moran, was to politics and literature: an Irish Irlander, disputatious, original, and idiosyncratic, but with a commendable consistency and honesty. No matter how dated and ethnocentric his writings may now appear, they

command attention as they exercised no mean influence in the early decades of the century.

It would be unreasonable to expect to find evidence of detailed comparative ethnomusicology during the initial rise in folklore research. What is surprising is that there is no discernible awareness of the basic correspondence between Irish folk music and the ethnic music of other countries. This is arguably less an indication of Ireland's insularity and more a confirmation that traditional music was valued primarily in relation to the alternative practice of art music. Pioneers such as Bunting and Petrie were urban-based and versed in the wider European tradition of art music and accordingly they emphasized the uniqueness of the native musical character. This was increasingly the case with their successors who idealized the music of the dispossessed Irish. The criticism then of the early research is not related to any lack of motivation or absence of diligence, it concerns, rather, the dearth of objectivity.

To lament the want of an objective approach to ethnomusicology - although the term was not available at this time - is not to deny the quality of Irish folk music which indubitably contains many treasures. Its principal glories lie in the abundance and beauty of its melodies, with their linear constitution being the chief characteristic of the tradition. The song is the centre of the heritage and consequently the majority of airs lie within the compass of an octave or a twelfth. The loss of more ancient airs has left a preponderance of neoterical melodies. So too, the architectonic construction of some melodies attests to the influence of Western European styles, and often indicates that the melodies are of more recent derivation. More venerable airs were frequently asymmetrical in construction as was freely admitted by Thomas Moore.

Another difficulty (which is, however, purely mechanical) arises from the irregular structure of many of those airs and the lawless kind of metre which it will in consequence be necessary to adapt to them. In these instances the poet must write, not to the eye, but to the ear.¹⁴

The opening of 'At the mid-hour of Night', based on the air 'Molly, my dear', reveals the variance between the melodic character and the architectonic approach to poetic construction which even the talent of Tom Moore failed to disguise completely. The melody is given first in the original arrangement by Stevenson (Ex.11), and then in the later setting by Stanford (Ex.12).¹⁵ Despite the manifest incongruity of music and words evident from the very opening, this poem earned Moore wide acclaim being regarded by Thomas MacDonagh as a precursor of the 'Irish Note'.¹⁶ However, a later critic, Robert Welch, was not so kind:

At the Mid Hour of Night for all its
rhythmical complexity is word-spinning
felicitous twaddle. A tissue of atmospheric
gesturings, the poem engages with nothing.¹⁷

Uneven phrase construction will be encountered in the indigenous tradition; five-bar phrases, such as those in the example quoted, are not uncommon. This is a characteristic which Irish music shares with the ethnic music of other regions.

A peculiarity of Irish folk music is the frequency of simple triple time and, to a lesser extent, of 6/8. Alfred Perceval Graves, a leading figure in the early years of the Irish Folk Song Society, comments:

What is common time in England now-a-days was
not common time in Ireland when the great
proportion of her folk airs were composed.¹⁸

Love songs and patriotic songs form the largest groups in the repertoire which doubtless gives rise to the erroneous belief that the true character of Irish music is revealed only in the slow airs. One is again reminded of Parry's reference to a tradition 'particularly rich in tunes which imply considerable sympathetic sensitiveness'.¹⁹ This notion is in large measure a legacy of the deliberate propagation of a pensive strain which best accorded with the political circumstances. Moore did much to implant this idea.

The poet... must feel and understand that
rapid fluctuation of spirits, that
unaccountable mixture of gloom and levity,

Ex. 11

Slow, and with melancholy expression

At the mid hour of night, when stars are weep- ing, I fly To the

lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;

The musical score consists of four systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a treble clef staff containing a whole rest and a bass clef staff with a series of chords and moving lines. The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The third system introduces a vocal line in the treble clef with the lyrics 'At the mid hour of night, when stars are weep- ing, I fly To the'. The fourth system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;' and concludes with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment continues throughout the vocal lines.

Ex.12

Quasi Adagio

p

At the

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Quasi Adagio' and the dynamics include 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The vocal line begins with a rest followed by a few notes.

mid hour of night, when stars are weep- ing, I

The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics 'mid hour of night, when stars are weep- ing, I' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

fly to the lone vale we loved, when life shone

The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics 'fly to the lone vale we loved, when life shone' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with its characteristic harmonic texture.

warm in thine eye

The fourth system concludes the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics 'warm in thine eye' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord and a double bar line.

which composes the character of my countrymen and has deeply tinged their music. Even in their liveliest strains we find some melancholy note intrude - some minor third or flat seventh - which throws its shade as it passes and makes even mirth interesting.²⁰

It can reasonably be argued that the melancholic mood of many of these songs reflects the depressed political conditions of the past three centuries. Nationalist gatherings, such as that of the Robert Emmet Branch of the National League at Harold's Cross Dublin when addressed on 14 November 1886 by Richard Pryor, were the natural orbit for this perspective. At the commencement of his lecture on the subject of 'Irish National Music', Pryor stated

Alas! our music is a mixture of restrained joy, o'ershadowed by a deep, tender, pleading, praying, beseeching moan; and herein lies its power; though it has undoubtedly been extracted by the whip of some merciless or unfeeling slave master.²¹

Giraldus Cambrensis, the archdeacon of Brecon who travelled to Ireland with Strongbow and other Norman-Welsh invaders and whose chronicles include a valuable record of the musical practices of the many centres he visited, provides evidence of the Irish musical character as it must have been just prior to the advent of concerted external influence. In discussing the Irish harpers, he records that

they are incomparably more skilful than any other nation I have ever seen. For their manner of playing on their instruments, unlike that of the Britons (or Welsh) to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the melody is both sweet and sprightly.²²

It appears that one consequence of prolonged political subjugation was the gradual suppression of native sprightliness and consequently of its musical manifestation.

Much of the beauty of the slower airs which survive in the repertoire lies in the complex decoration which also influenced instrumental music. The latter has received more attention in recent decades. Even the instrumental style reveals vocal inspiration. These

questions of influence and proportion are referred to by Captain Francis O'Neill, 'the most colourful collector',²³ in the introduction to the enlarged second edition of his publication Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody.

The great disparity between the number of airs, and dance tunes in such noted collections, plainly indicates that the former are the more ancient and diversified, because singing is a universal accomplishment, while skill in instrumental music is limited, and of comparatively recent development. It is quite apparent also that an appreciable number of dance tunes have been evolved from airs and marches, since the Irish or Union bagpipe and fiddle supplanted the harp in the later half of the 18th century.²⁴

The main traditional instruments are melodic in character: the harp, fiddle, Irish pipes, whistle and flute. They were employed singly rather than in concert which again echoes the folksong practice; choral and ensemble music were a later development. A number of the instruments were capable of providing simultaneous accompaniment, a facility employed by some historians to endorse the affirmation of a venerable and complex tradition. William Grattan Flood published a complete paper on 'Ancient Irish Harmony' designed to 'remove the erroneous views of those who contend that the ancient Irish were unacquainted with harmony'.²⁵ He was but one who pointed to Cambrensis, who, as early as the second half of the twelfth century, had praised the polyphonic skills of Irish harpers in his Topographia Hiberniae.²⁶ The industrious Graves speculates on this when answering his own question:

Was harmony known to the ancient Irish? Early figurings of players on the Irish harp point distinctly to such knowledge. The Irish method of playing, unlike the later Continental method, was for the minstrel to manipulate the treble strings with his left hand, the lower with his right, which would point to special stress being laid upon a bass part of the air.²⁷

The uilleann pipes can also supply a basic pedal with the drones and more complex chordal accompaniment with the regulators, although the widespread use of this facility is a more recent phenomenon.

This recent concentration on instrumental music has had a decided influence on the tradition. Decorative flourishes and figures characteristic of particular instruments have become commonplace. So too the growth of broadcasting and recording has encouraged a universal standard and style of execution in place of individuality and regional diversity. Modern temperament, performance techniques, and style have also made their impact primarily through the medium of instrumental rendition. It is not novel to argue that this instrumental domination has had a deleterious effect on the tradition as a whole; Richard Henebry, to whom all modern instruments were anathema, proposed the case at the outset of the twentieth century:

In the case of modern music the instrument has overrun everything and completely dominated and absorbed all vocal tradition. The modern educational system, which enforces upon defenceless youngsters whatever fad happens to be uppermost at the time, to the exclusion of all others, has imposed this instrumental tradition everywhere, and, except the remnants in Ireland and a few out-of-the-way places like it, has all but completely destroyed the very memory of European human music.²⁸

Such reservations do not alter the fact that the culture is essentially linear both in its vocal and instrumental manifestations. In this, Irish folk music was not unique; on the contrary, it was consistent with what Béla Bartók described as the rural, or peasant, music of other European nations.²⁹

A comparative study : Hungary and Ireland

The present writer has often been surprised by the similarity between Hungarian and Irish folk-song: a similarity which may be due to a joint Oriental origin.³⁰

It will be seen that the claims for the peculiarity of Irish music are valid only if it is contrasted solely with the alternative

practice. When placed in a wider setting, it reveals much in common with other European ethnic traditions. As suggested above by Stanford when, in a wide-ranging essay, he took just such a comprehensive view, a fruitful comparison is provided by developments in Hungary, which hosted one of the most successful folksong revivals and, through the vision of individual masters, constructed from this heritage a distinctive musical voice. One such composer, Béla Bartók, having devoted considerable energy and time to the revival, spoke with authority on the common origins and global appeal of folksong and its attendant problems.

It cannot be denied that the impulse to begin folk song research, as well as any folklore science in general, is attributable to the awakening of national feeling. The discovery of the values of folklore and folk music excited the national pride, and as there were no means whatever for comparison at the outset, the members of each nation were convinced that the possession of such treasures was their only and particular privilege. Small nations, especially the politically oppressed ones, found a certain consolation in these treasures, their self-consciousness grew stronger and consolidated; the study and publication of folk music values were adequate means of re-solidifying the national feeling of the more cultured strata which in consequence of oppression has suffered damage on more than one point. But soon these nations encountered some disappointment: however little they were concerned with similar values of the neighbouring peoples, it still was unavoidable to come inadvertently in contact now and then with some aspect of the neighbouring nation's cultural treasures of this kind. And so the trouble began.³¹

The initial motivation to research was, again in Bartók's poetic phrase, 'to offer pleasure to all those who still have a taste for wild flowers'.³² This image is echoed by Bartók's illustrious colleague, Zoltán Kodály, when proclaiming the artistic perfection of the individual folksong in the course of his major study on the traditional music of his native land.

It must be emphasized that the song-repertoire analysed in this book constitutes a single,

indivisible whole. It is essentially an expression of life, and instinctively satisfies the musical needs of the peasants. The greater part of the Hungarian nation has so far remained an ethnic community, particularly where music is concerned; it has in common its original folk-culture, which has been preserved intact. Thanks to this, the single song, or flower, of this folk-culture, is often an authentic masterpiece, and as a living product has often enjoyed a separate existence. It is not just the trésor des humbles, for it fulfils the most exacting of cultural requirements. It is no primitive product, but an art matured and refined by thousands of years of evolution: an art which is valid and perfect, because the culture that produced it was an organic, balanced unity. Nineteenth-century art-song, on the contrary, was merely the product of a semiculture which, for a large part of the nation, represented a transitional stage only.³³

Sentiments such as the foregoing, or Bartók's assertion that individual airs 'are as perfect as the grandest masterpieces of musical art',³⁴ can commonly be encountered also among Irish collectors. This realization of value and its proclamation are developments common to folksong revivals in general. Kodály's historical survey of his native praxis suggests even further parallels with the Irish situation.

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, in the capital and in various county towns, a handful of the élite, with 'literate' cultural pretensions, gradually developed a musical life comparable with that of Western European cities. But it was a minority compared with the mass of the nation. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, the musical life of the majority lagged behind their general culture, and wore the insignia of the unlettered oral tradition. When, about 1900, a great surge of interest in folksong and folk music occurred, most Hungarians incorrectly regarded the widely diffused popular music current at the time as the folk-tradition.³⁵

One salient difference between the two countries is that awareness and preservation of the heritage occurred earlier in Ireland, a fact which only serves further to contrast subsequent developments. Bartók

reveals, that Béla Vikár, the first to collect Hungarian peasant music systematically, did not commence his activities until 1898.³⁶ Earlier attempts had been made by Gábor Mátray, director of the Musicians' Society School of Music in Pest, and by András Bartay, most notably in his 1833-4 publication Eredeti Népdalok (Original Folk Songs). Their industry, and that of their successors, signalled the rise in national sensibility, but it was later criticized for a lack of discernment in the choice of airs. The general musical position was remarkably similar to that prevailing in Ireland at this time.

The 'musical map' of Hungary in the course of the eighteenth century, especially between 1720 and 1820, showed most peculiar extremes and most radical changes. Nothing but foreign orchestras, and foreign composers, conductors and virtuosi.³⁷

The growth in national sentiment had its origin in factors which stimulated a similar response in small countries throughout the continent.

This new definition of national culture was a fundamentally new phenomenon and it was brought about by profound political, social and spiritual changes. The rising resistance to the Germanizing endeavours of Emperor Joseph II had a share in it, as well as the French revolution and the popular tendency emerging in Herder's wake, and early Romanticism even. The foreign musicians in Hungary wished to participate in the efforts to express in Hungarian music the peculiar character of the nation and thus, together with the Hungarian musicians, determine the distinctive style of this national character.³⁸

The first musical manifestation of this, as Kodály records, 'represented a transitional stage only'.³⁹ This was the verbunkos, a hybrid music of instrumental character often supplied with texts of a patriotic nature. With its admixture of folk, gypsy, and Germanic art music influences, the verbunkos was readily disseminated by travelling gypsies and by military bands in connection with recruiting ceremonies. For much of the nineteenth century leading composers erroneously equated the verbunkos and gypsy music in general with true Hungarian folk music. This explains Bartók's rejection of Liszt's national

pretensions and of his theories on tzigane expressed in his Des Bohémiens et de leur musique en Hongrie (Paris, 1859), despite being an admirer of the older master's compositions. Although even in this rejection Bartók is, as ever, magnanimous.

It is my conviction that we can only partly blame Liszt himself. The whole question of the so-called gipsy music strictly belongs to the domain of folklore research. But in Liszt's time, folklore as a branch of learning did not exist at all. Nobody then had any idea that the study of problems in this field required hard work, scientific methods, and the collection of facts from the widest possible first-hand experience. In Liszt's time, and thus for Liszt himself, all the essential conditions were lacking which might have enabled him to see the question more clearly.... This explains why he placed the extravagant, over-loaded and rhapsodic gipsy music-making higher than the peasant performances.... It is public knowledge that Liszt himself always maintained, whether Hungary's fortunes were good or bad, that he was a Hungarian. And it is the right of such a great artist as he that the whole world should take note of his wishes in this matter and not dispute them, especially when there is no adequate proof to support such a dispute. Liszt called himself Hungarian; everyone, Hungarian or not, should know of this and let the matter rest at that.⁴⁰

Liszt approached the creation of a national musical voice from without, demonstrating the broader influences to which he was subject. This anticipated the procedure adopted by some Irish musicians which engendered a similar response. In the words of Bence Szabolcsi:

He [Liszt] started out from an international standpoint and developed towards national aims.⁴¹

As a land-locked country, located between some of the most powerful historic states in Europe, and peopled by the complex mixture of nations that inhabit the concourse of Eastern Europe and the North Balkan region, it is inevitable that Hungary was subject to greater cross-fertilization than was a peripheral island such as Ireland. Yet Ireland too experienced a transitional stage which was principally personified by the blind itinerant harper, Turlough Carolan

(1670-1738). The generous legacy of airs bequeathed us by Carolan, 'the last and greatest of the poet harpers',⁴² has earned him a special place in Irish music history. The summation of Aloys Fleischmann concurred with the opinions of many who took pleasure in Carolan's lyrical style. But Dr Henebry took a different view.

And so with the decay of taste we can understand how a harper named Carolan gained notoriety in the seventeenth century amongst the gentry (who were then abandoning Irish for modern music) by his performance or rather composition of concertos, etc., and how through the patronage of his admirers he attained to a certain amount of prestige amongst the vulgar. A little later certain people in Dublin prided themselves upon being the first to appreciate Handel's music. That will show the spirit that was moving the fashionable musical world at the time in Ireland and enable us to discount the title of last of the bards innocently bestowed upon Carolan. Indeed, his tunes, published by O'Neill, show him to have been no Irish musician.⁴³

This is an assessment born of a consciousness of nationalism, and one evident only from the middle of the nineteenth century; such decided distinction would not have occurred to the eighteenth-century mind. A more valuable retrospective judgment comes of perceiving Carolan as the chief representative of the middle nation, if one might borrow that historians' phrase and apply it to matters musical. It pertains here not to lineage but to compositional influences. He could be equated with Kodály's 'transitional man':

One who had already outgrown folk-culture, but had not yet reached a higher cultural level.⁴⁴

While the linear quality and form of his airs are characteristically Irish, the melodies betray a distinct Italian flavour. As Donal O'Sullivan, his biographer, records, this is accounted for by Carolan's acquaintance with, and respect for, the music of Corelli, Vivaldi, and Geminiani, the latter of whom took up residence in Dublin and may well have been known personally to Carolan. According to Bunting, 'Carolan was the first who departed from the purely Irish style in composition'.⁴⁵ Carolan's case is interesting in that it cannot have

been isolated. He was a native Irish speaker and he never travelled outside the country. He lived the typical life of the itinerant musician, and while his fame as a composer doubtless won him influential friends this may well have been balanced by his less than exceptional skill as an executant.⁴⁶ It would be stretching credulity to argue that contemporary musicians were unconscious of the broader influences apparent to Carolan or, indeed, that those working in rural parts were wholly oblivious to urban trends, which again supports the contention that Ireland was not as musically isolated as is sometimes claimed.

Underlying this whole debate is the assumption that folk music is the embodiment of the national spirit. Cecil Gray does valuable service when, in his idiosyncratic manner, he questions this basic tenet.

And so we find that folk-music, when it is authentic and ancient, tends to be cosmopolitan and international; when it possesses distinctively national traits it is in general not folk music at all in the proper sense of the word, but generally dates no farther back than the beginning of the nineteenth century or so.⁴⁷

Patently, Gray is determined here not to articulate received wisdom concerning folk music; his perspective is nonetheless beneficial in opening this cosy assumption to examination. His conclusion follows a dissertation in which he argues that much of what passes as folk music is not genuine, but is the expression of a 'flamboyant, grease-painted nationalism'.⁴⁸ He especially points the case of tzigane which he regards as a 'pseudo-nationalist gipsy music', although it appeared to him 'in spite of its surface flashiness, to be on a much higher level of musical interest than the genuine article'.⁴⁹ The musicologist, Carl Dahlhaus, supports this reading when he argues that the appearance is more important than the reality:

So long as gipsy music in Hungary was regarded as authentically Hungarian, it was authentically Hungarian.⁵⁰

The construction of a nationalist expression on an artificial but popularly accepted base is a conspicuous feature of Hungarian opera; as examples, Anthony Cross points to the operas of Erkel and even to so prominent a work as Kodaly's Háry János.⁵¹ This genre affords another interesting comparison between developments in Hungary and Ireland. Opera, the most potent vehicle for nationalism in music particularly when based on folksong or its elements, made an earlier appearance in Hungary. The National Theatre opened in 1837 and staged the early works of Ferenc Erkel (1810-93) who was the first to strive to create a consciously national opera; his work was later criticized for being based on the verbunkos and for being too reliant on the forms and styles of contemporary Italian and French opera. Yet his works won wide approbation especially in the period preceding the rebellion against Hapsburg rule in 1848, which suggests that popular appreciation of patriotic intent was not necessarily synonymous with a puristic approach to the heritage. There is a conspicuous contrast between Erkel's success and the situation pertaining in Ireland where an original operatic style had even more difficulty emerging for reasons which will be explored in the following chapter.

The modal debate

The most salient correlation between the indigenous traditions of the two countries concerns the structural basis of the music. At the turn of the present century the revival of interest in folksong gave rise to much speculative discussion on the nature and relevance of the modal structure which underlies Irish folk music. One such example was Donald McDonald's short publication Irish Music and Irish Scales.⁵² The result of McDonald's study of the Irish modes leads him to doubt the authenticity of the collections of Bunting and Petrie. A rather individual technical perspective is supplied by W.B.Reynolds, a disciple of Henebry, who contributed to the discussion by speaking with enthusiasm on the chromatic quarter-tone which occurs in Irish music between F and F#. ⁵³ Dr James C.Culwick, a prominent musician resident in Dublin, provided a more thought-provoking input with his paper 'The Distinctive Characteristics of Ancient Irish Melody' delivered before the National Literary Society on Monday evening 15 February 1897. It is a reflection of the current isolationist tendencies that he felt it

necessary to preface his remarks with the liberal observations that an appreciation of indigenous music need not entail a rejection of other expressions, and that Irish folk music could be held to complement the traditional practices of neighbouring lands, and particularly those of his native England.

In paying a visit of inquiry to these remote regions we need not - we shall not - regard with any less affection the more frequented parts of the musical field. On the contrary we shall see with a better informed mind the true position of all things, and with a surer judgement gauge their relative value.... take by way of comparison, the strong, broad shouldered, robust, and square-headed, sturdy and bold song-music of England, and compare it with the fervour, romance, and softened imagination of the early Irish music. These two styles, may in a sense, be said to complete the one the other: while they differ they are not necessarily antagonistic. To me they always appeared to illustrate the strength of the masculine, and the sweetness of the feminine qualities of music.⁵⁴

Such an inclusive approach was not common, and it did not prevent Culwick from arguing passionately for the preservation of a noble heritage.

...let there be no further tampering with the true traditions; let us not wantonly 'improve' these sacred reliques of antiquity until they become non-existent.... Are not these songs the voices of your dead forefathers? Let us cherish and protect them.⁵⁵

The scholarship exhibited by Culwick in his discussion of the scales is not universally evident. All contributors to this extended polemic refer liberally to A.J.Ellis' 1885 translation of Hermann Helmholtz's influential Sensations of Tone. However, much of the debate on the structure of traditional music was as ill-defined and misunderstood as it was exuberant. The modal basis provided confirmation for some that Irish music was more venerable and worthy than any cosmopolitan import. For some it principally served to demonstrate that Irish music was distinctive and fundamentally different from the European aesthetic, and the various investigations were primarily concerned to corroborate

this individuality. The issue was further confused by the concurrent Cecilian revival which found expression in Ireland largely due to the munificence of Edward Martyn (1859-1923), a consistent advocate of the advancement of his nation's cultural life. A comprehensive investigation into ecclesiastical modes was one aspect of this widespread reform movement. The exaltation of Gregorian chant and of great sixteenth-century masters appealed to Martyn who was as conservative in matters musical as in matters religious. A fervent Roman Catholic, he was to speak of liturgical music as 'the chief interest of my life';⁵⁶ it was also the interest which best demonstrated the liberal variety of nationalism of which he was a chief representative. The Cecilian Movement was fortunate to find in Ireland a champion so learned, willing, eloquent, and able. Martyn, who was to make a telling contribution to the literary revival through his association with the Gaelic League, the Irish Literary Theatre, and the Abbey, indulged his love of sixteenth-century sacred music by touring through Europe admiring the choirs of the great cathedrals.

After many years wandering on the continent to Rome, Paris, Regensbourg, Cöln, Mainz, Munster, where liturgical services were magnificent and the music varying in excellence - except at Regensbourg where it was always splendid and the best - I often wondered why in my own land, the most Catholic of all Europe, where much money had been expended on new churches, where the Church was most flourishing, there was so little to be seen of her wonderful art. In fact one would never suspect that she had any, if judged by her aspect here in Ireland.⁵⁷

Martyn was accompanied on a number of these journeys by the novelist and painter, George Augustus Moore (1852-1933), who had collaborated with Martyn, Yeats, and others in the planning of the Irish National Theatre, although such a pilgrimage was not an activity one might immediately associate with a man described as holding an opinion of himself as 'the liberator of his native land from the thrall of priestcraft and Catholicism'.⁵⁸ On one such occasion they invited Vincent O'Brien (1870-1948), a musician of like sympathies, to join them. O'Brien was Dublin-born and a former pupil of the eminent Sir Robert Stewart, and was a guiding figure of the national musical

organization, Cumann Ceoil.⁵⁹ His natural talent, and doubtless his preoccupation with liturgical music, earned him the respect of Martyn who was to promote his career. He had first come to Martyn's attention in 1898 when presenting Palestrina's Missa Papae Marcelli at St Teresa's Church in Dublin, an enterprise guaranteed to attract Martyn's approval.⁶⁰ For Martyn had more than a dilettantish approach; he was an erudite and critical observer with, for instance, a decided preference for the robust continental choral tradition over the more polished English alternative. By one of those strange accidents of fate, he found a powerful ally in the active archbishop of Dublin, Dr William Walsh. In a series of four articles entitled 'The Psalmody of the Choral Office' published in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record between September 1888 and September 1889, Dr Walsh had demonstrated his interest in the field of liturgical music by setting out his reaction to the Psalterium Vespertinum of Father Xavier Haberl (1840-1910), who had succeeded his fellow cleric Dr Franz Xavier Witt as director of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Caecilienverein, and was founder of the famous Kirchenmusikschule in Regensburg which, from its inception in 1874, was responsible for the ceremonies so beloved of Martyn.⁶¹ The technical detail of these articles is remarkable, and they reveal their author to be an impressive scholar, indeed his whole career proclaims a distinguished polymath, which is not surprising as he first came to prominence as the enterprising president of Maynooth. The reverence with which he approaches his subject would have found ready echo in Martyn who, in a review of the musical season 1899-1900, devotes appreciable space to recording liturgical music activities and in praising the annual Cecilian festival held in Dublin's St Saviour's Church.

An admirable Palestrina revival was also organised at Loreto Abbey, Rathfarnham, chiefly by the energetic exertions of the Rev. Bewerunge, whose efforts to create and maintain in Ireland high ideals of sacred music deserve, even in this brief record, more than a passing mention. His influence on the artistic and liturgical training of our clergy in a centre like Maynooth College is, and will be, far-reaching.⁶²

In 1903 after a protracted period of negotiation and of defining the legal niceties, the vision and generous beneficence of Martyn and

the enlightened support of Archbishop Walsh combined and found fruition in the establishment in Dublin's pro-Cathedral of the Palestrina choir, a name that demonstrated its affinity with the many continental Palestrina choirs composed wholly of male voices which subscribed to the ideals of the Cecilian Movement, and one that reflected the deference accorded the great sixteenth-century master by Haberl and his disciples. According to Martyn's biographer, Denis Gwynn,

The foundation of the Palestrina Choir was probably the most durable achievement of Edward's public life in Ireland, and he followed its development with affectionate interest and enthusiasm until his death.⁶³

This is a particularly revealing appraisal when one considers the range and calibre of Martyn's interests. Under the direction of Vincent O'Brien, an appointment insisted upon by Martyn, the choir set an impressive musical standard for the Catholic liturgy, and the encouragement it gave to John McCormack (1884-1945), who was to achieve universal distinction for the quality of his tenor voice, is but a small, if colourful, part of its overall contribution.

The creation of the choir and the interest in the older music of the church has more in common with the general tenor of the revival than might at first seem apparent. In the manner of Hyde and his associates, the church was expressing an anti-modernization credo: it was extolling the ancient order and disavowing the excesses of the recent past which in musical terms equated with the sacred music of the Viennese school. It was, to use A.D. Smith's phrase, subscribing to the prevailing 'cult of primitivism'.⁶⁴ The burgeoning research into the structures and character of the autochthonous Irish tradition occurred parallel with the investigations of Witt, Haberl, and the many others who were studying the nature of chant. It was perhaps inevitable that in such a Catholic country comparisons would be made between the two; how much greater the standing of Irish music if it could be shown to be similar to, or even derived from, the venerated tradition of liturgical chant. Inevitably attempts were made to catenate the indigenous secular modes with the ecclesiastical modes. The Revd Dr Henebry alludes in his Irish Music (1903) to the 'admitted relationship' between Irish music and Gregorian chant,⁶⁵ although Culwick

concentrates on the differences between the two, noting in particular the gapped forms common in the Irish tradition.⁶⁶ Henebry along with others such as Dr William Grattan Flood, Dr Annie Patterson, and particularly Carl Hardebeck, promulgated the creed that the future course of national music must, of necessity, be founded on the modal system. Such juxtaposition may at first appear implausible, but it was a catenation eagerly pursued by these Irish scholars. Hardebeck set out the parallels in a paper submitted to the Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society entitled 'Gregorian Music: its resemblance to Irish traditional music'. The objective reader must find Hardebeck's case unproven; his argument is frequently driven by emotion rather than reason and arrives at sudden conclusions:

The Irish tonalities did not originate in the Greek or Latin, as did the Gregorian modes, for the Gaelic language and poetry are at least as old as Latin or Greek; yet you find that the traditional Gaelic singer will always have the right accent. As Gaelic poetry depends upon assonance, not rhyme, for its existence, it is quite quite independent of English metre and rhyme. The Irish bards and minstrels had their heart in what they wrote, and never sacrificed the text to make commonplace music. The commonplace belongs to a commercial age alone. In my article on Rhythm I hope to show that, not only in the church but in the field and cottage, the Irish understand the art of rhythm; and also that some of the peculiarities of rhythm met with in Brahms were in a manner anticipated by the Irish musicians.⁶⁷

Carl Hardebeck

Hardebeck occupies a singular place in the history of Irish music and his influence on his fellow musicians was far greater than the current regard for his endeavours might suggest. Often referred to as a German-born musician, he was in fact born in London in 1869 where he enjoyed a comprehensive training.

This education in musical form, theory and artistry was to help me in later years when I was to come in contact with the glorious music of the Gael - the soul of Ireland which

at that time alas! being overshadowed, was
unappreciated.⁶⁸

This contact was made when he moved to Belfast in 1893 to set up as a partner in a music business. The venture did not meet with success constraining Hardebeck to turn to teaching, an employment he supplemented through his facility as an organist; from 1904 to 1919 he was organist at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast. He relinquished this post to embark on an unhappy four-year period in Cork where he had been appointed master of the Municipal School of Music. However, he was regarded as an outsider in the southern city and even his appointment in 1922 to the Cork Corporation chair of Irish music in University College Cork proved controversial. The withdrawal of a government grant awarded to assist in the publication of Gaelic airs hastened his departure. Hardebeck resigned this position after just one year and returned to Belfast where he was to remain.⁶⁹

It is one of those antinomies of Irish musical history, and one that illustrates the traffic in ideas and personnel, that this English-born, German-sounding musician was one of the first and most thorough representatives of the Irish Ireland note in music. He was one of the earliest prize winners in the composers' competitions of the annual national music festival, Feis Ceoil; he was the official accompanist at the sister festival, An Oireachtas, until 1918; he engaged in the collection of folk song, notably in County Donegal; he was an early director of the Gaelic musical body, Cumann Ceoil; and he took the trouble to learn Irish in order better to understand the native musical heritage and to make 'direct personal contact with the traditional performer'.⁷⁰ He dedicated his life to the preservation and propagation of Irish music and his achievements were accomplished despite the handicap of losing his sight in infancy. Hardebeck was a pioneering figure and it was the opinion of John Larchet, long-time professor of music in University College Dublin, that his

contribution was so valuable that no Irish
composer of the future will be in a position
to ignore it.⁷¹

Hardebeck produced a substantial amount of songs, partsongs, and arrangements of Irish airs for various media through the Dublin

publishing house of Pigott. Representative of this output, which seeks to present the originals in an apposite and uncluttered fashion, is the traditional jig, 'The Maid in the Morn' (Ex.13), taken from a simple album for piano entitled A Collection of Jigs and Reels (1921).

Ex.13

$\text{♩} = 112$

? b in key-sig

These arrangements betoken the area of his greatest influence for Hardebeck was not possessed of a strikingly individual creative voice, as Larchet's counterpart at University College Cork, Aloys Fleischmann, records:

His achievements are humbler but none the less significant to us here, as he was the pioneer, who first brought Irish traditional airs into the concert hall, the school and the home with their natural freshness and

spontaneity unspoiled in their new environment.⁷²

Hardebeck did not engage in much original composition, it was not his forte. But according to his own testimony:

I have tried to do some original work in orchestral music as I hold that one cannot live on arrangements alone. Composers must familiarise themselves with the Irish idiom and then try to produce original music on those lines. In this way I believe a school of Irish music could be founded and in a little while when I shall have passed on I hope that this work that I have tried to do in my own imperfect way may be an inspiration to younger and abler pens and may help to make better known this glorious heritage and to enable it to take its rightful place in the music of the nations.⁷³

This is precisely the path Hardebeck followed. His original work is not intrinsically exacting, but it did set a genuine model for later generations. He has left two Irish Rhapsodies, the Meditation on an Irish Lullaby, and some other incidental pieces including the gentle Seoithín Seó for medium-sized orchestra which proved among his most popular achievements (Ex.14).

Ex.14



A lyric cantata, The Red Hand of Ulster (Lámh Dhearg Abú), written to his own libretto based on Irish mythology, provides further example of his compositional style. It is scored for three solo voices, chorus, and orchestra. Even a charitable researcher must find this an

uninspired work. It is cast in ten movements which betray a constricted harmonic resource which, it must be said, is less a result of any technical deficiency than a consequence of Hardebeck's belief in the efficacy of a simple approach. A penchant for dividing the male lines particularly in the lower ranges leads occasionally to unbalanced choral writing. The syllabic and simplistic melody line from the first choral movement 'Noblest King' illustrates the restricted level of melodic invention (Ex.15).

Ex.15

The musical notation consists of two staves in treble clef, 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The melody is simple and syllabic, with lyrics: "Nob- lest King of Kings most nob- le". The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: "We thy loss this day de- plore,". The piece concludes with a double bar line.

In a work such as the cantata, Hardebeck was building on his experience as an arranger of Irish melodies. His fluency in this regard denotes his principal legacy. He had identified the aptness of a setting as the foremost consideration in approaching the body of traditional melody, and to subsequent generations of composers he bequeathed a modish preoccupation with modal structure and the association of its use with the development of a distinctive national school of music. His deep acquaintance with the heritage and with its structures led him to fashion accompaniments wholly appropriate to the character of the original air, and his memory is held dear for this proficiency as Fleischmann records:

And in a further respect Hardebeck was in advance of all other arrangers - he was the first to take proper cognizance of the modal structure of the airs. Earlier arrangers had either been entirely ignorant of the modal system, regarding any characteristic progressions which arose from it as some sort of primitive aberration, or else they cloaked them to the best of their ability

under a barrage of spurious modulations, in conformity with Victorian ideas of tonality. Hardebeck understood the modes; his treatment of them is almost exclusively diatonic, and as a result always sound. We do not find in his arrangements the interesting usage of chromatic-modal harmony which one finds, for instance, in Béla Bartók's arrangements of Hungarian folk tunes, but at least he cleared away the bric-à-brac of an earlier generation, and showed us a simpler and truer line of approach. Nor do his settings fall between the two stools of art and folk music - they are pure folk music, which has merely borrowed some of the resources of art music for adornment, for emphasis and colour. And songs such as Cath Céim an Fhiadh and Bean Dubh a Ghleanna show us how noble and stirring the effect can be when traditional material is treated in this way.⁷⁴

One of the most objective contributions to the structural debate was that made by a friend and supporter of Hardebeck, the Revd Heinrich Bewerunge (1862-1923), first and long-serving professor of music at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, who had also the distinction of being the first occupant of the chair of music in University College Dublin. He spoke as a noted scholar with an impressive technical command which he had devoted to the furtherance of Cecilian aims. In a published lecture originally delivered before St Mary's Literary Society, Maynooth College, he examines claims that the special charm of Irish melodies is principally due to the characteristic scale employed, and he responds to the argument that an isolationist educational policy be adopted to preserve the purity of the musical inheritance. Bewerunge's analysis is impressive and thorough and his conclusions are balanced and even charitable. He is clearly dubious about the assertion that the Irish modes are peculiar, and is opposed to an insular musical policy.

If we look at the question from an abstract point of view, we must admit that it is a very serious matter for a nation to lose a precious national inheritance; and, prima facie, we cannot deny the possibility of Irish music being such an inestimable treasure that to exchange it for all the achievements of modern music would be a very bad bargain. But, if we look at the actual

state of affairs, and if we put the question this way: 'Is Ireland to remain stationary at the point which the rest of civilised humanity passed about five or six centuries ago?' I think very few, even of the most patriotic Irishmen, will, without any hesitation, decide in favour of the Irish scale.... By all means, then, let us make an effort to 'study and understand the peculiarity of the real Irish music; and if we find that it possesses advantages which modern music cannot come up to, we will preserve it, and, perhaps, fructify modern music by it.⁷⁵

That the modal system was so readily seized upon as a principal characteristic serves to illustrate the prevailing anxiety to differentiate the indigenous tradition from its principal rival. This provides evidence of the politically-inspired ethnocentric nature of much of Irish musical life. It further demonstrates that those sympathetic to the insular position perceived that rival not as the representative of a noble and inclusive European tradition but as the comminating expression of a depraved Anglocentric view. Had it been possible to take a more liberal view, the self-evident distinction between the music of the Gaelic culture and the largely urban-based art music would have required less contentious assertion. Ironically, far from establishing the singularity of the native expression, the structural debate demonstrated the communion between the folk music of Ireland and that of other European cultures.

Structures

The majority of Irish traditional melodies are in the Ionian or Mixolydian modes with most of the remainder being either Aeolian or Dorian in construction. Heptatonic scales predominate, but hexatonic and pentatonic examples will also be found. Occasional chromatic inflection will be encountered, the use of the flattened seventh being idiosyncratic. But this modal structure is not exceptional; it is the basis of the folk music of the various nations on these islands. Structurally Irish music is one of family of ethnic expressions in the same way as Hungarian folksong is part of a Finno-Urgaric group with discernible Asiatic influences.

Formal construction provides another common feature between the ethnic music of the Ireland and Hungary. The most frequently encountered Irish structure, AABA, coincides with the predominant form of what Bartók describes as the 'new style' of Hungarian folksong.⁷⁶ This is also of course an archetypal form of European art song. This concurrence along with the form's prevalence in the Hungarian new style (i.e. folksong which betrays evidence of influence from universal musical styles) again supports the contention that a large proportion of the Irish tradition is not as venerable as some of its early advocates would have us believe.

Is there, then, a case to argue that Irish music is individual? The ear undoubtedly perceives a distinction in flavour and in concerns between the folksong of Ireland and that of neighbouring nations. These differences, and indeed the principal distinguishing features of the Gaelic culture, are factors of the social and economic environment. The folksong was, like its East European counterparts, a peasant culture, orally-transmitted and rurally-centred. It was the living culture of an unlettered people and was intimately connected with the Gaelic tongue. Padraic Pearse, the leading figure in the insurrection of 1916, wrote:

When the position of Ireland's language as her greatest heritage is once fixed, all other matters will insensibly adjust themselves. As it develops, and because it develops, it will carry all kindred movements with it. Irish music, Irish art, Irish dancing, Irish games and customs, Irish industries, Irish politics - all these are worthy objects. Not one of them, however, can be said to be fundamental.⁷⁷

For Pearse, the language was the critical constituent of culture, and culture was far more enduring even than statehood; the culture was the core of a nation and while there could be a nation without a state there could never be a state without a nation. It was the Hungarian example, brought to Pearse's attention through the publication in 1904 of Arthur Griffith's The Resurrection of Hungary, which confirmed him in the belief that the relationship of language and culture was crucial. The Irish evidence supported this conviction. The inexorable decline in the language engendered a corresponding decline in folk

music. That the language was at the heart of the culture meant that the very notion of Gaelic revival was largely inspired by the celebration of the language and the necessary focus on preservation was a goal which rallied Irishmen of diverse political persuasions. One has only to consider the extensive labours of the first president of the Gaelic League, Douglas Hyde, on the folksongs of Connaught to realize that the musical heritage benefited indirectly, in terms of preservation, from being recognized as a component part of the language-centred culture.⁷⁸

It might be expected that music, like the language, would be perceived as embodying the spirit of a distinctive people and be valued accordingly. To a limited extent this was the case which no doubt accounts for some of the chauvinistic claims made for its quality and the inimitability of its structure. Those who esteemed it for its intrinsic value were apt to be outnumbered by others who prized its expedience in supporting a cause, although language and literature were the favoured media in this respect. The crucial disparity with letters was that there was no broad interest in folk music and its preservation. For the committed few who recorded their thoughts in print this was a source of pained obscurity, especially when juxtaposed with the assertion that Ireland was a musical nation.

The most unfortunate aspect of the whole question of music in Ireland is that we have nothing at the present moment which approximates either to the continuance or the foundation of a national tradition. At almost every turn we hear of the Irishman's inherent love of music and of the wealth of Irish music, especially Irish folk music. It is just a little painful, therefore, to have to realise that all our reputation in this matter depends almost wholly on the achievements of the past.⁷⁹

But again such an observation points to the similarities between Ireland's position and that of other small nations. Assertions of innate musical excellence and frustration with the current position were not the preserves of the Irish; F.Griffith writing of the Welsh situation at the end of the nineteenth century states:

It is a singular fact that, whilst no country has displayed more natural aptitude for music, there is none which has made so small an impression upon the history of Art.⁸⁰

The relative want of interest and sympathy evident in the Irish case was in striking contrast with the position in Eastern Europe. There the pioneering work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály benefited from public aid and was the occasion for wider debate. Also evident are the subtle differences in actuation. One cannot but be struck by the absence of political overtones and of chauvinism in the extensive ethnomusicological writings of Bartók. He was motivated by a love of, and respect for, the intrinsic value of culture. On more than one occasion he attests to the pleasure he derived from his labours.

It is another mistake to suppose that the local research in this treasure chest of music, so closely associated with rural life (in other words, the collection of folk songs) has been a tiresome task, requiring a great deal of physical effort and self-sacrifice. As far as I am concerned, I must say that the time devoted to this work constitutes the happiest part of my life and that I would not exchange it for anything. - Happiest in the noblest sense of the word, as I had the great privilege to be a close observer of an as yet homogeneous, but unfortunately rapidly disappearing social structure, expressing itself in music.⁸¹

A further and crucial inducement to collection was the realization that what Bartók describes as the spirit of folksong must contribute to the development of a national school of music. But the ability to harness that spirit requires an expertise the absence of which in Ireland could not be compensated for by any amount of commitment. Not only did the early collectors lack the training necessary to focus their labours on forging a distinctive musical voice, they made little impact on the traditional practice itself. It can be argued that the first of the great collectors to exercise an influence on traditional performers and their repertoire was Francis O'Neill. It is perhaps no coincidence that he worked away from the enervating duality in Ireland, collecting the majority of his 1,850 airs among emigrants in Chicago. His influence may also be accounted for by the fact that the majority of these airs were instrumental and that his principal work, The Music of

Ireland, appeared in 1903 when this aspect of the tradition was in the ascendant.

A third factor which inspired Bartók's collecting, and one largely absent in Ireland, is his sympathy with the rural culture in face of advancing modernization.

There is no trace of mass production or standardized articles manufactured in factories. The smallest articles have individuality, changing their form and style in every district, frequently in neighbouring villages. The delight offered to the ear by the variety of folk tunes is paralleled by the visual pleasure over the divergence in the shape and colour of objects. These are unforgettable experiences, painfully unforgettable as we realize that this artistic aspect of rural life is doomed to perish. And once extinct, it will never flourish again and nothing similar will ever take its place. The vacuum left in its stead will be filled by misinterpreted urban culture and the scraps of mechanized civilization.⁸²

Modernization was not an immediate threat in Ireland. With the exception of the North East and isolated areas on the eastern littoral, Ireland was not an industrial country; nor was it likely to become one while under the control of a neighbouring industrial power.⁸³ Ironically the Famine had confirmed traditional agricultural practices by releasing pressure on the land. Therefore preservation was motivated initially more by fear of loss primarily due to linguistic abatement than by any fear of modernization.

If however the concept of modernization is broadened sufficiently to include the encroachment of extraneous cultural practices then the native tradition was certainly endangered. And preservation was not the ideal solution. Folk music, being an active oral tradition practised by ordinary men and women, was constantly changing, responding to the fluctuating concerns of successive generations. This capacity to adapt, even when this is unconscious, and the freedom from a defined version are essential components of a living tradition. A social music deprived of its communal setting and its ability to

respond to the moment, and instead transferred to a concert setting in a defined version, may retain its beauty, but it will lack the essential dynamic spirit. Throughout his writing Bartók repeatedly returns to this very point:

One fact in this connection was of the greatest importance: it was of the utmost consequence to us that we had to do our collecting ourselves, and did not make the acquaintance of our melodic material in written or printed collections. The melodies of a written or printed collection are in essence dead materials. It is true though - provided they are reliable - that they acquaint one with the melodies; yet one absolutely cannot penetrate into the real, throbbing life of this music by means of them. In order to really feel the vitality of this music, one must, so to speak, have lived it - and this is only possible when one comes to know it through direct contact with the peasants. In order to receive that powerful impression of this music, which is needed if it is to exert a proportionate influence on our creation, it is not enough merely to learn the melodies. It is just as important, I might almost say, to see and to know the environment in which these melodies have their being. One must have witnessed the peasants' changes of features when they sing; one must have taken part in their dance entertainments, weddings, Christmas festivities, and funerals of the peasants, for on all these occasions quite special melodies, often characteristic in the highest degree, are sung.⁸⁴

This naturally leads him to a contemplation of folksong's role in the future of art music. Direct quotation of melody or arrangements, worthy though they might be, could not themselves provide the foundation for a characteristic school of music. What Bartók sought to learn from folklore was something more central.

I should, in fact, stress one point: in our case it was not a question of merely taking unique melodies in any way whatsoever, and then incorporating them - or fragments of them - in our works, there to develop them according to the traditionally established custom. This would have been mere craftsmanship, and could have led to no new and unified style. What we had to do was to

grasp the spirit of this hitherto unknown music and to make this spirit (difficult to describe in words) the basis of our works.⁸⁵

It was a question he was to address again and again.

In what way will the ancient music of the Hungarian peasants, the only existing musical tradition, serve as a basis for the creation of a new Hungarian music? Surely not in the artificial way of inserting a song or a phrase of a song into a composition of international character or of foreign style. Instead the composer must learn the language of the ancient village music, so that he might express with it his musical ideas, just as the poet uses his maternal language. If the composer has sufficient love to dedicate himself heart and soul to such music, if he allows himself to be freely caught up by the influence of this music, if he has something to say and has a complete technique to express his thoughts, - then he will succeed in the undertaking. His works will not be a mosaic of harmonized folk songs or variations of them, but the expression of the intimate substance of the folk music.⁸⁶

These sentiments return us to the notion of 'the democ^Ratization of culture'. Bartók here unconsciously echoes Wordsworth whose revolutionary ambition was 'to adopt the very language of men',⁸⁷ thereby demonstrating that cultural nationalism, which could sponsor a return to the life of innocence, was nourished both by the spirit of romanticism and by 'the cult of primitivism'. Organic communities emerging in the wake of nationalism were rediscovering their characteristic cultures and with the confidence born of this revelation were determined to forge an artistic life from below, an expression of, and for, that community. Bartók's views were shared by his friend and compatriot, Kodály.

If national classicism means the expression of the national spirit in perfect form, it is clear that classical Hungarian music is only to be found in the few thousand melodies of the folk-tradition. Up to now this melodic wealth represents the most perfect musical expression of the national spirit. More than a folk heritage, it is the property of the whole nation, since it once belonged to the whole people; if Hungary really desires

an organic musical culture, the whole nation will have to discover it anew.... The purpose of the folk-tradition is not confined to providing for the musical life of a people. It is closely connected with life, with the life of everyone. It contains in embryo the shape of a great national musical culture. It depends on the educated classes for its growth and full flowering, but they will only find strength for their task through spiritual unity with the peasants.⁸⁸

As to what material is employed, it is Bartók who records the important difference between his approach and that of his companion.

Kodály's music language is exclusively based on Hungarian folk music. My own, however, is in general based on East-European folk music, and includes Hungarian, Slovakian, and Rumanian influences (and so on).⁸⁹

Bartók's position provides another contrast with the Irish situation. Irish collectors were more insular in their approach and displayed less sympathy with the tradition and culture of neighbouring peoples. It is telling that political considerations lay behind the decision to cede from the united Folk Song Society founded, paradoxically, on Irish initiative in 1898.⁹⁰ As Alfred Perceval Graves records in his Irish Literary and Musical Studies:

Ireland, with its Home Rule tendencies, felt, however, that her own folk song affairs needed special treatment, and an Irish Folk Song Society has been started under the secretaryship of Mrs. Milligan Fox.⁹¹

Mrs Milligan Fox provides a prime example of the many collectors who, while demonstrating commendable zeal, lacked the musical training and foresight necessary to see beyond the initial task. Thus what Bence Szabolcsi described as 'this dangerous duality in Hungarian musical life, the divergence of folk music and composed music'⁹² was avoided largely through the emergence of two eminent and dedicated masters. Ireland was not so fortunate. In the absence of such a figure, that is one with sufficient training, musicianship, perspicacity, and with an intimate acquaintance with the Gaelic musical culture, Irish musicians and audiences were forced increasingly into an exclusive allegiance to

one or other of the divergent traditions. The century closed with little prospect of musical rapprochement and consequently with diminished possibilities for the establishment of a distinctive national school of music.

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CHAPTER V

The alternative tradition

The historian embarking on a study of Irish music cannot but be struck by the paucity of both primary and secondary material available to aid his research. This is especially true of early and medieval music. The observations of Geraldus Cambrensis in his Topographia Hibernia are an exception. On occasion this lacuna has been supplied by ambitious claims for the quality of music and for the influence of the practitioners in early Ireland. Such speculation is centred on the earlier epoch as somewhat more is known of later periods. The eminent church composers, John Farmer and Thomas Bateson, active during the late Tudor and early Stuart administrations, were but two of the many British musicians who practised here. As a result of such correspondence, Ireland's experience of the broader European aesthetic was cognate with that of her close neighbour. Civilized society in Dublin was an extension of that in London; fashion in music, as in much else, being consistent. Such was the case in the eighteenth century when Dublin was an elegant and vibrant city which could claim to be the second city of Empire; its social mores and cultural expression were at one with its larger sister. The art music one would encounter in both cities was much the same, the only difference being one of scale. That an influential section of Irish society enveloped itself in an extension of the neighbouring culture meant that attitudes to music were similar. To replicate English tastes was to encounter the European aesthetic at some distance; for England was not at this point a great musical power. In his study of musical thought, Donald Ferguson states:

To the Italian and the German... music was an indispensable element of cultured life. To the Frenchman and the Englishman on the other hand, music, however enjoyable, was an ornament and a luxury of life.¹

This exhilarating period has left us an image of the eighteenth century as a golden age of music in Ireland; the urbane Irishman

demonstrated as much enjoyment in the art as did his neighbour. But this should not conceal the fact that this activity was limited to a particular geographical area and confined to that class largely associated with the political and commercial administration. The cultural life of that educated and restricted circle was at far remove from the reality facing the majority on the island. The golden age we celebrate was as fragile as it was splendid.

The dignity of the city was well matched by the refinement of the music it sponsored. But even here there is a tendency to magnify the grandeur of the period beyond the level that can be corroborated by scholarly research. Percy Scholes, for instance, could write, in a survey of music in Ireland:

Altogether Dublin in the eighteenth century appears to have been one of the musical centres of Europe.²

The history of music, however, is as subject as are political affairs to revisionist thinking. Brian Boydell has on more than one occasion set out to counter such high claims.

What is not often realised is that, with certain notable exceptions, the quality of the music that was presented and what can be deduced concerning performance does not bear favourable comparison when viewed in the European context.³

This view accords with that of R.F.Foster given in his recent epic history of modern Ireland:

Ascendancy life in Dublin was not notably 'cultured'; it was, for instance, largely undistinguished by musical achievements or patronage; Handel's celebrated premiere of Messiah on 13 April 1742 is, in fact, an outstanding exception to the general rule.⁴

The Italianate taste prevalent in London society was naturally in the ascendant along with some element of French music, the latter a legacy of Purcell. This was an age as yet innocent of a nationalist programme; civilization, urbanity, and the associated musical

expression, while registering the dominant fashion, were essentially cosmopolitan virtues; it is telling that this enterprising period preceded the emergence of a national idiom. The supremacy of the Italian style was confirmed by the procession of illustrious masters who visited, or made their home in Dublin during the century.⁵ There was as yet no call for a decidedly Irish flavour.

Although euphuistic claims have been made for the excellence of the music of the period, there is no question that in both quantum and quality it surpassed the succeeding century. It was no accident that this propitious epoch coincided with the apogaeic decades of Anglo-Irish dominion which marked the most successful era of Ireland's history as a feudal state. This came to an abrupt end with the Act of Union.

To the end of the eighteenth century music remained on a high level. In 1800 there were ten music shops and eight harpsichord makers in Dublin. But music was in those days an entirely aristocratic art, enjoyed and practised by the fashionable ladies of society and the members of the Irish House of Lords and Commons: after the Act of Union, with the gradual decline of the aristocracy, time had to elapse until the humble people learned to be themselves the patrons and organisers of music.⁶

The reasons underlying the passing of this legislation in 1800 have been outlined in Chapter III. What is of moment here is the critical effect this measure had on the cultural life of the country. A political instrument founded on concern for security and economic considerations proved catastrophic for musical activity. Stripped of most of its political and economic consequence, Ireland, and particularly Dublin, lost also its social circle, its patrons, and the occasions which had supported musical enterprise in the eighteenth century. The early years of the new epoch proved a period of marked decline. Dublin, the 'deposed capital',⁷ was no longer a centre of significance sufficient to attract leading musicians from abroad. The cultural displacement set a pattern for the whole century. Deprived of the practical means of earning a living, native musicians were forced abroad to pursue their studies and subsequent careers. The

nineteenth-century catalogue of Irish composers, including John Field, Michael Balfe, and William Wallace, who earned international acclaim testifies to the dearth of opportunity in their own land, and illustrates that musicians were as subject as the remainder of the population to the increased mobility of the period.

The history of music in nineteenth-century Ireland through all its aspects - creation, performance, and appreciation - makes for a dismal account. As suggested in earlier chapters, there is strong temptation to attribute this solely to the division of tradition consequent on an unfavourable political environment. As ever, the truth is more complex. Ireland appeared possessed of many of the ingredients necessary for a musical recrudescence: a glorious store of folk music which engendered the reputation as a music-loving nation with the necessary interest and motivation to sponsor a respectable expression. Yet nothing emerged, which was doubly embarrassing for a country with such stature; the contrast between myth and reality was uncomfortable. The greatest legacy of the splendours of the eighteenth century was the claims made on its behalf; it left little by way of practical estate. It bequeathed no musical infrastructure, no scheme of training, little regular employment, and no creative tradition. The testimony of an eminent musician of the late nineteenth century, Dr James C. Culwick, reveals that those of his era were well aware of their sorry inheritance:

Trydell tells us that in 1786, musical composition in Ireland was a lost art. In an Irish magazine, dated 1800, there is a review of music at the opening of the century. The tale is the same. There appeared to be some tuneful glee singing, and tasteful rendering of sentimental songs among the better class of musicians; but though Handel at his visit (1742) could find an orchestra and band of musicians more than able to satisfy him, yet, in 1800, instrumental music of all sorts, it would seem, had almost vanished. Music had ceased to be a serious art having for its object pure ideals and elevation of thought, and resting for its foundation on a substratum of science; and our University had long ceased to count music as worthy of serious consideration. For a sufficient proof of this we need only point to the fact

that from the resignation of Lord Mornington (1774) until 1845, when Dr John Smith became Professor of Music, the Professorship had lain derelict.⁸

Sir John Stevenson

What musical activity there was in the wake of the Act of Union was directly attributable to the sterling work of some dedicated individuals. In the main, these were enlightened members of the ascendancy tradition whose allegiance to their country had not been altered by the new political situation. Notwithstanding the college's apparent indifference to matters musical for some three-quarters of a century, most were Trinity-educated and were conversant with the broader aesthetic even if, at first, only as refined amateurs. One of this class whose commitment to the art went far beyond that of the layman was the recipient of the first honorary Doctorate in Music from Trinity College in 1791, Sir John Stevenson.⁹ He was typical of the figures who prospered in the halcyon days of the late eighteenth century. Born in Dublin in 1762, he obtained a position as choirboy in Christ Church Cathedral.¹⁰ He subsequently progressed through a course familiar to many musicians of his generation, becoming a vicar-choral of both city cathedrals. Stevenson was a leading member of the Hibernian Catch Club, a venerable society founded by the vicars-choral of both St Patrick's and Christ Church, and was knighted on the occasion of a visit to the club in 1803 by the Earl of Hardwicke who was evidently impressed by a rendition of Stevenson's glee 'Give me the harp of epic song'.¹¹ He was indeed an active composer of songs, sacred music, and music for the stage, although these have not stood the test of time. He is better remembered as the arranger of Moore's Irish Melodies, an enterprise that links him ineluctably with the dawn of the emerging nationalist sentiment. But even in this venture the style and propriety of his settings have attracted censure. In the preface to his own 'restoration' of the Irish Melodies, Stanford states:

Stevenson, a remarkable musician, who though resident all his life in Ireland was well read in foreign music, was much under the influence of the works of Haydn: and he seems

to have imported into his arrangements a dim echo of the style of the great Austrian composer. He could scarcely have chosen a model more unsuited for the wildness and ruggedness of the music with which he had to deal. This probably led to the alterations of scales and characteristic intervals (such as the flat seventh) which are the life and soul of Irish melodies.¹²

But in a later aside, Stanford wrote warmly of his fellow countryman when considering music in his native city during the early nineteenth century.

The traditions of Stevenson were still fresh, though the older composer himself had more or less retired. The knowledge of and admiration for Haydn and Mozart, with which that very remarkable man had imbued the musical spirit of Dublin, could not fail to have a broadening effect on the minds of the younger and more enthusiastic generation.¹³

As Stanford correctly identifies, Stevenson made his greatest impact through his work as a teacher. His influence was partly a factor of contemporary circumstances; Stevenson was at the height of his powers during that long period when the chair of music at Trinity College was vacant, and he was the leading musical figure in the city until his death in 1833. Many of that committed group who sought to give their art a voice in that prosaic century laboured by the light of Stevenson's precepts; he can thus justly be cited as the pioneer of the modern movement in Irish music, although the gestation period was to prove inordinately long. The conservative spirit which pervaded this milieu was his legacy and it remained predominant until well into the twentieth century.

Joseph Robinson

One of Stevenson's most influential charges, and a commanding figure throughout the nineteenth century, was Joseph Robinson, the dedicatee of Stanford's volume of Moore's Irish Melodies. He was the leading representative of a Dublin family whose members were foremost in cultivating the musical life of the city. It was the patriarch of

the family, Francis, who set the example for his distinguished offspring. He was a Yorkshireman who settled in Dublin and came to hold the position of organist at both Christ Church and St Patrick's Cathedrals. In 1810 he founded a large choral group which flourished under the memorable title of The Sons of Handel.¹⁴ It was the first such body formed exclusively for the performance of oratorio, and the initiative also signalled the first endeavour following the Act of Union to perform the larger works of the repertoire. It says something about both the scarcity of suitable venues and the sociability of this group that it held its meetings in Morrison's Hotel on the corner of Dawson street.

Francis Robinson's four sons continued the family's record of service to music in Dublin. Stanford recalled them with affection:

The 'four wonderful brothers,' as they were called in Dublin circles, were all connected from their earliest days with the two cathedrals which Dublin has the distinction (unique as far as the British Islands are concerned) of possessing. When they grew up they formed a quartet of surprising perfection; John was the first tenor (his voice, according to Mr. Hercules MacDonnell, ranged to the high D), Francis the second tenor, Joseph the baritone, and William the bass. They were the first to bring before the public the great store of German part-songs, and were also the backbone of that historical body, the Hibernian Catch Club, which to this day preserves in Ireland the best traditions of the English glee.¹⁵

The eldest of the four was, like his father, named Francis. 'The gentlest and most urbane of the quartet', he possessed a tenor voice according to Stanford's testimony 'intensely sympathetic in colour'.¹⁶ He was also an able violoncellist and had the distinction of giving Stanford his introductory lessons in harmony and thorough-bass.¹⁷ The second brother, William, was short-lived and is best remembered for his sonorous bass, while John succeeded his father as organist at both Dublin cathedrals.

However, it was the youngest son, Joseph, who proved the most energetic and influential member of the family, for he was, in the opinion of Stanford, 'a man who was both by culture and ability one of the best musicians of our time'.¹⁸ He was born in 1815 and followed a path similar to that trodden earlier by Stevenson. Robinson served as a boy chorister in St Patrick's and shortly after leaving the choir school there he joined the Anacreontic Society which offered him the opportunity to engage in orchestral music, although Stanford's account of the constitution of the band reveals much about the difficulties facing those who laboured in the cause of music-making in Dublin at this time.

The favourite instruments were at that period the double-bass, and, more particularly, the flute. The row of fifteen double-bass cases, which formed part of its collection, is still one of my boyish memories; they were but a remnant of the great regiment to which they belonged. The flutes were so numerous that the Society had to pass a rule that not more than twenty players of that instrument should be allowed in the orchestra at the same time. This Society afterwards merged into a more ambitious scheme, which was dubbed the Philharmonic Society. Here symphonies by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were studied with avidity, and for a time very fairly given, and artists of European fame were engaged.¹⁹

Robinson senior was one of the initiators of the Philharmonic Society which was established in 1826 to perform the greatest works of the orchestral repertoire. It survived some 40 years and, as Stanford suggests, was a mainstay of musical life in the capital. In 1856 Joseph Robinson appeared as a soloist on one of the society's most memorable occasions, the first Irish performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony which was conducted by Henry Bussell, another musician active through the middle years of the century, and for many years secretary to the society. Robinson himself was conductor of the society for that period in which it enjoyed its greatest achievements. During his stewardship the Philharmonic served to keep Dublin society, which was in danger of becoming culturally isolated, in communion with the broader aesthetic. Among the eminent soloists who were first attracted

to Ireland by the invitation to perform with the Philharmonic were Josef Joachim who appeared in June 1847, and Anton Rubinstein in May 1858.²⁰ Both made return visits largely on the strength of their friendship with Robinson, and on these occasions they were frequent visitors to his home.

The labours of individual musicians of commitment such as Stevenson, the members of the Robinson family, and, to a lesser extent, Bussell, were exceptional in that they sought to provide a musical outlet for Irish people in their own land. This constituted not just a philanthropic, but a nationalist design. However, the liberal outlook of the musical intelligentsia pursuing this goal meant that they were possessed of a motivation and character at variance with the separatist approach of the opposing nationalist ideology. There is a decided contrast between the devotion of the group of which Petrie was a leading member and that to which Joseph Robinson was aligned. Those of the latter persuasion were untouched by any desire to promote a divaricated national idiom; the whole European experience of music was their heritage and they could not have countenanced a more narrow focus. Perceptible in other arts, literature for instance, is the desire to sponsor an Irish flavour within an inclusive British culture; but in music there is no evidence even for this limited measure during the first three-quarters of the century. Moreover, the shared background and environment of this small society, encompassing the two metropolitan cathedrals and Trinity College, engendered a particular kind of expression - the emphasis on religious choral music is the obvious example - which was unfamiliar to the majority of the population. Such concentration was in accord with the devotional disposition of the age, but inevitably it accentuated the sectarian nature of the divide between the separate traditions. Thus the musical activity sponsored by this group was destined to be confined to a small, if influential, community. Its true legacy consisted in tackling the fundamental problems of musical literacy, in maintaining some measure of enterprise and thereby promoting a consciousness of the art, and in encouraging broader participation in musical activity.

They were building from a low base. For much of the century what music there was, was provided by visiting opera companies, which were perennially popular, and by the occasional celebrity concerts. One of the most notable of the latter was 'The First Dublin Grand Musical Festival for the benefit of the Mendicity Association and the Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers' Society' which was held at the beginning of September 1831. The attraction on this occasion was the appearance of Paganini whose every move, musical and otherwise, was reported with avidity. The farraginous nature of his recital was characteristic of these celebrity concerts where the performer was evidently more important than that which was performed. The final concert of the festival, for instance, featured a collection of well-liked pieces including the first part of Haydn's Creation.²¹

Apart from his musicality which was of a calibre sufficient to earn him the respect of eminent executants, Robinson was also remarkable for his energy and for the number of societies with which he was involved. He had the distinction of being the first conductor of yet another distinguished musical organization, the University of Dublin Choral Society. 'The College Choral', as it was initially known, was established in November 1837 with the aim, characteristic of the time, 'to cultivate choral music in general'.²² Robinson was elected conductor in January the following year. The concentration on established choral works during its first decade was doubtless due to the fact that these works were not so familiar to a Dublin audience and, in part, due to the practical difficulties in obtaining printed parts. But in later years, according to Walter Starkie, many new works were given for the first time in Dublin by the society under Robinson's direction.²³ This dedication to novel works was particularly evident in his supervision of yet another body, the 'Antient Concerts' through which he made arguably his most telling contribution. Robinson had founded this group in 1834 when he was not yet 20 years old. This organization erected the Antient Concert Rooms in Great Brunswick street (now PEARSE street) which became a focal point for the art in succeeding decades. The title, like that of the Philharmonic before it, was taken from the London model which again reveals Dublin's dependence on fashion as dictated in its larger sister city. A Concert

of Antient Music had been established in London in 1776 where initial success engendered a whole series. These occasions, which became known popularly as the 'Ancient Concerts', flourished with the active support of King George III.²⁴ As its title suggests, it was a conservative movement concerned to present the works of established masters and it reflects the burgeoning interest in the music of the past. Robinson's venture was generated by similar motives, although the Dublin audience was sufficiently small to ensure that the acrimony which existed in London between conservatives and progressives was avoided. Nor indeed did Robinson regard himself as being bound by a title; he happily introduced contemporary works. He exhibited a particular partiality for the music of Mendelssohn, and championed him to the degree that many works of the master received their Dublin première contemporaneously with the first London performance. Such was his reverence, that Robinson, in company with John Stanford, the father of the composer, had travelled to Birmingham for the first performance of Elijah in 1846. Not only were the visitors impressed by the oratorio but also by the humour and warmth of the composer whom they met, and a promise given by Mendelssohn on that occasion to orchestrate 'Hear my Prayer' for the Antient Concerts Society was honoured when Robinson received the score from the executors shortly after the composer's death.²⁵

Joseph Robinson was essentially a lover of choral music and in this he was in concord with the age he enhanced; for the observer of the musical scene in nineteenth-century Dublin will recognize the nonpareil position of choral music in the city's cultural calendar. Dublin had imbibed this trend which was universally evident; choral singing being the epitome of the democratization of music. The declining involvement of the individual patron brought music increasingly into the the public domain:

As a result of the shift in social patronage of music to the level of the public, composers now no longer presented their works to a class in which they served as members; instead, as autonomous and responsible shapers of ideas valid for all humanity, they faced an amorphous multitude that they were to raise to their own sphere, to lift above

itself, a public that was to worship them as demigods in the temple of art or to reject them as madmen.²⁶

The pre-eminence of choral music reflected the growth of literary influence on composers. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony set a pattern for the remainder of the century. His design necessitated the presence of the human voice at its apogee; in this sense a music for the people required the involvement of the people; a chorus could, like that in Greek drama, represent a society.

Man himself must be called in - and men and women in the mass - to proclaim human aspiration, both political and mystical, in unambiguous verbal form.²⁷

It was precisely the referential quality of text which made a choral work more accessible to the burgeoning audience, many of whom were coming to art music for the first time. In many respects choral music is the most primitive and approachable genre. One is reminded in this respect of the comment by the collector Francis O'Neill, quoted earlier, that 'singing is a universal accomplishment'.²⁸ The interested amateur can partake in performance without the specialized training required of the instrumentalist; it affords the ordinary individual the opportunity to make his contribution, and to do so in some of the finest music ever conceived. It is thus the form of music-making which quickest accommodates the committed non-specialist. Furthermore, choral music thrived in urban centres where it offered inexpensive communal entertainment imbued with a noble purpose, and it was the natural metier for the alumni of the two cathedral choir schools. Thus it was that Beethoven's example was followed, although he was to retreat to the abstract qualities of the string quartet for his most personal and closing statements.

Typical of the occasion and style of the choral concerts which dominated in the Irish capital throughout the century was the 'Grand Choral Concert of Sacred and Secular Music in aid of the Fund for the Relief of the Poor in Dublin' which was presented by the 'Ladies and Gentlemen of Mr. Gaskin's Private Singing Class' in the Antient Concert Rooms on 3 February 1863. The advertised selection of music for the

evening, and particularly its variety, was also characteristic, with the first half being devoted to the sacred repertoire.

Programme

Part First

1. Motet: 'I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord' Palestrina
2. Aria: 'God of mercy, God of power' (from
the Oratorio of Abraham) G.W.Torrance
3. Kyrie: (by particular desire) Mozart
4. Recitative and Solo: 'The People that walked
in Darkness' (Messiah) Handel
5. Preghiera: 'Dal tuo stellato soglio' Rossini
6. Et Incarnatus }
7. Et Resurrexit } Mozart
8. Aria: 'Jerusalem' (from the Oratorio
of St Paul) Mendelssohn
9. Hallel^ujah: 'Haec Dies quam fecit' Latham
10. Sacred Song: 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep' Knight
11. Gloria: 'Glory to God in the Highest' Pergolesi
12. Trio, Maltese Mariners' Hymn:
'Queen of the Sea' Dr.J.Smith
13. Solo and Chorus: 'Laudate nomen Domini' Zingarelli

The second half was equally multifarious, being composed of secular pieces including Joseph Robinson's arrangement of 'Let Erin remember' and concluding as usual with the national anthem.²⁹

Consistently popular was opera, which was regularly given by visiting companies. Italian opera was a feature of each season and Gounod's Faust was premièred in Dublin just months after its initial London appearance and only four years following its first production in Paris. This performance took place on 1 October 1863 at the Theatre Royal and was directed by Signor Arditi. The orchestra was led by the theatre's principal permanent musician, R.M.Levey, who was to be one of

Stanford's early teachers; the military band was provided by the 86th Regiment. This presentation proved the highlight of the season and was warmly applauded by the commentators, although the conclusion of one report contains echoes of a more primitive age of opera:

We regret being compelled to direct attention to the scandalous misbehaviour of a large number of persons seated in the gallery. The commencement of the fourth act of the opera was delayed for fully ten minutes, owing to the sustained uproar proceeding from the section of the house referred to. If decided and energetic measures were adopted to prevent the recurrence of these disgraceful and senseless manifestations we can scarcely believe that they would not be attended with success. It is but just to the respectable artisan class of our fellow-citizens to state that they are in no way responsible for the misconduct to which we advert. It is to be set down solely to the discredit of that low type of the specie 'gent', which, in the season when the Italian opera does not obtain here (a season by far too extended, we regret to say), finds a spurious enjoyment in wrenching off the door knockers, and otherwise despoiling the property of respectable householders.³⁰

Opera in Dublin survived the attentions of cultured hooligans. Its popularity attested the ease with which London fashions translated to Dublin. Again choruses were crucial to this leading vehicle of nationalist expression through music; the great vocal ensembles could carry the cry of a people. The operas of Verdi and Wagner, both clearly displaying political affiliations, dominate the second half of the century. The dearth of native opera in a city so attracted to the genre may therefore at first seem surprising; it is a reflection not of any lack of true appreciation, but of an environment bare of the facilities necessary to nurture creative talent; it is furthermore a factor of the interesting situation that among the public that supported music in the capital there was little nascent ethnocentricity, a position which points anew to the fundamental chasm between the cultural traditions.

Choral music was also furnished in more miniature form: during the year in question, 1863, R.M. Levey gave occasional performances with his Dublin Madrigal Society in the Antient Concert Rooms. And displaying that characteristic dedication of the ubiquitous few, Levey was again to the fore in one of the rare instrumental groups, being the founder and leader of the Dublin Quartette Union which appeared periodically in the same year.³¹

The legacy of Handel's successful sojourn and the pervading influence of London fashion resulted in opera having to concede popularity to secular oratorio. One of the major exponents of this genre was the Sacred Harmonic Society which dominated the London scene noticeably after 1848 when Michael Costa became the conductor. While this particular choral tradition had its roots in the previous century, its vigorous expansion occurred as a consequence of social and economic changes.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw orchestral music in England declining. It was a transitional period, with a large section of the population drifting from the country to the towns in response to the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution, and the landed aristocracy no longer completely dominating the political arena as they had done in the past, but compelled to recognise the power of a new moneyed class grown influential by reason of its control of production in industry and the commercial exploitation of manufactured goods. There was a desire among these new industrialists to enjoy a reputation for charity, and, in much the same way, a reputation as patrons of music. The nineteenth century saw the upper-class resistance to these wealthy middle-class ambitions steadily being overcome until at last the position was changed, and music found its most effective supporters in the middle classes.³²

Schumann considered that choral-orchestral music was the loftiest form of composition, and interestingly his one completed oratorio, Das Paradies und die Peri (Paradise and the Peri) was based on Moore's Lalla Rookh.³³ Indeed this work, which Schumann described as 'an oratorio - not for the conventicle, but for bright, happy people',

points to the altered nineteenth-century perception of the form.³⁴ Primarily as a result of Protestant influence, it had become much more than a sacred manifestation.

Like the church music of both denominations, and in many ways closely related to it, the oratorio occupied an extensive field in 19th-century composition. Born of a spirit of revival and historicism similar to that of church music - though in its forms and treatment of sound material it leaned much more upon secular music and especially upon opera - the Romantic oratorio came to occupy a curious sort of intermediary position between church music, opera, and secular choral music.³⁵

This tendency is probably best seen in the choral works of Brahms; Ein deutsches Requiem is a humanist's elegy set in the vernacular, as is the smaller Schicksalslied set to the poem of Friedrich Hölderlin. Oratorio and choral music other than opera was perceived throughout the century as 'good' music; thus it was that the famed soprano, Jenny Lind, elected to renounce operatic fame and devote her talents to oratorio; indeed, to mark the Handel centenary in 1859, she appeared in Dublin as one of the soloists in a performance of Messiah given under the direction of Joseph Robinson.³⁶ This impression of rectitude allied to the democratic principle was fundamental to the growth of choral endeavour. Jenny Lind helped her husband, Otto Goldschmidt, to found the London Bach Choir in 1875. This was just one of the very many such groups established before the turn of the century, and the list of choral festivals at Birmingham, Norwich, Sheffield, Cardiff, Hanley, and Leeds, along with the renowned Three Choirs Festival evinces the massive interest in the movement. Underlying this conspicuous success from the outset of the period was the growth in general musical education. From the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a remarkable acceleration throughout Europe towards improved musical literacy. Ireland was left behind in this movement because it did not possess the educational infrastructure to take advantage of this initiative, which provides a primary reason why Ireland compares so unfavourably with England during this period.

Education

The dedication and consistent enthusiasm of those such as Robinson masks the true extent of the contemporaneous musical stagnation. What enterprise there was, was invariably generated by members of the same circle and was confined to Dublin and its immediate surroundings. There is little record of endeavour of merit in the other major cities until towards the close of the century. Rural areas were even more deprived; the occasional visit of a temperance band was likely their sole contact with organized music. Music-making outside urban centres was primarily functional and recreational, provided within a small society for that society. Consequently, the majority of these areas had little experience of art music and were acquainted only with the indigenous tradition. Social, political, and geographical factors can be shown to be fundamental to this division, but even more important was the absence of a systematic scheme of music education. But with which tradition was such a programme to occupy itself? The native oral practice was largely innocent of research and analysis to the extent that it could not be imparted in a methodical uniform manner. This of course was not true of art music; but it does not yield its mysteries lightly particularly in a country with no tradition of music education. The debate over what was to be taught was itself a factor in delaying the emergence of a comprehensive scheme. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century could Ireland boast of having its own specialized music school, which was particularly necessary as the standard and availability of music in state schools was poor. Music made slow progress despite the innovative attitude of the British administration towards general education, although this benevolence was largely self-serving.

Educate that you may be free. It is education that will enable you to take advantage of opportunities.³⁷

Education is central to nationalist philosophy. The credo of Davis and the Young Irelanders, set out above, was anathema to the establishment responsible for formulating educational policy. This division between the segregationists and unionists persisted throughout the nineteenth century. At issue was not the practical core of affairs

with universal application but, rather, the ethos of the education and the culture it was to reflect.

The new emphasis was on cultural division and cultural hostility; on emotion rather than rationality; on group, rather than individual, rights; on a subjective and creative rather than a formal and negative concept of independence; and, of course, in the very long run, on race and language.³⁸

In promoting educational initiatives in early nineteenth-century Ireland, the government was conscious that a carefully constructed syllabus could counter separatist tendencies and assist in integrating the Irish nation within the dominant culture. Elementary schooling was the first area to be tackled; an investment in the youth of today would reap a political dividend in the future. The cultural content of courses proffered was essentially concerned with the propagation of the English language, a common tongue being the first necessity of fuller assimilation. The initial foundation level was also the educational tier most crucial to the development of musical literacy. This primary level was subject to much consideration in the late eighteenth century. The reform of the education system proposed by successive chief secretaries, Thomas Orde and Alleyne Fitzherbert, is embodied in a commission report of 1791, the findings of which were to form the basis of the primary school pattern that emerged in E.G.Stanley's Irish national school system of 1831.³⁹ It is often noted that this design antedated the English system by some four decades, a fact which has led some commentators to the conclusion that Ireland was employed as a social laboratory; for those who do not subscribe to the conspiracy theory of history, it is but another reform consistent with the administration's benevolent approach evident throughout the century, albeit an approach predicated on an even closer union of the two islands. The scheme appeared to present Irish children with the first ordered opportunity to become acquainted with the broader world of music of which the majority had previously been ignorant. This unlettered state is not to be confused with indifference; D.H.Akenson has remarked on the striking avidity for education displayed by the peasant classes and cites the widespread use of 'hedge schools' in

support of his case.⁴⁰ However appetite alone is insufficient without discerning guidance; Akenson also records:

Most hedge schoolmasters, it appears, knew something more than the 'three Rs', but because of the impediments to catholic education few had been to universities or even to secondary schools. Much showy, useless pedantry was usually part of the hedge schoolmaster's intellectual gear, and this was sufficient to awe the parents who paid the fees.⁴¹

Whatever the innate musical sensibility of the individual teacher, there was no opportunity to cultivate this latent talent nor to become acquainted with the fundamental principles of the art. Consequently, music had little place prior to the establishment of the national scheme. The Select Committee of the House of Commons on Foundation Schools and Education in Ireland 1835-6 found that vocal music should be included as an optional subject on the curriculum of national schools because of its moral value and civilizing influence.⁴² The sight-singing method of John Hullah was introduced and interestingly survived longer in Ireland than in England before being superseded by Curwen's tonic sol-fa. Hullah was championed by successive professors of vocal music at Dublin's Marlborough street Training Institution, notably James Hill and, from 1845, John William Glover. One initiative they sponsored was the employment of a peripatetic teacher, one James Washington, to compensate for the dearth of masters with sufficient musical training.⁴³

Such measures could offer the prospect of limited improvement only; the musical base in Ireland being so low. In 1851 of 204 schools examined only 6 were teaching music; in 1870 of 6,332 schools visited 688 were including music.⁴⁴ The latter, while still abysmal, shows a marked improvement largely due to a measure introduced in 1859 whereby gratuities ranging from two to five pounds were paid annually to teachers who successfully presented a course in music. But such a course would indicate nothing more than a regular class in singing; in this respect the limitations of the music class in the individual primary school resulted in its range of experience being nothing but a microcosmic reflection of the universal choral hegemony.

One inspector of schools, Patrick Keenan, active in the mid-century, demonstrated a particular interest in the furtherance of music. He was antagonistic to Hullah's method and manual which provided

melodies constructed with no idea as to musical excellence, but to illustrate the intervals, sharps, flats, scales, marks of expression to be met with in music.⁴⁵

In 1858, following a visit to Prussia, Keenan advocated that schools provide instruction in instrumental music. The harmonium proved the preferred instrument; it was versatile and could be employed for assembly, choral accompaniment, worship, and individual instruction. By 1867, 433 schools had availed of the subsidy to purchase them. The harmonium was also favoured in the training colleges for teachers. Of the students examined in practical proficiency at the five such colleges in 1893, 122 took harmonium, 32 the pianoforte, and just three the organ.⁴⁶ It is suggested in the Sixtieth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1893 that the reason for this was that school managers preferred teachers who could act as choirmasters. Such practical incentives notwithstanding, instrumental teaching proved as difficult to encourage as had general musicianship. Even Keenan's initiative to allow instruments be taught outside of regular school hours met with a positive response in just 47 schools in 1884, although the figure rose to 180 in 1889.⁴⁷

Peter Goodman

The slow amelioration was directly related to the general low level of activity. In 1874 only 16.68% of primary school children examined took music. By 1893 the figure had increased but little to 18.56%.⁴⁸ The final years of the century proved the period of greatest progress for the art. In 1897 the Final Report of the Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction in the Primary Schools of Ireland recommended that music be included as a subject in the examination for the classification of teachers. Further improvement was managed by Peter Goodman, an active music examiner and former teacher at St

Patrick's Drumcondra and Marlborough street, who was appointed inspector of musical instruction in 1899. Even prior to his promotion, Goodman had been diligent in advocating the educational responsibility to a musical revival.

An entire nation has to be made once more musical. The lost character of the Land of Song has to be re-established. Such is the work before the school teachers of Ireland. To prepare them for it must be the duty of the training colleges. Every school must be made to supply a choir, and if only the teacher be sufficiently competent, an excellent choir.⁴⁹

Goodman's tenure proved fructuous. He demonstrated commendable zeal and contributed toward the national tenor through his collections of Irish song published in tonic sol-fa by Gill and Son of Dublin under the title The Irish Minstrel (1903). The appreciation of a colleague indicates the respect which Goodman commanded.

The head organiser is Mr. Goodman, the [National Education] Board's examiner in music, whose long experience, and pronounced success as a teacher, whose untiring energy and zeal in the cause of music in Ireland, and whose keen appreciation of the value of music as an educational factor, and acquaintance with the methods and systems of other countries, render him eminently qualified for the task imposed upon him.⁵⁰

Goodman's appointment was also welcomed by no less than Edward Martyn,⁵¹ and he lost no time in justifying this faith. During his first year in office, he presided over an increase from 45.6% to 69.4% in the number of primary schools teaching music.⁵² He instituted courses for existing teachers designed to promote enthusiasm and improve their ability to instruct music; however these lasted only until 1908 when he admitted that their success was limited. He supervised the introduction of a revised programme for the national schools in 1900. Through each standard a choice was offered between tonic sol-fa and staff notation, with the former being recommended. The requirements for the most senior grade, sixth standard, show the absolute dominance of singing.

Staff Notation: To sing from the teacher's pointing on a blank staff, diatonic passages in any key. To sol-fa any six previously prepared exercises of a fairly advanced character - each exercise in a different key. To sing from notes, in two or more parts, any three approved school songs.⁵³

A truer measure of Goodman's achievement can be gauged from the fact that in 1912/13 92.55% of primary school pupils were exposed to some form of music.⁵⁴ This proved the high point for music in the primary system; the First World War heralded a shift to utilitarianism which resulted once again in the removal of music to the educational margin.

The situation in the second educational tier was even more precarious, partly because it was not as well developed as the primary sector, being afflicted even more so by denominational wrangling, and, with particular reference to music, because the universities were ill-equipped to provide the specialized training necessary for teachers at this level. Trinity College, the sole constituent college of Dublin University, possessed the country's most venerable tradition in connection with music. It had awarded its first music degree in 1615; it is thought that the recipient was the madrigalist Thomas Bateson.⁵⁵ The college appointed a professor in 1764, the first incumbent being Garrett Colley Wesley, the Earl of Mornington (1735-1781), father to the Duke of Wellington. He held the chair for a decade after which it lay vacant for some 70 years. Not until John Smith, the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the college in 1827, was appointed professor in 1845 did Trinity have a regular succession in the department. Despite such an august record, Trinity's influence was circumscribed by being an examining body rather than a centre for the teaching of music. In fact it was as recently as the tenure of the seventh professor, Dr George Hewson who assumed the position in 1935, that the move towards the creation of a teaching department was made, although the notable advances made in this direction by Smith's immediate successor, Sir Robert Stewart, are worthy of mention.

Religious and political sensibilities lay at the heart of the difficult gestation of those institutions which were eventually to become constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland. Central to this question was the initial demand for a Catholic seminary and later for a separate secular third-level institution which would reflect the Catholic ethos. The Catholic Church was conscious of the power of education and was determined that no education was preferable to 'wrong' education.

We are very far from meaning that ignorance is the Catholic youth's best preservative against intellectual danger, but it is a very powerful one, nevertheless, and those who deny this are but inventing a theory in the very teeth of manifest facts.... It is simply undeniable, we say, that the absence of higher education is a powerful preservative against apostasy.⁵⁶

The foundation of St Patrick's College Maynooth in 1795, discussed in the last chapter, was one of the first fruits of the administration's novel and salutary approach to the Irish question. However this institution made little impact on the general development of music. The talented and energetic German scholar, Revd Heinrich Beyerunge (1862-1923), was selected as first professor of music in the college in 1888, but the influence of the college in this area was restricted by its total concentration on sacred music. R.V.Comerford indirectly attests the institution's outstanding contribution to the sacred sphere when recording:

At the first Vatican council in 1869-70 no less than 10 per cent of the participating bishops were Irish-born.⁵⁷

The creation of Maynooth as the response to the demand for a centre of theological learning was not to be emulated so expeditiously in the secular domain where the government's philosophy hinged on religious integration rather than separation. Sir Robert Peel's Queen's Colleges scheme launched in 1845 failed to satisfy the Catholic bishops and only the Belfast college thrived, eventually being made separate in 1908. The Catholic University established in 1854 under the rectorship of John Henry Newman lacked both state endowments and

the royal charter necessary for the conferring of degrees. The subsequent failure of the ambitious attempt by Gladstone to unite Irish universities in 1873 led to the creation of the Royal University six years later by his political adversary, Disraeli. This enabled Catholics to sue for degrees without attending either a Queen's College or Dublin University. Again this resulted in the Royal University having little impact on standards as it was solely an examining body.⁵⁸ The only Doctorate in Music successfully sued for by examination at the Royal University was that awarded in 1889 to Annie Patterson who was to become a prominent figure in Irish music. Not until the dissolution of the Royal University in 1908 and the establishment of a separate institution in Belfast and the creation of the National University of Ireland comprising constituent colleges in Dublin, Cork, and Galway, with the addition two years later of St Patrick's College Maynooth, did the question arrive at an equitable solution.

Even with the new structures the position of music in the colleges was only marginally improved. A professorship was established in University College Dublin in 1913 but it remained a part-time appointment until 1944. The first third-level provision for music in Cork had been the creation of a part-time lectureship in the Queen's College in 1906 which was retained under the National University scheme; this was later converted to a part-time professorship and was not made a full-time position until 1948. Some measure of this institution's early influence can be gleaned from the fact that between 1906 and 1928 just one music student graduated.⁵⁹ The college in Galway, which ironically is the one situated closest to the heartland of the surviving indigenous tradition, has never offered music as a degree subject.

It will be understood from the foregoing that there was precious little provision for instruction in music at the various educational levels throughout the nineteenth century. It is undeniable that the absence of educational opportunity was a central causal factor in the lowly position of music during the period. It was because of this situation that the need for a specialized music school was so keenly felt. Yet again the initiative for such a project came from committed

individuals labouring independently of any central policy. Furthermore it is not surprising to find that this enterprise was launched in the middle of the century when the country was recovering and regaining its confidence and poise following the Great Famine. The early 1850s witnessed some of the most elaborate musical undertakings of the century; these also gave evidence of the general trend towards performance on the large scale. As in England, much of the new enterprise was initiated not by the ascendancy class but by the rising merchant and middle classes, and the endeavours they sponsored reflected a more populist and Catholic ethos. One of the first of the large organizations not connected with Joseph Robinson was the Royal Choral Institute established in 1851 by John William Glover (1815-99), sometime director of music at the pro-Cathedral and professor of vocal music at the Normal Training-School of the Irish National Board of Education, an appointment which indicated some early central concern about the musical proficiency of aspiring teachers. A consistent advocate of the poetry of Thomas Moore, Glover was a native Dubliner who lived his whole life in the city. He enjoyed a varied career, at one time finding employment as a violinist in a theatre orchestra.⁶⁰ He was given to periodic exercises in composition including an ode to Moore, One Hundred Years Ago (1879), written, as the title suggests, to commemorate the centenary of the poet's birth. Other large-scale compositions are the opera The Deserted Village (1880) after Goldsmith, and the oratorio St Patrick at Tara (1870) which received many performances and again evidenced the popularity of larger choral compositions. The oratorio is based on poetic selections from the works of Ossian, Moore, Mangan, and others who might reasonably be represented as authenticating a strong ethnic consciousness, and the work accordingly constitutes an early attempt at a distinctive Irish expression. The substantial overture commences with an unpromising figure constructed from an initial arpeggio and a succession of repeated notes (Ex.16). The remainder of the work is competent but contains nothing to suggest that the listener is in the presence of an original imagination.

Ex.16

Allegro agitato

The musical score is for a piano piece in G major and 2/4 time, marked 'Allegro agitato'. It consists of two systems of grand staff notation. The first system is marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and the second system is marked 'p' (piano). The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The second system shows a more complex texture with multiple voices in both hands, including some sixteenth-note passages.

The 'First Grand Concert' in which Glover directed the Royal Choral Institute was given on Tuesday 2 December 1851 when it presented Handel's Messiah. The advertisement for the concert proclaimed the Institute's objectives and uncovered the contrast with previous endeavours:

The Royal Choral Institute has been formed for the public performance of the highest class of Choral Music, both Sacred and Secular.... it is... hoped to establish... a large body of Choristers, composed chiefly of the working classes, capable of performing the best Classical Works, the performance of which is at present exclusively confined to private societies.⁶¹

Glover's organization represents the Catholic response to earlier Protestant initiatives. Its emergence also cautions against a simplistic association of Catholics with the indigenous tradition and Protestants with the imported culture. The rising Catholic middle class aspired to a cultural expression which would rival that of their Protestant neighbours. It was a symbol of their advancement, and was perceived as more appropriate to their position than an unlearned oral tradition associated with the language and civilization of servitude.

In this respect it marked a further separation of the urban and rural cultures. Progressive Catholics in the city cultivated the fashionable and accessible choral repertoire. While this was an encouraging musical departure, the entrenched sectarian approach which it seemed to confirm boded ill for the development of the art; for now even within the broader tradition of art music there existed a division which was to endure. Too many musical societies were established, all seeking the support of a small constituency, which provides a primary reason for the high rate of attrition suffered by such bodies. This is but one example of a more profound problem. It will be a contention of this thesis that one of the fundamental factors underlying music's jejune showing - a performance so miserable that, according to the emotive description of the critic Charles Acton, it placed Ireland in 'the valley of contempt'⁶² - was the lack of direction and continuity which had the effect of producing a plexus of uncoordinated activity. The comment of the composer Frederick May demonstrates that professionals were well aware of this problem.

One outstanding disadvantage from which we suffer is the multiplicity of our musical institutions which dissipate our resources in a way we cannot afford.⁶³

Not surprisingly, this emerging Catholic class cultivated a more nationalist tone which found expression in the Grand National Commemoration concerts given during the third week of March 1852 dedicated to the memory and the music of 'our gifted countryman, Thomas Moore', who had died the previous month.⁶⁴ Moore was evidently a marketable commodity. The success of the venture spurred Glover's national enthusiasm to a series of 'Irish National Concerts' in May of the following year again devoted to the works of Moore rendered by a motley collection of musicians 'under the skilful management and brilliant instrumentation of Professor Glover'.⁶⁵ Not only did Glover conduct his own arrangements on this occasion, he also performed a number of the melodies on euphonium.⁶⁶ The very next month, June 1853, as Revd Dr Newman was presenting his series of lectures on university education in the Exhibition Room of the Rotunda (or Rotundo as it was then known) in Dublin, Joseph Robinson was featured yet again conducting an expansive performance for the opening of the Cork

Exhibition, held in imitation of the Great Exhibition in London the previous year. The Freeman's Journal reported that a corps of gentlemen vocalists led by Robinson performed after the exhibition banquet on 11 June.⁶⁷ He surpassed this the following year by gathering together a choir and orchestra of some 1,000 performers, reputed to be the largest such musical assemblage to that date, to perform for the opening of the International Exhibition in Dublin. Robinson's programme, accompanied throughout by his colleague Dr Robert Stewart on the organ specially commissioned for the Exhibition from Telford and Company, consisted of a selection of favourite large choruses, with Handel and the esteemed Mendelssohn featuring prominently. The event was reported in detail and with obvious enthusiasm in the Freeman's Journal, although it leaves the reader wondering about the imbalance between chorus and orchestra.

Such were the feelings which the majestic music given at the opening of our Great Exhibition yesterday inspired in us, and we are sure were responded to by the thousands present. Here was shown in the face of day before all men the mighty influences of these vast industrial gatherings upon musical art, when was produced under auspices the finest and amplest performance ever given in this land - aye, or we might almost say, in any other. We have heard frequently the large orchestras and chorus of the great musical meetings of the sister country, the thrilling effects of which were never equalled here until yesterday, when even they were surpassed in grandeur, accuracy, and solemnity. None will gainsay this who attended to Mendelssohn's gorgeous chorus 'All men, all things, all that has life and breath sing to the Lord,' given by the thousand instruments and voices.... The skill with which the mighty orchestra, consisting of upwards of 800 performers, was conducted by Mr. Joseph Robinson, evinced the study of years in that difficult walk of the art which he has adopted and made his own in this country, and reflected the highest credit upon every individual engaged in the performance. Such a noble display of musical excellence tells us that we are no way behind England in the materials for getting up performances equal in every way to their world-famed festivals, and we trust ere the splendid and beautiful Exhibition building is

removed, that we shall have a Dublin musical festival in the vast hall where the music went so resplendently yesterday, and that our countrymen will have an opportunity in Ireland of hearing the oratorios of the great masters performed in a manner worthy of their genius, and equal to the magnitude of their sublime conceptions.⁶⁸

The Royal Irish Academy of Music

The unrivalled ascendancy of choral music throughout the century was not wholly a factor of fashion; it was also the consequence of a dearth of skilled executants and of the want of appreciation of the instrumental repertoire. The slow advancement of music in the elementary schools might in time have been expected to supply the former, but only a specialized music school could produce the instrumentalists with which to establish ensembles and orchestras. Such institutions were being founded throughout the world and the finest examples were proving a principal source of musical regeneration. But, as H.C.Colles describes when discussing the experience of Anton Rubinstein at the Petrograd Conservatoire (now St Petersburg), many of these academies had to confront the pertinent decision as to the espousal of a national or a cosmopolitan ethos.

Rubinstein was perfectly right in seeing that Russian music could not flourish in exclusion; foreign influences are not to be avoided, nor, as we have seen, is it desirable to avoid them, but the group of young composers who had inherited the ideals of Glinka and Dargomijsky had some fears lest they should be swamped by the adoption of habits and rules imported from without.⁶⁹

One looks to Ireland, with its honed national consciousness, for a similar record of tension, but none will be found, initially at least. This suggests two points, both ominous for the future course of the art: first, that music was simply not sufficiently crucial to occasion such a dispute, that it was perceived as nothing more than elegant entertainment; second, so disjunct were the traditions that the establishment of a training institution for one would be regarded as irrelevant to the other. Those to the fore in advocating such an

academy were concerned to establish in Ireland a firm technical and musical foundation and the school naturally reflected their cosmopolitan perspective. The institution to emerge from this endeavour, the Academy of Music in Dublin, was further to integrate Irish musical development into the mainstream of European experience. Analogies might be drawn with foreign conservatoires and notably with that in Prague of which Arnold Whittall writes:

If anything, the establishment of a conservatoire there in 1811 (although composition as such was not taught until much later), as well as a permanent opera company and various concert-giving organizations, reinforced the non-Czech factor in the city's musical life.⁷⁰

Robinson, always pivotal in musical activity of the period, was to the fore in the foundation of this first Irish institution. He was aided in this endeavour by a number of colleagues, many of whom had been involved in the Antient Concerts, notably John Stanford, Dr John Smith, and the man who was to be his successor as professor in Trinity College, Robert Prescott Stewart, along with the violinist, R.M. Levey. A school of music had been established in 1848 but had met with only partial success. Indeed on the very night after the opening of Dublin's Great Exhibition in 1853, undoubtedly an occasion of strain for Robinson, Stewart, and Levey, all three were again to the fore in presenting Messiah 'in aid of the Irish Academy of Music'.⁷¹ The advertisement for the evening announces that 250 performers would partake in the performance, showing that Dublin was modishly in thrall to magnitude. Some three years later it was decided to revive the spirit of the initial venture and to aim for a more ambitious institution. A committee was formed comprising some leading citizens and divers activities were arranged with a view to disseminating the idea and encouraging practical endorsement. Much of the initial capital for the project came from a special performance of Wallace's Maritana, organized by the Marquis and Marchioness of Downshire.⁷² Thus was the Academy of Music established in 1856 with classes being held initially at 18 St Stephen's green. Additional assistance came in the form of generous legacies from Miss Elizabeth Coulson and Mr Ormsby Vandeleur, while Parliament voted the fledgling institution an annual

grant in 1870. The title 'Royal', bestowed two years later indicates the standing the school achieved in its formative years.⁷³ Robinson and his wife, the English pianist Miss Fanny Arthur whom he had married in 1850, were members of the teaching staff from the outset and played their part in establishing the school's reputation. Growing security and prestige allowed the Academy attract to its teaching staff foreign musicians of high calibre. This was the first occasion since the Act of Union that the practical conditions were conducive for such musicians to dwell and work in Ireland. They brought with them that invaluable direct acquaintance with the European tradition which had for too long been largely absent here. This experience was itself guaranteed to promote music-making. These individuals also established for the Academy a reputation for excellence in the schools of piano and string teaching. The institution and its able staff were to become a focus for the much needed musical revival. But it was naturally constrained in its influence by its geographical location; it could hope to cater directly only for those who lived within the metropolitan area. Thus once again progress centred on the capital. Aspiring musicians outside Dublin had no such opportunities with the exception of those in Cork where the Municipal School of Music was founded in 1878, although it had places initially for only 180 pupils.⁷⁴

The Municipal School of Music

When firmly established, the Royal Irish Academy of Music assisted in the creation of a further metropolitan music school with separate aims and a different constituency. This second foundation was different not in that it provided for the indigenous tradition, for this was not at all its purpose, but in catering for a different social class and in offering a complementary range of instrumental tuition. The Dublin Municipal School of Music was but one element in a chain of technical schools instituted following the Artisans Exhibition of 1885 held in the city. One aspect of the exhibition, which opened on 24 June and ran for some three months, had been a major series of recitals by, and competitions for, amateur and military bands which served to demonstrate the appreciable interest in this form of music-making - there were some 30 such bands in Dublin alone - and, more to the point,

how the want of education was resulting in a universally poor standard of performance. It was with the dual function of recognizing this formidable musical sub-culture and of offering a practical focus for the improvement of standards that a music school was founded in October 1890 concentrating on instruction in woodwind, brass, and percussion. For over a decade the new institution was guided in its development by the Royal Irish Academy of Music with which it was decidedly not in competition. The very real distinction between wind players and percussionists on the one hand, and pianists, string players, and vocalists on the other, is apparent from the fact that the Academy was established to cater for 'the children of respectable Irish parents',⁷⁵ while the Municipal School was to make 'provision for the musical instruction of the working classes'.⁷⁶ For this reason the latter charged more modest fees and there were further reductions for accredited members of amateur bands. An internal report records that in 1902, 205 pupils were attending for instruction. However, in 1904 the younger school parted from its parent and came under the control of the Dublin Technical Instruction Committee and increasingly it departed from its original design. Classes in piano, tonic sol-fa, and violin were introduced, and by 1918 of the 12 teachers at the school only two specialized in wind and percussion with just 34 students taking these instruments. In time the Municipal School largely replicated the work of the Academy thereby losing sight of the concept of complementary institutions which together could furnish a wide range of skilled executants capable of peopling orchestras and ensembles.

Progress on the educational front did not lead to an immediate amelioration in the performance of music. In a major review of the events of 1881, the journal Hibernia gives evidence of the sorry state of music in Dublin.

The present time of year will suggest to every lover of music inevitable thoughts concerning the musical season in Dublin, some of them pleasant and cheerful, but others, if the truth must be told, of a highly serious, not to say melancholy, nature. He would indeed be a bold man who could so far shut his eyes to facts as to deny that the history of recent musical events in this city has been a very lame and impotent chronicle. Not

that last season was without its episodes of brightness, the memory of which we would not willingly let die, but it is plain to every candid mind that its shortcomings were infinitely more suggestive and instructive. For what did and does our musical year generally consist? Taking last season as a fair average specimen we shall find something like the following - Two pianoforte recitals by Anton Rubinstein; three or four oratorios; twelve nights of opera in English (of which four were devoted to the Bohemian Girl and Maritana!); two or three ballad concerts, by so-called Italian artistes, and with programmes almost cursed with the immortality of the Struldbrugs; three very inadequately attended Chamber concerts; a few performances, vocal and instrumental, by the pupils of the Royal Irish Academy of Music; a sprinkling of that saddest of all sad things, amateur opera; small concerts, whose name was legion, by some half-dozen very well known amateurs; one or two benefit concerts; and the opening of a couple of new pianoforte warehouses - these are about the most notable events in the history of last season.⁷⁷

This record is as lugubrious as it is valuable; it provides the clearest evidence of the extent of musical stagnation which appears even worse when one considers the increscent health of the situation in London at this time. Especially noticeable throughout the century is the paucity of creative endeavour; not only was there no consistent attempt to produce a distinctively Irish music, there was precious little composition in any style. This was an inevitable consequence of the low level of activity. The journal continues:

So much for one side of the picture, but what about the other? When we become more explicit, and add, that there was not a single first-class orchestral performance in our city; that not one of Mozart's Symphonies or of Beethoven's immortal nine was given (nor, has been for years!); that many works of the first rank, such as Mendelssohn's Elijah, lie practically on the shelf, that not a single public organ recital by any well-known performer was heard, that glees, madrigals, and part songs are as dead in Dublin as the traditional door nail, and that our local societies, with the exception of that newest favourite, whose field of action

is in St. Patrick's Cathedral, are not supported at all as they should be by the public - when these things are so, it will hardly be conceded that all is right, or that Dublin does not lie under the grave reproach cast upon it not long since by a leading musician of the day, when, addressing an audience representative of the thought, culture, and talent of the three kingdoms, he seriously instanced it as a city the most musically backward of those with which he had acquaintance. The truth would seem to be that few towns are at once so musical and so unmusical as our metropolis.⁷⁸

The 'newest favourite' which provides the only source of optimism in this review was yet again a choral union devoted to oratorio. St Patrick's Oratorio Society was founded in 1880 and was based in the Dublin cathedral. It was established and conducted by Charles George Marchant, who had succeeded to the post of organist there the previous year. During the second weekend in November 1881 the society presented Messiah on successive evenings to observe the installation of the organ after restoration and remodelling by Messrs Telford of Dublin. The cathedral was full on both evenings for which the society insisted on the return of Sir Robert Stewart, a former and distinguished organist, to play the refurbished instrument while Marchant directed. The performances won wide approbation, and in the course of one assessment a basal reason for the existence of the society is touched upon. According to this observer, the success had established the new society's

ability to render the sacred compositions of the great masters in a manner worthy of the traditions of the Cathedral and the musical society of Dublin has been sufficiently demonstrated. There is now no possibility that the design of such performances can be misunderstood. They have become the means of making English cathedrals in recent years more recognised centres of the religious life of the people, and the spirit with which amongst ourselves they have been instituted and conducted is one of an acknowledged high character. The funds which through their medium have accrued to the Cathedral have been of material assistance, especially as contributions that might fairly be expected from the public have not been bestowed with

remarkable generosity; and they will enable its clergy to improve the ordinary church service, and greatly extend, it may be hoped, the usefulness of the institution in many other directions.⁷⁹

This isolated success could not compensate for the general atrophy. It is worth noting again that this was the position pertaining in the most favoured centre in the country; the situation outside the capital was more depressing. The journal, Hibernia, was in no doubt as to the reason underlying this sad state:

While on the one hand, it is quite true that the greatest quickness and capacity for receiving musical ideas and impressions is common among the Dublin public, it is equally true that there are few places of importance where musical education is so disastrously backward. By musical education we do not in the least mean technical education. Of this latter we have plenty, and our fair share of distinguished and capable professors; but of that musical education which implies a thorough acquaintance with the best works of the best masters, Dublin folk, as a rule, know little or nothing.⁸⁰

It is against this background that the contribution of Joseph Robinson must be judged. His dedication to the cause of music in his city was evident into his venerable years. Following his crucial role in establishing and teaching at the Academy he contributed further by conducting the choral union there. As late as 1876 he founded yet another organization, the Dublin Musical Society, dedicated to presenting major works of the repertory in the Great Hall in Earlsfort terrace. Robinson conducted the performances with his choir and orchestra, which could number up to 350, until 1888 when he finally retired from both the society and a remarkable lifetime of service to the art he loved. So enormous was his magnetism that it was intended to wind up the society after this farewell performance.

We hope that this concluding concert of the society's brilliant record will be in every way worthy of its past traditions and of Mr. Robinson's oft-proved ability as a conductor. We can scarcely believe, however, that Dublin will be content to remain without an

organisation for the performance of choral works. Now is the time for our younger generation to come forward and show what they can do....⁸¹

The content and style of that final evening on 6 December were entirely consistent; the society gave great and popular choruses by Handel, Rossini, Gounod, and inevitably, by Mendelssohn. Robinson was the subject of an address and he received a purse of 100 sovereigns which he promptly returned with the words:

While I think a professional man should expect his fair remuneration, yet his chief object may be something higher and nobler - the advancement of art in his native city.⁸²

The offer and the characteristic refusal were particularly generous in the light of the fact that for many years the society had experienced a perilous existence; as early as 1881 it was known 'that its position is not one of undisturbed security'.⁸³ The Dublin Musical Society had endeavoured to give three concerts each year, but this proved particularly expensive as the society possessed no concert hall and as the city had no resident orchestra. The following day's newspapers paid warm tribute to Robinson, but were equally concerned that his retirement signalled the close of expansive music-making in the capital.

What had been announced as the closing performance in the career of the Dublin Musical Society took place in the Royal University Buildings last night and the spectacle presented was a very striking one. A stranger entering the Hall, unfamiliar with the recent incidents of local musical history, would never have imagined that he was attending the obsequies of a great artistic institution.... To any stranger it would be difficult to prove that failure is now inevitable, and he further would find it hard to imagine how it had come about.... But this much may be said, that if the musical public of Dublin allow this society to be disbanded, and the esprit de corps amongst its members engendered by a long list of successful performances to be dissipated, they will find that the task of supplying its place will be well nigh insuperable, or, at

all events, that for some seasons to come there will be no practical possibility of recovering the abandoned ground.⁸⁴

Conscious of advice such as this, the Dublin Musical Society did in fact continue for some years after Robinson's departure under the direction of his friend, Dr Joseph Smith, but like so many Irish music societies it eventually lapsed. In April 1898 Robinson was granted a civil list pension but did not live to enjoy it for long: he died in August the same year.⁸⁵

Joseph Robinson is largely forgotten now, as are those others who laboured valiantly through a period inimical to cultural concerns. His contribution is all the more impressive because of the unrewarding age in which he lived. Stanford, for one, was conscious of his worth, and penned his tribute with eloquent sincerity.

Joseph Robinson is perhaps to older musicians more of a name than a personality, and to younger men of the craft who have not crossed the Channel of St. George even his name may not be associated with any striking fact or any historical event. But for that lacuna in their experiences we have to thank what Lord Beaconsfield called the melancholy ocean, and the comparatively scant notices of his career are perhaps the greatest tribute to his patriotism. For he was born, lived, worked, and died in the city of his birth, just too far west of Europe to win fame and too far east of America to earn dollars. To Ireland he was devoted, and no inducements to desert it for a more lucrative and fame-bringing centre of activity ever found favour in his eyes. Such personalities are rare, and their claim to recognition at the hands of posterity is irrefragable. The fact that a career is by choice and conviction circumscribed in extent impels the chronicler all the more to do justice to its merits when the work is closed and the worker silent; especially when those merits are of a sort which would have compelled the widest admiration if their possessor so willed it.⁸⁶

Robinson's successor, Dr Joseph Smith, was of a similar background and was another who was not an obligatory composer. A prominent organist, he was commissioned to write and direct a cantata for the

opening of the Artisans Exhibition in 1885. The resulting Awake, Arise, set to words by A.P.Graves, is little more than a cleverly constructed medley of popular airs. Smith employs many Irish songs but the inclusion of 'God Save the Queen' occasioned some controversy with one correspondent signalling the increase in ethnic sentiment with a complaint at the intrusion of this 'West-British hallelujah'.⁸⁷

Michele Esposito

It is fitting that the mantle should pass from Robinson to a man attracted to Ireland by the prospect of a teaching position in the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Michele Esposito was an Italian national, born in Castellammare, a small coastal town south of Naples, in 1855. Naples possessed a long and distinguished history as a centre for music learning; some of the oldest conservatoires in Italy, and indeed in the world, were to be found there. During what has become known as the French decade (1806-1815), these various schools were united into the Real Collegio di Musica, also known by the address of its new location, the Conservatorio di Musica (Regio) San Pietro a Majella. It is noted for its excellent library which supports the august teaching tradition. It was here that Esposito studied, benefiting from the guidance of some of the most illustrious tutors of the age. Beniamino Cesi (1845-1907) was his piano teacher. Cesi was a celebrated recitalist and was later invited by the first director of the new conservatory in Petrograd, Anton Rubinstein, to head the piano school there. On a return journey from Russia in 1885 he joined his former pupil to present a recital in Dublin as part of the major Artisans Exhibition.⁸⁸ He was also to write important treatises on piano performance. Esposito studied theory and composition with Paulo Serrao (1830-1907) who was an active composer and numbered Verdi among his acquaintances. In 1878 Esposito moved to Paris to further his musical education and build his career. According to the testimony of John Larchet, a pupil and later a close colleague, it was on the advice of Saint-Saëns that Esposito came to Ireland in 1882 to assume a temporary appointment in order to broaden his experience.⁸⁹ It was an unusual and courageous decision for a promising young musician and it

indicates something of the amelioration in the country's musical reputation.

Esposito was initially appointed to the humble task of teaching piano to the boys of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. However his evident ability and dedication resulted in his temporary position becoming a permanent career; he remained in Ireland for all but the final year of his life. As previously indicated, visiting musicians were strongly represented on the school's staff and were particularly to the fore in the generation following Robinson's departure. Their presence reflected his cosmopolitan disposition along with the more practical fact that few Irish teachers with comparable experience could be found to fill the positions. This influx of talent was a feature of the musical revival; many ventures in various centres were reliant on the guiding influence of foreign musicians, a dependence which lasted well into the twentieth century. As will be seen, this situation was not unanimously accepted in an increasingly partisan age.

The excellence of the string school in the Royal Irish Academy was founded on the commitment of Guido Papini, Adolf Wilhelmj, and Achille Simmonetti. The most influential figure in vocal teaching was likewise a foreign musician, Adelio Viani. There were many others besides, but none more dynamic than Esposito. He established within the Academy a surpassing piano school which laid the basis for the flourishing keyboard tradition evident in twentieth-century Dublin. Within a few years of his arrival in Ireland he had initiated a scheme of local centre examinations in practical music which for the first time proposed a uniform standard. The examinations were first held in 1894 at centres in Dublin, Bray, Rathfarnham, and Belfast; locations which reveal the problems faced by Esposito in making his project relevant to the whole country. It is testimony to his perseverance that within decades these examinations were being taken by students in the most remote rural districts.

Although officially senior professor of pianoforte at the Academy, Esposito was in reality the uncrowned director and indeed was often referred to as such. The institution thrived under his guidance and he

greatly increased its significance and reputation by his work outside its walls.

The Royal Dublin Society

Music in the capital received a considerable lift in 1886 with the decision of the Royal Dublin Society to encourage the performance of ensemble music. Founded in 1731 as the Dublin Society, it drew for its direction on the ideals of those such as William Molyneux (1656-98), the liberal-minded pamphleteer and sometime politician, and his short-lived Dublin Philosophical Society established in 1684. Like this precursor, the Dublin Society was started by a group of scholars and graduates from Trinity College; the inaugural meetings were held in the 'Philosophical Rooms' of the college.⁹⁰ In keeping with the spirit of Molyneux, its designs were pragmatic and utilitarian: its stated aims being to promote agriculture, manufacture, and the useful arts. It presented from the outset the positive, practical, and even proselytizing face of the ascendancy. Typical of its early supporters was Revd Dr Samuel Madden, a nephew of William Molyneux, whose principal work was Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland (1738). His proposal for a system of premiums designed to encourage learning and industries was accordant with the rationale of the society.⁹¹

The society was launched in an age when central government was far less involved in practical matters than it has since become. Thus the Dublin Society (the 'Royal' was added in 1821) tackled with commendable zeal a programme which today would be considered more appropriate to government. Essentially the society sought to stimulate native enterprise: it encouraged practical research into agriculture and industry, promoted Irish crafts and a distinct style in architecture, and founded the Botanic Garden at Glasnevin (1795). One of its most notable achievements was the creation of a central library which eventually it donated to the nation as the nucleus of the National Library of Ireland.⁹² In pursuing these philanthropic objectives, the society embodied what was best in the constitutional approach to nationalism; it sponsored a spirit of enterprise and enquiry, remaining

open to broader impressions and yet seeking to make a distinctive contribution without any separatist design. Its seminal influence can perhaps best be illustrated by pointing to the fact that the imposing complex of buildings which houses the library and the seat of Irish political power, the Dail, was from 1815 the headquarters of the society until requisitioned by the Free State Government in 1922.

The transference of the library was indicative of the many changes affecting the society. During the nineteenth century much of its work was increasingly subsidized and eventually assimilated by government departments, reflecting the advancing centralization of the age. In 1886 when the Art School, previously maintained by the society, was thus transferred to the aegis of government, it was decided by the council to devote its freed capacity towards the encouragement of chamber music. This initial digression proved to be a consistent commitment, and the Royal Dublin Society has remained a leading promoter of ensemble music. The proselytizing proclivity was evident in the stated purpose which was to 'aid in the development of an enlightened musical taste in Dublin'.⁹³ The society has striven to fulfil this ambition with admirable tenacity; but mention of Dublin calls to attention the enduring imbalance in endeavour throughout the century. This is no criticism of the society; it had little option but to direct its new undertaking towards the denizens of the capital and its environs; but again the observer is taken by the concentration on such a restricted geographical area.

The new obligation was embarked on with promptitude and enthusiasm. At first a trio or quartet was engaged for the whole season with printed programmes of the series, annotated by leading musicians including Sir Robert Stewart and Dr Ebenezer Prout, his successor in the chair of music at Trinity, being provided to members. The recitals were held on a Monday and were taxing for both audience and performers. Artists faced matinee and evening performances on the one day and the music which they presented was of the highest order with programmes which were far longer than they are today, such audiences evidently being a resilient body. The gravitas which surrounded these recitals can be gauged from the injunction, often encountered at the foot of the

programme page, to lady members to refrain from knitting during performances. Thus had the society departed from the principles of the venerable Dr Madden who

objected to concerts and parties for women, and would only allow them to go if they brought needlework along.⁹⁴

Michele Esposito was the foremost contributor to this novel departure. Anthony Hughes, in his review of the society and music, notes

that Esposito planned, organised, rehearsed and, except for a rare illness, participated in every recital from 1886 to the end of 1900.⁹⁵

One of those who assisted Esposito in inaugurating the recitals was Dr Johnstone Stoney whose support was sufficient to warrant mention in a leader in the Freeman's Journal when he departed permanently for London in the autumn of 1894.⁹⁶ The journal's anxiety that the series would suffer as a consequence of his going appeared well grounded just one month later when it reported in detail on a general meeting of the society which had considered the commitment to music. Judge Boyd, the honorary secretary of the Royal Dublin Society Council, noted that

last year's recitals had cost... 350 pounds over the receipts, a considerable sum compared with the sums spent by the society for other purposes.... artists who performed [were asked] to accept smaller fees, but this the artists refused to do. Thus there was no option... but to reduce the number of recitals, at the same time making each recital a different one.⁹⁷

Esposito's application played no small part in ensuring the survival of this commendable initiative. His collaborators in the initial years were often colleagues from the staff of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He appeared frequently with the violinists Papini, Simonetti, and Herr Lauer; with the accomplished viola player, John Griffith; and with the cellists Rudersdorf, and, notably, Clyde Twelvetrees who was later to lead the cello section of the Hallé Orchestra.

The didactic objective of the chamber series was confirmed by the conservative programmes presented. This is confirmed by Walter Starkie in his account of music given in the society's bicentennial souvenir published in 1931.

As I look back at the past period the society's activities seem in comparison with to-day to have been confined to a small and intimate circle. In the compact theatre, with its galleries, it was possible to see everyone, and there was a tendency on the part of the members to choose always the same places. As I visualize those recitals I see in my mind's eye Mr. Edward Martyn, the great patron of literature and music, enveloped in the vast flapping cape, or else the majestic figure of Dr. Mahaffy, with his black clerical hat pulled down over his head, listening with closed eyes to the quartet of Brahms in A minor played by Brodsky and his companions.... That public was an intensely conservative one, with fixed notions about the function of music in the community. I remember the look of horror that came into the faces of some of those steadfast Mozart and Mendelssohn lovers when Miss Annie Lord devoted most of her piano recitals to the works of Debussy and Ravel. Such music ruffled the calm surface of the minds of those charming people, who would have wished the world to continue changeless in the little theatre.⁹⁸

The Royal Dublin Society's attitude to music was consistent with its attitude to all of the many endeavours with which it concerned itself. It was unswervingly cosmopolitan; comfortable in its role disseminating the finest treasures of the literature, it perceived no need to foster a peculiarly national musical mode. So natural was this stance that it precluded comment and it was further confirmed when, from 1900, the society increasingly looked to attract eminent artists from abroad. As a consequence, the early decades of the twentieth century proved among the most exciting in the record of the society's promotion of chamber music, although both the First World War and the loss of Leinster House were highly disruptive during this period. Among the distinguished ensembles which graced the society's recitals during these years were the Brodsky and the Hans Wessely quartets, both regular visitors, along with the Bohemian, Max Mossel, and St

Petersburg quartets. This impressive list of quartets was added to in later years by the Lener and Pro-Arte. Many pianists performed for the members amongst whom must be mentioned Busoni, Backhaus, Egon Petri, Fanny Davies, and Frederick Dawson. In the period after the First War Adela Verne, Myra Hess, the Swiss, Alfred Cortot, and the legendary Artur Rubinstein were also welcomed, as were later arrivals Schnabel and Gieseeking.

The Dublin Orchestral Society

While the Royal Dublin Society's principal commitment was to chamber music which had the practical merit of restricting the financial burden, it did occasionally welcome larger ensembles. It proved possible after protracted negotiation to attract to the society Hamilton Harty and a reduced complement of the Halle Orchestra on a number of occasions during the mid-1920s. The concert given on 28 February 1927 by this group cost the society 160 pounds, its largest expenditure of the season.⁹⁹ Orchestral concerts were not at this time a total novelty; Esposito had supplied a want during the barren war years when he presented his Dublin Orchestral Society. This body made its first appearance at the Royal Dublin Society in 1916. It represented yet another of Esposito's extramural contributions. He was primarily responsible for its foundation in 1899 when it was initially funded by public subscription.¹⁰⁰ It assumed the mantle of Robinson's old society, the Dublin Musical, which had finally expired that year; the crucial difference between the two was, of course, in the move away from the choral bias. Right to the end of its existence, the Dublin Musical Society had aspirations to extend the range of its enterprise. In a threnody on its failure to include even one orchestral concert as part of the 1894-5 season, the Freeman's Journal draws attention to the recurring difficulties experienced by a succession of organizations in attempting to present such programmes and points the dearth of instrumentalists which, as we have seen, the schools of music were as yet ill equipped to provide.

It will be a case of some disappointment to many that we are not offered this year a great orchestral work. Last season we were promised Beethoven's C minor symphony; but

the promise was withdrawn. One great symphony in the year might be expected from the only organization in Dublin capable of producing such music. Perhaps, however, the orchestra is hardly strong enough, and the wise conclusion is arrived at that it is better not to play a great symphony at all than to play one badly.¹⁰¹

In the light of such a recent record, Esposito's courage in proposing the formation of a semi-professional orchestra was estimable, but it is but another indictment of the nineteenth-century musical condition that one must look to the very final year of the period to find such a body.

The inaugural concert of the Dublin Orchestral Society was given in the Royal University Buildings on 1 March 1899, and was conducted, as ever, by Esposito.

Every item has been chosen so as to secure the maximum of interest for all the audience. It is not a 'faddish' programme, but a list of delightful masterpieces of music.¹⁰²

The programme was indeed as demanding and conservative as one might expect from Esposito. It opened with two overtures: Gluck's Iphigenie en Aulide in the revision by Wagner, and that composer's Faust Overture. Mendelssohn's Serenade and allegro giocoso for piano and orchestra with Mr Harry Charles as soloist was followed by Bizet's first suite L'Arlesienne, a further overture Egmont by Beethoven, and Mozart's Symphony in g minor.¹⁰³ The orchestra was impressively complete in every section and was led by Esposito's colleague from the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Adolf Wilhelmj, who was to take the solo in a Romance for Violin and Orchestra by his more famous father, August, at the next performance given by the society three weeks later on 22 March. This second concert was warmly supported, not surprisingly perhaps in view of the reception afforded the initial appearance.

The performance of the various works showed the results of careful training. In the materials that he has brought together Signor Esposito has secured a perfection of ensemble which audiences are not often privileged to hear.... The programme was, as stated, an

ambitious one. It was for the purposes of the audience something more. It was instructive in different styles and in the growth of style.¹⁰⁴

Throughout the history of performance in Ireland one is conscious of a consistent tendency on the part of critics to praise and encourage. This is arguably less a factor of native kindness or of a reluctance to criticize, than a concerted if unconscious attempt to foster what little initiative there was. The researcher is well advised to make allowance for such positive motivation. Hamilton Harty, who recorded that 'the worst of musical life in Ireland is that there are practically no orchestras', redresses the balance through his memories of his period as a violist with the Dublin Orchestral Society

...a very inferior violist I was; but the orchestra itself was not superlative.¹⁰⁵

The sense of succession from Robinson to Esposito is strengthened by the fact that the latter's society held its regular series of winter concerts in the Antient Concert Rooms. The commitment to broadening the musical base and extending public awareness is evident in Esposito's pragmatic promotion of a series of Sunday concerts at the same venue. For these he employed a reduced band of some 30 instrumentalists, and the society attracted public support by introducing an extensive and popular symphonic repertoire at reduced admission prices.¹⁰⁶ Detectable throughout these productions was Esposito's eclectic taste, rather anomalous in a Neapolitan; he had, for instance, a singular penchant for the works of Brahms, a passion observable both in his programmes and in his own compositions; indeed, Esposito was largely responsible for introducing the North-German master to Irish audiences. He also brought his orchestra to the gracious home of his friend and benefactor, Sir Stanley Cochrane. This mansion, Woodbrook, situated near the town of Bray some ten miles south of Dublin, became an occasional venue for concerts including some conducted by Esposito's close friend, Hamilton Harty; in August 1913 he was one of the conductors engaged to direct members of the London Symphony Orchestra in a series of such concerts.¹⁰⁷ Cochrane was exceptional in being a patron of the arts in his day; he even erected a fine concert hall on the estate and invited the public to support many

of the events he sponsored, but the distance from the capital defeated this project. In addition, he supplied the financial backing, and one of his initials, for C&E Music Publishers, founded in 1923. The remaining initial, and the direction, were provided by the indefatigable Esposito, who through this venture again demonstrated his understanding of the practical requirements necessary for musical expansion. Under his editorship, the firm produced admirable editions of the works of popular masters, along with some by Harty and Esposito himself.

In the manner of all its forebearers, the Dublin Orchestral Society had quickly to confront the low level of support for musical ventures. Within a year of its creation it was experiencing major financial difficulties. In June 1900, the All Ireland Review, a consistent supporter of this 'excellent corps of instrumentalists' and its 'conductor of singular capacity, enthusiasm, energy, and initiative', reported on a meeting of the shareholders:

...now, at the end of a two years' trial [sic], we find that the citizens of Dublin, by their presence, have paid something slightly over a quarter of the cost which this enterprise has incurred! And this in the capital city of a musical nation!... Numerous suggestions have been made for keeping the Society alive - that Miss Butt should be brought over from London to sing at the concerts; that some more 'popular' music should be introduced into the programme; that fewer instrumentalists should be employed; that, in a word, we should accept the stigma which attaches to a pretence at caring about the art of orchestration whilst we really only care for playing at being musical.¹⁰⁸

The institution of the populist Sunday series was a direct result of this meeting, and for some time it secured the society's future. But it proved a temporary respite. Esposito did not enjoy the best of health. This also contributed to the eventual dissolution of the Dublin Orchestral Society and later, in 1928, to his return to his native land where he died the following year. In an earlier appreciation evincing the characteristically liberal and inclusive view it adopted toward all it commented on, the All Ireland Review recorded

the debt of gratitude owed to Esposito with a generosity to a musician of foreign birth not often replicated in the more sectarian days which followed.

Signor Esposito's genius as a composer and conductor, and his artistic qualities as a pianist make him a musician whose residence in Dublin confers on that city an honour of which Irish musicians may be rightly emulous. It is a pity that so much of our natural skill and art capacity is wasted for want of organisation, and that so much latent genius, in this as in other fields of industry, remains undeveloped. We can only hope that with the growth of National prosperity we shall be able to produce in time more great musicians of our own. Meantime we are glad to accept the teaching and help which come to us in our need from foreign countries.¹⁰⁹

There are persistent notes of regret and reproach throughout the many reports quoted here; no matter how indubitably positive the commentator, it was not possible to be other than concerned at both the quantity and quality of musical activity. This account of the alternative tradition also reveals the dependence on individual endeavour; music in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Ireland revolved around a small, but remarkably dedicated succession: Stevenson, Robinson, Esposito, and later the German-born Colonel Fritz Brase. Of these, two had come from abroad, and one other, Robinson, was the son of an immigrant. Given the impoverished state of music education and the deficiency of support and infrastructure, it is not surprising to find that visiting musicians were to the fore throughout this period. That this situation was tolerated indicates, first, that the musical world was not sufficiently significant for such appointments to occasion controversy, initially at least, and second, that for much of this period the developing national consciousness did not regard music as a vehicle for chauvinistic expression. There was as yet no evidence of what Vaughan Williams refers to as the 'keep out the foreigner' movement.¹¹⁰ It is also undoubtedly true that the presence of musicians from abroad in such significant numbers was itself a factor in retaining an eclectic musical emphasis in those locations in which they settled. This is a primary reason why a musical expression of nationalist sentiment is encountered in Ireland

later than is the political asseveration. The writings of W.B. Yeats demonstrate that this consciousness of external seasoning and assistance was not confined to the art of music.

It would do its best to give Ireland a hardy and shapely national character by opening the doors to the four winds of the world, instead of leaving the door that is towards the east wind open alone. Certainly, the national character, which is so essentially different from the English that Spanish and French influences may well be most healthy, is at present like one of those miserable thorn-bushes by the sea that are all twisted to one side by some prevailing wind.¹¹¹

In music's case such decisions were founded on necessity rather than choice. This dependence on musicians from abroad lasted well into the present century: the Catholic Church was compelled to look to foreign schools of church music such as those at Regensburg, Aachen, and the Lemmens Institute at Malines in order to fill many of the positions of organist in cathedral towns; and many of these individuals have been the principal source of rejuvenation within their local areas. As late as the middle of this century a report into this situation noted that of 27 organist's positions in Catholic churches eleven were occupied by 'non-Irish'.¹¹²

Music outside Dublin

Mention of these local areas brings to notice that this chronicle focuses almost exclusively on the capital. This is consciously to reflect the truism that Ireland's experience of the European aesthetic was predominantly centred in Dublin. But this is not to deny that art music could be encountered elsewhere. Belfast might have lacked Dublin's political tradition and the associated civic grandeur, but this was compensated for by its strong industrial base. Its more loyal attachment to British traditions is evinced in its embrace of English musical fashion. Early attempts had been made to establish an academy of music in the city in the 1850s but these had not met with success. Like Dublin, Belfast was largely forced to rely on visiting companies for its music making although the Anacreontic Society had provided some

welcome activity from its foundation in 1814. A sometime conductor of this society during the middle years of the century, the English organist Dr Edmund Chipp (1823-86), was among the first in a succession of immigrant musicians who contributed to activity in the city. Chipp had been educated as a chorister at the Chapel Royal in London before proceeding to Belfast. . Apart from his appointments already mentioned, he was also conductor of of the Vocal Union a post he relinquished in 1867 when he moved to become organist of Ely Cathedral.¹¹³ And foreign guidance proved particularly welcome. A German bandmaster, Dr Francis Köller, succeeded Adolf Beyschlag as conductor of the Belfast Philharmonic Society in 1887. This body was an amalgamation of two earlier organisations, the Classical Harmonists' Society and the Belfast Musical Society, both founded in the third quarter of the century and very much of a character with their Dublin counterparts. The union was accomplished in 1874 and the very first conductor was yet another immigrant musician, Henry Stiehl. A consistency of style between the two cities was enhanced through the appointment of Sir Robert Stewart as his immediate successor in 1877.¹¹⁴ As elsewhere, choral music was in the ascendant, but the society did endeavour to give symphonic works as well. With percipient direction it eventually surpassed the achievements of its southern cousin.

Under the guidance of Köller, the Belfast Philharmonic Society became the country's most adventurous body in presenting works of large scale, such as Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius and Berlioz's Faust.¹¹⁵

In the early decades of this century it had sufficient support and prestige to attract illustrious guest conductors including Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Henry Wood, Sir Granville Bantock, and Sir Hamilton Harty, and it survived the First War and the Irish political trauma far more successfully than did societies in Dublin largely thanks to the discerning guidance of E. Godfrey Brown who succeeded Koeller as conductor in 1912.

The observer of music in these two major cities at the end of the nineteenth century is struck by the similarity of their experiences. Such comparison further emphasizes that polity and partisan sentiment

found little echo within the experience of the broader aesthetic, although the resultant divisions dramatically altered its course.

The history of music in Cork is less distinguished. During the early and middle years of the nineteenth century it relied heavily on the services of musicians from the capital such as Joseph Robinson and R.M. Levey to encourage what little endeavour there was. Not until the establishment of the Municipal School of Music in 1878 did the city possess a permanent foundation for activity. Around this time were formed the Cork Musical Society (1869) and the Band of the Cork Orchestral Union (1872) but they survived only a short time despite the appreciable energies of their respective conductors, Dr J.C. Marks and W. Ringrose Atkins. The significant initiative was again dictated by a foreign musician, Signor Ferruccio Grossi. Originally from Milan, he settled in Cork in 1902 and contributed much to the promotion of string-playing in the city. He revived the Orchestral Union in 1903 and gave a series of popular concerts in conjunction with the Cork Choral Union, which had been founded the previous year by yet another foreign musician, Heinrich Tils.¹¹⁶ Grossi was an active composer, his cantata Sarsfield at Limerick being given in 1906. But those works that survive in the archives are not of a standard to suggest that his reputation as a creative artist will endure. The significant contribution made by members of the Fleischmann family in Cork added to the popular perception that a degree of foreign involvement was the norm in musical ventures. One member of this family, Aloys Fleischmann, a long-time professor of music in the city's university, notes that the various enterprises can not disguise the true position:

It must, however, be admitted that despite all the activities of the long list of societies, the amount of actual music-making is negligible in proportion to the size of the population, while the executants available for orchestral or chamber music are exceedingly limited in number.¹¹⁷

However, it is the creative sphere, the area of activity which best supplies a gauge of musical vigour, that provides the most damning indictment of the nineteenth-century musical situation. The few composers of renown, such as Field, Balfe, and Wallace, worked abroad

and if and when they employed an Irish idiom it was as an exotic, rather than a nationalistic, element. One could point to works by Stevenson, John Glover, and Ferruccio Grossi, which had ephemeral appeal; but they are slight in nature. Furthermore all of these figures were occasional composers; most earned a living through teaching or performance leaving little time for creative work. Nor was there the incentive that a new work would be frequently heard; the paucity of performing ensembles meant that a composition would have to prove exceptionally popular to warrant a second hearing. What new music there was tended to be utilitarian, composed for religious services, or the opening of a major exhibition, or for the dedication of a new building. This is true of the work of Sir Robert Stewart, the principal creative spirit of his age and the one who best represents those writers who remained in Ireland.

Sir Robert Prescott Stewart

Stewart's early progress was of a one with those Anglo-Irish musicians who preceded him. He was born in Dublin in December 1825 and attended the cathedral school of Christ Church where he became a chorister. A prodigious talent as an organist brought him his first opportunities. In 1844, when just 19, he succeeded to the posts of organist in both Christ Church and the chapel of Trinity College following the death of John Robinson, brother to Joseph. Some eight years later he was appointed also to St Patrick's Cathedral, thereby confirming his virtual monopoly of the principal positions for organist in the city. Meanwhile, Stewart had taken over direction of the University Choral Society in Trinity College. On his departure, the outgoing conductor, Joseph Robinson, is reputed to have recommended his young colleague with unstinting praise:

I commend to your choice this friend of mine, who, young as he is, is already the finest musician our country has produced; and in saying this I do not except myself.¹¹⁸

It proved a momentous and happy appointment. Stewart was successful and popular. In 1851, at the request of the society, the Board of Trinity College resolved to confer on Stewart the combined degree of

Bachelor and Doctor in Music. The recipient responded with one of his larger creative enterprises, an elaborate realization of psalm 107 in the form of a cantata which opens in a manner conventional for such exercises with a double chorus of eight individual parts followed by a joyous fugue. Alternating solo and choral movements bring the work to a close. In 1862 Stewart was appointed to the chair of music in the college. He approached this position with sincerity and instituted substantial changes in the regulations for obtaining degrees. The new requirements, which incidentally were strongly resisted in some quarters, reflected his own urbane and liberal training and, conversely, they equally demonstrate how indistinguishable his thinking was from that of a progressive English counterpart. He insisted that candidates for a degree in music should demonstrate a proficiency in English composition, history, and literature, possess at least one other modern language, and have some arithmetical competency.

I have tried to keep musical degrees here respectable, by admitting to degrees in Music only such candidates as could show a fair acquaintance with the ordinary routine of a gentleman's education. I know no better method to elevate our artistic cult; and since 1861 [sic], my life's work has been to educate and to make gentlemen of our professional musicians: to raise them up from the status of craftsmen to that of artists and littérateurs.¹¹⁹

Stewart's erudition and manner produced, in combination, a fine teacher but the responsibility this imposed left him with little time for creative industry despite his predilection for arising early in order to work. His reputation as a composer was already secure before his appointment. Indeed the doctoral citation delivered on that April day in 1851 makes special mention of Stewart's imaginative faculty:

...you have proved yourself well entitled to receive such an honour from the Board by the production of musical compositions of acknowledged ability. In that most important branch of the science, ecclesiastical music, your Church Services have shown you to be a master, and the superiority of your compositions in other styles is attested by the prizes which have been recently adjudged to them.¹²⁰

Stewart's religious music constitutes his principal creative contribution. One of his enduring labours was the Irish Church Hymnal which he edited in 1876 thereby revising the earlier edition completed by Revd George Torrance. Aside from this and the many anthems, notable are the Service in E flat for double choir and the Service in G which is of more modest proportions. His cantatas earned him some transient popular approbation, particularly A Winter's Night Awake (1858), a long but accessible conception, and The Eve of St John. This latter work was given by Stanford in Cambridge in 1872 and was performed for the opening of yet another Dublin Exhibition one year later. The substantial overture alone was first given in London in 1883 to general critical acclaim and the work was frequently performed in Dublin. Described as a 'Romantic Cantata' by the composer, it is written to a text by his friend Dr John F. Waller and is set in the North of England at the time of the third crusade in the twelfth century. The opening solo for soprano conveys something of the character of a work that is conventionally competent rather than inspired (Ex.17).

Ex.17

Allegro moderato

When the stars are dim in the dark-ling sky -

- Ere the young moon looks from her bower on high-

- And the wind sprite howls on the clouds that

fly thro' the drea-ry waste of night-

It might be fair to state that this piece attests to Stewart's cosmopolitan approach which owed nothing to his Irish background. Fair yes, but not wholly true. The technically impressive finale, a bright paeon incorporating five soloists and full chorus, is very cleverly, albeit freely, crafted from the traditional Irish melody 'Eileen Aroon'. The device, however, is more a demonstration of craftsmanship than of any enduring commitment to an Irish note. Waller also collaborated with Stewart on the Ode to Industry, the rather cumbersome title given to the commission, set in five distinct parts, completed for the opening of the Cork Exhibition in 1852. Stewart accepted the invitation to provide a march for the inauguration of the Great Exhibition in Dublin the following year. A further piece, Ode to Shakespeare, was written for Birmingham in 1870.¹²¹ His last substantial work was yet another commission and collaboration, the Ode for the Tercentenary Festival of his university in 1892. His literary partner in this instance was the Cork poet, George Francis Savage-Armstrong, who furnished a long and demanding text tracing the whole course of learning in Ireland which Stewart sets in a succession of choruses, recitatives, and solo arias, such as 'Behold, the men are with us still' (Ex.18) delivered by the bass soloist which lauds the great men the university has produced. Sir Hubert Parry, for one, esteemed this work.

I did not at all anticipate such all-round resourcefulness and savoir faire as appeared in the Tercentenary Ode. It was not only the resourcefulness of the thorough practical musician, but a sense of style, which made me surprised and sorry that we had not seen more works from the same composer on a similarly large scale. Not only was the treatment of the voices free and artistic, and thoroughly effective - that I was prepared for; but the orchestration was not mere instrumentalism of organ or pianoforte passages, but genuinely orchestral in the form of the ideas and figures, and phraseology; and often highly effective as instrumentation. The solos, too, were very free and varied in form and texture, thoroughly well written from the singers point of view; tuneful when tune was required, and good with regard to declamatory effect, when that was needed.... The whole making an excellent impression of vivacity,

Ex.18

Andante con moto

The first system of music is a piano introduction. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The middle and bottom staves are connected by a brace and contain the piano accompaniment. The music begins with a series of chords and single notes, marked with a forte 'f' dynamic.

The second system features a vocal line on a single staff and piano accompaniment on a grand staff. The vocal line begins with a long note followed by a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes. The lyrics are: "Be- hold, - the men are with us still Who".

The third system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a melodic phrase that ends with a long note. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and single notes. The lyrics are: "here have reap'd im- mor- tal fame;".

invention, and variety; and showing in a most effective way the genuinely high and sympathetic organisation of the composer.¹²²

The strain of this major undertaking hastened his demise. Stewart passed away on Easter Eve, 24 March 1894. A brass tablet perpetuates his memory in his beloved Christ Church Cathedral and a statue on Leinster lawn was unveiled in March 1894 by the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Cadogan. One who had strongly supported this memorial was the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, Dr William Walsh, a fact which says much for his ecumenical spirit and for Stewart's standing.¹²³ More significant perhaps, was the promise suggested by this gesture, coming at the close of a century marked by division, of the replacement of a sectarian approach to musical industry by a more united musical endeavour.

James C. Culwick

One who mourned the passing of Stewart was James C. Culwick (1845-1907) whose unaccompanied Elegy for vocal quartet to words from Milton's Lycidas bears the inscription 'composed in loving memory of Sir Robert P. Stewart' (Ex.19). Culwick was an English musician who had studied there and had been a chorister and assistant organist at Lichfield Cathedral before moving to Ireland in 1866. His first appointment was as organist in Birr, County Offaly. He subsequently moved to similar positions in Bray and later in Dublin where he was attached to St Anne's before accepting the prestigious position of organist and choirmaster at the Chapel Royal in 1881. A true love of choral music led to his involvement with a number of such groups in the city, and he founded and conducted the Orpheus Choral Society. His contribution to the musical life of his adopted country was rewarded by an honorary doctorate from the University of Dublin in 1893. Along with so many of the leading immigrant musicians, he displayed a profound interest in native Irish music. In 1897 he delivered a paper on old Irish modes to the National Literary Society and published it as a pamphlet which constituted a learned addition to the modal debate.¹²⁴ The vocal ascendancy in his original works reflect his preferences and involvement. His output includes church services, anthems, and notably the dramatic cantata, The Legend of Stauffenberg (1890). These works

Andante
pp

O the hea- vy change, now thou art gone,
 O the hea- vy change, now thou art gone,
 O the hea- vy change,

pp *dim.*

the change now

gone, gone, and nev- er,
 thou art gone, gone, nev- er,
 gone, gone, and nev- er,
 gone, gone, and nev- er,

fp

nev- er, nev- er must re- turn!
 nev- er, nev- er, nev- er must re- turn!
 nev- er, nev- er must re- turn!
 nev- er, nev- er must re- turn!

f *pp* *pp*

have suffered a fate similar to so many of the Irish productions of that century. Culwick's creations deserve better. The smaller compositions, such as the set of six songs op.10, reveal a sensitive approach and a genuine sympathy for a good vocal line. The fevered rhythmical style and the syllabic approach evident in the second of the set, 'Wild Brook', are characteristic (Ex.20).

Ex.20

Animato

Wild brook, bab- bling and bic- ker- ing,
Down through the li- ly buds in- to the lake!

Culwick retained a cosmopolitan approach in his creative work, notwithstanding his affection for autochthonous music. His compositions demonstrate careful craftsmanship and it may well have been their very complexity which deprived him of wider recognition.

His ideal of the musical art was lofty and serious; and throughout his career he maintained the honour of his profession in every way. His compositions were abstruse and difficult rather than melodious, but were always scholarly, and in some of them a predilection for Wagnerian treatment could be discerned.¹²⁵

No claims are made here for the genius of Culwick's conceptions; rather, the contention is that they vouch a discriminating musicianship and a clear creative vision. The haste with which they were neglected following his passing suggests that tastes and expectations were changing and that if there were to be a music that would command popular approbation in a time of increasing political uncertainty, then that music would be the music of commitment.

All of the considerable achievements of Stewart and Culwick cannot disguise the jejune creative record of a century. Notwithstanding the endeavours of the few, there survives no work of enduring quality by a composer resident in Ireland. It was not until the end of the century that a remarkable eclosion was to herald a true renaissance in musical creativity.

This chapter and its predecessor have focused in turn on the indigenous and the alternative musical cultures. It is striking that for so long each operated in isolation, innocent of the other. The contention is that this division is fundamental to the despondent nineteenth-century situation. But, as implied earlier, it would be simplistic to claim that this is the sole cause. This chapter has pointed to additional pragmatic reasons: the absence of patronage; the lack of a systematic scheme of music education; and the fact that no infrastructure existed for musical development, and no amount of individual dedication could compensate for such deficiencies. The sectarian schism in endeavour was a further and peculiarly Irish complicating factor. In short, the major obstacle was, to borrow Donald Ferguson's phrase, 'the lack of a pervasive musical culture'.¹²⁶ It was, however, the initiatives instituted by the perspicacious individuals considered here which ensured that conditions were favourable for a musical resurgence at the turn of the century. Fortuitously, this coincided with the fusion of cultures which was the particular feature of the revival.

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37. C.G.Duffy, Young Ireland, I (Dublin, 1884), 60. This has been a consistent belief as is attested to by Michael Tierney's early book on education in Ireland where he notes that 'the primary basis of all our teaching must be our own language, our own history, our own music, and our own art'. See Education in a Free Ireland (Dublin, n.d. [1919]), 45.
38. O.MacDonagh, 'Ideas and Institutions, 1830-45', in W.E.Vaughan ed., A New History of Ireland, V (Oxford, 1989), 199.
39. D.H.Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870', in W.E.Vaughan ed., A New History of Ireland, V (Oxford, 1989), 523.

40. D.H.Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870', as n.39, 524.
41. D.H.Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870', as n.39, 524.
42. See N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', Proceedings of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland Conference, Dublin 1979 (Galway, 1979), 48-56.
43. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 49.
44. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 50.
45. Quoted in the Twenty-second Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland for the year 1855, appendix B, 73-4.
46. Sixtieth Report of the Commissioners of National Education for the year 1893, appendix C, 329-36.
47. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 53.
48. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 52.
49. P.Goodman, from The Report of the Board of National Education for the year 1896, cited in Freeman's Journal (4 Aug. 1897), 5.
50. T.Donovan, 'New Programme of the Board of National Education - Singing', Irish Ecclesiastical Record, IX (Jan. 1901), 3.
51. See 'The Musical Season in Ireland (1899-1900)', The New Ireland Review, XIV (Oct. 1900), 105-6.
52. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 55.
53. Full programme reproduced in T.J.Durcan, History of Irish Education from 1800 (Bala, 1972), 247-9.
54. N.Kelly, 'Music in Irish Primary Education, 1831-1922', as n.42, 56.
55. J.F.Larchét, 'Music in the Universities', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 13.
56. Dublin Review, XXII [new series] (Jan.-April 1874), 192.
57. R.V.Comerford, 'Ireland 1850-70: post-famine and mid-Victorian', in A New History of Ireland, V, as n.38, 389.
58. Report of the Commission on Higher Education 1960-67, I (Dublin, 1967), 335-8.

59. A.Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 273.
60. For further on Glover see N.Slonimsky ed., Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians (New York, 1958), 547.
61. Freeman's Journal (8 Nov. 1851), 1.
62. C.Acton, 'Towards an Irish Music', Envoy, III (Sept. 1950), 78.
63. F.May, 'The Composer in Ireland', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 167. Brian Boydell also raises this point in his article, 'The Future of Music in Ireland', The Bell, XVI (Jan. 1951), 24.
64. Freeman's Journal (22 March 1952), 1.
65. Freeman's Journal (28 May 1853), 1.
66. Freeman's Journal (28 May 1853), 1.
67. Freeman's Journal (12 June 1852), 3.
68. Freeman's Journal (13 May 1852), 3.
69. H.C.Colles, The Growth of Music (London, rep. 1934), 171.
70. A.Whittall, Romantic Music (London, 1987), 141-2.
71. Freeman's Journal (13 May 1853), 1.
72. W.J.M.Starkie, 'The Royal Irish Academy of Music', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 106.
73. C.W.Wilson, 'Dublin', as n.11, 100.
74. B.B.Curtis, 'The Cork Municipal School of Music', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 116.
75. Cited in W.J.M.Starkie, 'The Royal Irish Academy of Music', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 107.
76. J.McCann, 'The Dublin Municipal School of Music', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 113.
77. 'Music in Dublin', Hibernia (2 Jan. 1882), 6-7.
78. Hibernia as n.77, 7.
79. The Irish Times (11 Nov. 1881), 4.
80. Hibernia, as n.77, 7.
81. The Irish Times (6 Dec. 1888), 6.
82. L.Mc.L.Dix, 'Robinson', Grove, IV, as n.36, 408.
83. Hibernia, as n.77, 7.

84. The Irish Times (7 Dec. 1888), 5.
85. L.Mc.L.Dix, 'Robinson', Grove, IV, as n.36, 408.
86. C.V.Stanford, 'Joseph Robinson', as n.13, 117-8.
87. For a full report of the commission and the correspondence see the Freeman's Journal (24 June 1885), 4-6.
88. Freeman's Journal (3 July 1885), 7.
89. Radio Telefis Eireann Sound Archives; J.F.Larchet revealed this in a recorded tribute to Esposito originally broadcast in 1955 on Radio Eireann; this archive tape was later employed in a further documentary, 'Esposito Remembered' presented by Dr Anthony Hughes and transmitted on the fiftieth anniversary of Esposito's death in 1979.
90. 'Trinity College, Dublin, and the Foundation of the Royal Dublin Society', Royal Dublin Society: Bi-Centenary Souvenir 1731-1931, ed., W.H.Brayden (Dublin, 1931), xxx.
91. See R.F.Foster, Modern Ireland 1600-1972, as n.4, 199.
92. 'Trinity College, Dublin, and the Foundation of the Royal Dublin Society', as n.90, 5.
93. Cited in A.Hughes, 'The Society and Music', in J.Meenan and D.Clarke eds., The Royal Dublin Society: 1731-1981 (Dublin, 1981), 265.
94. T.de Vere White, The Story of the Royal Dublin Society (Tralee, 1955), 9.
95. A.Hughes, 'The Society and Music', as n.93, 266.
96. Freeman's Journal (8 Oct. 1894), 4. For further mention of Dr Stoney's commitment to the undertaking see The Irish Statesman, X (2 June 1928), 254.
97. Freeman's Journal (9 Nov. 1894), 4.
98. W.Starkie, 'What the Royal Dublin Society has Done for Music', Royal Dublin Society: Bi-Centenary Souvenir 1731-1931, as n.90, 62.
99. Music Committee Minutes: Royal Dublin Society. Sir Hamilton Harty, in a letter to Arthur E.Moran of the RDS dated 23 April 1926, offered the society three options for a proposed performance by the Halle:
- (a) an orchestra of 35, 'by whom practically any music could be played' - 350 pounds
 - (b) a medium orchestra of 28 which would offer 'interesting programmes and good variety' - 270 pounds
 - (c) the 'original orchestra of last season' which numbered

14 players 'for which the supply of works is not large and would take a good deal of arranging' - 160 pounds.

That the society elected for the third option suggests that it could not guarantee an audience large enough to warrant engaging the greater forces obviously favoured by Harty.

100. In a review of Esposito's work in Ireland, one journal recorded that the formation of the Dublin Orchestral Society was the 'immediate result' of the performance of Esposito's award winning cantata Deirdre composed for the first composers' competition in the Feis Ceoil. See The Irish Statesman, X (2 June 1928), 254. However this victory and the performance of the work, which are discussed in chap.VI, occurred two years prior to the establishment of the orchestra. Yet another report, that of the All Ireland Review see n.108, would suggest that it was founded in 1898. Both are mistaken.
101. Freeman's Journal (8 Oct. 1894), 4.
102. Freeman's Journal (1 Mar. 1899), 5.
103. Freeman's Journal (27 Feb. 1899), 4-5.
104. Freeman's Journal (2 Mar. 1899), 5.
105. Cited in D.Greer ed., Early Memories (Belfast, 1979), 26.
106. C.W.Wilson, 'Dublin', as n.11, 100.
107. L.Hirsch, 'Memories of Sir Hamilton', in D.Greer ed., Hamilton Harty (Belfast, 1978), 70-1; Esposito also conducted during this series, see W.Starkie, 'Esposito', A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians, as n.23, 143.
108. All Ireland Review, I (23 June 1900), 2. This weekly periodical which set itself the noble objective of being 'a true and characteristic product of this island' (see first issue 6 Jan. 1900, p.1) was founded and edited by Standish O'Grady.
109. All Ireland Review, I (20 Jan. 1900), 4. Esposito's contribution as a composer is discussed in the next chapter.
110. R.Vaughan Williams, National Music (Oxford, 2nd edn 1987), 55.
111. W.B.Yeats, Explorations (London, 1962), 76.
112. A.Fleischmann, 'The Organization of the Profession', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 83.
113. For further on Dr Chipp see O.J.Vignoles, Memoir of Sir Robert P.Stewart, as n.8, 77-9.
114. A.Perry, 'The Belfast Philharmonic Society', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 291. Stewart was first attracted to Belfast through his

friendship with Dr Chipp whom he succeeded as conductor of the Vocal Union in 1867.

115. J.Ryan, 'The Army School of Music: 1922-1940' (MA dissertation, National University of Ireland, 1987), 14.
116. For a fuller account of music in the southern city see A.Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 268-79.
117. A.Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork', Music in Ireland, as n.6, 275.
118. Cited in O.J.Vignoles, Memoir of Sir Robert P.Stewart, as n.8, 14.
119. Quoted in O.J.Vignoles, Memoir of Sir Robert P.Stewart, as n.8, 109.
120. Quoted in O.J.Vignoles, Memoir of Sir Robert P.Stewart, as n.8, 34.
121. See W.H.Hadow, 'Sir Robert Prescott Stewart', Grove, V (London, 1929), 137.
122. Quoted in O.J.Vignoles, Memoir of Sir Robert P.Stewart, as n.8, 204-5.
123. See Freeman's Journal (30 June 1894), 5.
124. J.C.Culwick, Distinctive Characteristics of Ancient Irish Melody (Dublin, 1897).
125. Freeman's Journal (7 Oct. 1907), 5.
126. D.Ferguson, A History of Musical Thought, as n.1, 518.

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CHAPTER VI

The age of fusion

The fruits of that fecund synergy between burgeoning national sentiment and culture, evident throughout Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century, became apparent in Ireland only in the final decade. But this late eclosion was more than compensated for by the richness of the movement that has attracted such descriptions as the Irish Renaissance, Celtic Revival, Celtic Twilight, and the more specialized designation, Irish Literary Revival. It was the contention of the literary historian Ernest Boyd that this remarkable expression

has done more than anything else to draw the attention of the outside world to the separate national existence of Ireland.¹

This movement was splendid out of all proportion to previous emanations. Its achievements in the realms of visual arts, of crafts, of language and literature did much to engender national consciousness and a confidence in a distinct nationhood. There was also the suspicion, as voiced by the most brilliant personality of the revival, the poet William Butler Yeats, that this cultural ferment laid the foundation for future political action.

All that I have said and done,
Now that I am old and ill,
Turns into a question till
I lie awake night after night
And never get the answers right.
Did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot?²

A colleague, John Eglinton, had no doubts about the catenation between art and polity:

Yeats, and the literary movement in which he was the commanding figure, may be said to have conjured up the armed bands of 1916.³

The very designations employed to describe this period are themselves revealing. In accord with their fundamental romantic

inspiration, they stress the theme of rebirth which, while a feature common to contemporaneous cultural expressions, took on a singular character in Ireland. Faced with the elemental divisions in Irish society, it was imperative that the guiding intelligentsia stress accomplishments which predated both the Reformation and the English conquest; only in this period could Irishmen of all creeds find a common source for national regeneration. The Unity of Culture of which Yeats dreamed was to be founded on a veneration of the past, a veneration which ultimately expanded into a national obsession to a degree which militated against innovative endeavour.⁴ In few arts as much as in music is one as conscious of the constriction imposed by this deference to history. The responsibility of accommodating this weight of homage in a musical representation appropriate to the age proved the fundamental problem for a generation of composers.

The most telling and yet ambiguous term ascribed to this period is Celtic Twilight, taken from the title of a book of stories by Yeats published in 1893. This primordial nomination can suggest renewal, but is additionally redolent of melancholy and impending decline which accurately captures the dominant concern to preserve an ancient heritage. Moreover, there was a determination to protect this fragile tradition from pervading cosmopolitanism. In consequence, much of the thinking was essentially defensive and even negative in approach; it was an attitude which heralded the aesthetically sterile decades which followed the achievement of an independent state.

Such criticism could not be levelled against the first flowerings of the revival. Commentators have understandably concentrated on the literary achievements of the period, while the few existing musical critiques centre on that art's failure to answer in any significant fashion the challenge of the age. But such implied stricture is not wholly just. There was a musical response, but its energy was dissipated, first, by the absence of an agreed course of development which was aggravated by the fundamental division in Irish musical culture; second, by the low level of general musical literacy and consciousness; and third, by the very fact that music is by nature better suited as a secondary manifestation of nationalism, primarily because of its non-referential character.

A distinctive expression

During one of the Charles Eliot Norton lectures which he was invited to deliver in 1951-2, the American composer Aaron Copland turned his attention to the prerequisites for the emergence of a healthy and distinctive musical culture.

Actually it seems to me that in order to create an indigenous music of universal significance three conditions are imperative. First, the composer must be part of a nation that has a profile of its own - that is the most important; second, the composer must have in his background some sense of musical culture and, if possible, a basis in folk or popular art; and third, a superstructure of organized musical activities must exist - that is, to some extent, at least - at the service of the native composer.⁵

It is noticeable that throughout these lectures Copland speaks as a populist. This is evident in the second of his stipulations which emphasizes the desirability of a basis in folk or popular art, which was a universal hallmark of nationalist expression through music at the turn of the century. This stance is also discernible in Copland's music which, like that of Benjamin Britten, consciously seeks to be accessible. This is in marked contrast to a concurrent disposition, noted by Rollo Myers, for modern music to become increasingly complex as a counterbalance to technical innovations which make the music so readily available to large audiences.⁶ The contention that a school of composition reacted knowingly to offset too easy an access is also touched upon by H.H. Stuckenschmidt in his excellent short study Twentieth Century Music.⁷ But any form of programmatic art seeks a broad constituency, and this is particularly true of music with a nationalist design. Such a music cannot be both inclusive and esoteric. 'The music of commitment', to borrow Stuckenschmidt's phrase, requires itself to be acceptable to all the members of a nation.⁸ It needs employ a language that is comfortably comprehended by all; a language founded on a common style, or on familiar airs, or on a characteristic turn of phrase or rhythm recognizable as typical of the shared heritage. This brings us back to Copland's proposition because it presupposes a common tradition, which is precisely what so

much of the Irish cultural energy of the nineteenth century was disposed to create. Unlike the antiquarians and workers in other fields, musicians failed to establish such a common tradition, and this failure proved a critical drawback to attempts to make a more telling musical contribution. It is likewise illuminative to apply Copland's remaining requirements to late nineteenth-century Ireland. To establish the first and most important of these, that sense of a characteristic community, was the function of the revival through all its disciplines, but it was also, as we have seen, the precise issue which determined that great philosopher of nationalism, Mazzini, to reject Ireland's claim to distinct nationhood.⁹ As to the third and last of the prerequisites, it has been shown in Chapter V that the musical superstructure was in an elementary stage and was too fragile to support the emergence of a vibrant expression. Furthermore, these young institutions were concentrated on the major urban areas and had little relevance for those engaged with the indigenous tradition in its rural heartland. To acknowledge that Ireland at the turn of the century could not fully meet even one of these requirements is more readily to appreciate the obstacles to a musical revival.

Charles Villiers Stanford and a typology of musical nationalism

Ireland's difficulties were compounded because they were so deep-rooted, the result of a fractured tradition. It was in the realm of practical matters that the disadvantage was most evident. Such was the low base from which Ireland started that even with the fruits of dedicated individuals, Ireland still lagged far behind England with which it was inevitably compared, although the Irishman viewing the superior structures in London could still find much to bewail.

One of the idiosyncrasies of England is to identify the term Art with only one of its branches. All other countries with the exception of our own, include music under this head. While every possible assistance, state and municipal, is given to painting and literature, none is forthcoming for her. What wonder if this gives occasion to the foreigner to write us down unmusical?¹⁰

The author of this extract, Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), was responding to the German charge that Britain was das Land ohne Musik¹¹ and in so doing he was contributing to the genesis of a musical renaissance. He spoke from the authoritative position as a pillar of the British music establishment, which was not a station one would expect to find occupied by the father to that whole movement of Irish nationalist expression through music. In later years he was largely disowned by his artistic progeny; a chief criticism being that he approached his music, as he did the extract above, from the perspective of an Englishman. It is only recently that Stanford's reputation has commenced a process of rehabilitation. Prior to this he was attacked not only by his fellow countrymen but particularly by general critical opinion for what was perceived as his all too obvious eclecticism and academicism. It is difficult to find an account of the man and his works without encountering a list of his distinguished pupils, such was his predominant influence as a teacher. Yet for a creative musician such a talent is a two-edged sword; his teaching occupied limited time and energy and his success in this area has for long overshadowed his compositions. The complaint of his son, Guy, is both understandable and justified:

My reactions to all accounts of his life are chiefly that far too much emphasis has been given to his teaching and far too little on his composition.¹²

Stanford fell prey to his own versatility. This is a peculiarly Irish trait which can be observed in composers of a later generation including Hamilton Harty and John Larchet. This was not solely a factor of a multifarious talent; rather, it indicated the attention each was required to devote to developing the underlying structures necessary for musical activity. Stanford, like his compatriots, could give but limited time to composition; his duties as professor at Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music demanded much of his attention. T.F.Dunhill records:

It is surprising that with his manifold and varied activities, which increased when he settled in London in 1892, Stanford's output as a composer was so continuous.¹³

His prolific creative output is largely due to a facility to write without preliminary sketch or revision. By the same token, one can but speculate that freed of didactic responsibilities these works would be more finely honed and would display a greater stamp of individuality.

Stanford's eclectic nature was in part a function of his education. He enjoyed a comfortable childhood and a sound education in the day-school run by Henry Tilney Bassett. This formidable master had a fondness for classics and a corresponding indifference for every other branch of learning which undoubtedly endeared him to his pupils. At a time when Dublin could offer few musical opportunities, Stanford was particularly fortunate in having parents who could supervise his early musical education. As the distinguished baritone and personal friend Harry Plunket Greene records:

Stanford appeared out of the blue in Irish music. He was born, and grew up in its atmosphere. His mother was musical to her finger-tips and played the pianoforte delightfully; while his father must have been one of the finest amateur bass singers that ever lived.... It can easily be gathered from whom his son inherited his music and his character. He was an inveterate practical joker - another virtue which he handed on - and there are records of many of his reckless escapades.... His son inherited this delight in bringing off a 'sell' as on the occasion at the Royal College when he announced on the notice board that the first half of the afternoon's orchestral practice was to be devoted to the works of Strauss. Richard Strauss was at that time supposed to be the last word in modernism, and all the young bloods turned up to a man, and were entertained with the 'Blue Danube' and other masterpieces of the immortal Johann.¹⁴

He was equally fortunate in coming under the influence of Robert Stewart and Joseph Robinson, for both of whom he was to retain a lifelong respect. He had also as a teacher the little-remembered Michael Quarry, a fine pianist recently returned from Leipzig, who was chiefly responsible for the development of Stanford's prodigious keyboard facility.¹⁵ Stanford was to become the leading musical representative of his Anglo-Irish tradition; like his mentors, he was one of that relatively small but dynamic society centred upon the two

great Dublin cathedrals, Christ Church and St Patrick's, which nurtured the European aesthetic in Ireland. While Plunket Greene's assessment that Stanford 'appeared out of the blue in Irish music' is correct in respect of his remarkable achievements, it is equally true that he was building on work of members of his own community who were sympathetic to, and versed in, the repertoire and technique of the broader culture. Just as Seamus Deane writes with disparagement of the 'Trinity College view of Irish history',¹⁶ so one can speak with no deprecatory inference of the Christ Church and St Patrick's bequest to Irish music.

Stanford's heterogeneous outlook was further assured through personal exposure to this tradition during periods of study in London, Cambridge, Leipzig, and Berlin. This experience, most notably through the guidance of teachers such as Carl Reinecke in the Leipzig Konservatorium, an institution which proved a veritable nursery for composers from various nations who were to espouse an ethnic idiom, engendered in Stanford a paramount deference for the conservative Germanic tradition which was to become so evident in his compositions. This inheritance is as discernible in his 'Irish' works as in any genre of his wide creative output. Viewed in the light of these compositions alone, he is perceived as doubly untypical; he was naturally unique in being the pioneering nationalist composer, but he was also quite distinct from those who followed. In fact he represents but one attitude, that which approaches Irish music from outside. This does not imply any lack of respect for the tradition; he was ever proud of his heritage as his short preface to the Irish Symphony reveals:

Be thou gracious to my country, and to me who
sing of my country, Phoebus, who thyself
suggest with the crowned lyre.¹⁷

But the Irish note was to Stanford as a mantle to be assumed and discarded at will; it was not central to his creative personality and many of his works bear no trace of it. However, he valued the compositions which display this note and they form a substantial part of his oeuvre. Frederick Hudson records that this characteristic

saved him from that insularity of outlook
which had pervaded English music since
Handel's time.¹⁸

That this note was but one persona in a gallery of characters which he could adopt at will places his brand of nationalism at variance with that of, say, Bartok, whose ethnocentricity was ingrained as a critical constituent. This contraposition confronts us with a keynote question: is there a typology of musical nationalism? Some commentators would suggest that there is, although admittedly the admission is by inference and is made apropos of other matters and without addressing the issue directly. An early example is provided by Cecil Gray, whose writings while speculative and occasionally fanciful are yet perceptive. In his extended essay Predicaments published in 1936, Gray recognizes the rising importance of the national over the cosmopolitan idiom, and he proceeds to differentiate between two well-defined forms.

It is necessary to distinguish carefully between this genuine nationalism and the cult of local colour, the love of the exotic, which is only a by product of the Romantic Movement.... The true distinction, it would therefore seem, between the two types of nationalism, must consist in this: that in the one case it is genuine, unconscious, spontaneous, whereas in the other, whether of one's own race or any other, it is deliberately and consciously cultivated. The Finlandia of Sibelius, which makes no use of folk-songs or any other kind of local colour but is nevertheless demonstrably inspired by patriotic feelings, is a good example of the former; the Russia of Balakirev, based upon three folk-songs, is a good example of the latter. (Needless to say it does not necessarily follow that Finlandia is a better work than Russia - on the contrary, I should say it is nothing like as good, but this does not affect the argument).¹⁹

This distinction between profound sentiment and exoticism finds echo in the writings of later critics including the Americans William Austin and Rey Longyear.²⁰ Indeed, in the course of his Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music, Longyear proposes an alternative duality: aggressive and defending nationalisms, each of which makes its appropriate cultural statement. Yet another American scholar, Joseph Machlis, presents us with a third reading:

We should distinguish between the nationalist composer, who deliberately emphasises national characteristics in his art, and the

national composer, who may embody them in his work without having to make any special effort because they form the basic layer of his thinking and feeling. The national composer is apt to be the more universal, hence the more accessible to the world at large. The nationalist composer may be more picturesque, but he is more limited in his appeal. Tchaikovsky is a national composer; Rimsky-Korsakov, one would be inclined to say is a nationalist. Bartók is a national composer; Kodály is a nationalist. Sometimes, of course, an artist may move from one level to the other. Sibelius, for example, in his early tone poems emphasized picturesque local color and legendry [sic] in the manner of the nationalist composer. In his later symphonies he was a national composer, subjecting his material to process of stylization in abstract works that brought to the fore the universal aspects of his art. A similar development may be observed in nationalists like Vaughan Williams and Manuel de Falla.²¹

The reference to Bartók and Kodály points to the difficulty of sustaining such a general duality. Kodály is certainly more determined in his nationalist concentration than is his compatriot so some separation seems warranted. But if Machlis' distinction is applied to the Irish situation, Stanford would join Kodály as a nationalist composer; yet the difference between the two is far more pronounced than that between Kodály and Bartók. Furthermore, in the light of the myriad socio-cultural and political backgrounds to diverse musical nationalisms, it is inevitable that no neat typology exists which could accommodate such a range without enforced compartmentalization. The absence of a comprehensive typology does not negate the central distinction between the subjective and objective approaches which all commentators recognize, nor does it deny that any musical emanation will evince disparate attitudes and levels of commitment, as can clearly be seen in the Irish experience.

At the turn of this century the differentiation between the subjective and objective approaches was marked. The subjective was lauded as the more pure expression, arising from innate sentiment; it was regarded as a noble and patriotic asseveration. Its counterpart was more likely to find popular favour, the exotic has perennial

appeal; but it was viewed with suspicion by committed nationalists. This situation applied equally in other fields. Standish O'Grady, the proprietor and editor of the penny weekly journal All Ireland Review, and a man who played a crucial role in the cultural candescence, wrote in 1900 in response to an article by the poet W.B. Yeats, that it was

not written for me or written for Ireland; it was written for London, for all your clever friends over there, and all your clever enemies, for I know you are carrying on a sort of war there.... come back to Ireland.²²

O'Grady wrote as a friend; he had after all been an inspiration to Yeats, of which more in its proper place. His criticism is accordingly gentle and his motivation kind. Were he a more musical man he might have said similar of Stanford; for Stanford indubitably wrote for the audience he knew, an English audience. He approached with sincerity but without the understanding of the heritage necessary to do it justice. Essentially he interpreted the tradition for an audience receptive to its picturesque qualities through an acquaintance with the works of Thomas Moore. Stanford was a more musical Moore writ big. The association is telling because Stanford was indebted to his countryman and beyond that to Moore's sources, primarily Bunting and Petrie. Stanford's faithful collaborator in his research was the poet and inspector of schools and a fellow Dubliner, Alfred Perceval Graves (1846-1931), whose father had been a close acquaintance of Dr Petrie. Together Stanford and Graves published three collections: Songs of Old Ireland (1882), Irish Songs and Ballads (1893), and Songs of Erin (1901). The first of these is inscribed to Johannes Brahms. Stanford and Graves also published independent collections, one of which, Stanford's Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore (1895), has already been referred to in Chapter V. Graves shared Stanford's high opinion of Moore the poet, but was equally censorious of his approach to indigenous airs, a criticism he voiced in the preface to his late publication The Celtic Song Book (1928):

many of his melodies are not standing the test of time. This is either because our fine airs have been altered in time or character by him and Stevenson, and so depreciated, or have been assorted by Moore

with the sentimental, metaphorical, and pseudo-philosophical fancies that took the taste of the English upper classes half a century ago, or because the tunes to which some of his finer lyrics are set are not of first-rate quality.

If a great national collection of Irish melodies is to be formed it will be our plain duty to divorce these ill-matched lyrics from their present partners, and to mate them to worthy airs in the Petrie and Joyce collections and in Bunting's last volume, which came after Moore's last melodies, and of which he was so ill-advisedly contemptuous. It is as plain an obligation to slip out of their golden settings Moore's occasional bits of green glass and to slip into them the occasional emeralds of his contemporaries and successors.²³

Plunket Greene felt this criticism was misplaced.

The editing of folk-music demands probably more care than any other branch of the art, as folk-tunes are the product of many minds and voices and pass through many hands before they reach the printing-press. To us of those days it was still a 'hobby'. Had Stanford, the purist, the teacher and the Irishman, realized in his lifetime that he had done injustice to his countryman for the want of taking trouble, he would have repented in sackcloth and ashes and owned up like a man. It was loyalty, misplaced it is true, which drove him to that fine frenzy. To him and to Graves the tune was their bible.²⁴

There is irony here; the Irish note in Stanford derives largely from his acquaintance with the Melodies and with the work of Petrie which, with the help of Plunket Greene and Cecil Forsyth, he edited and published as The Petrie Collection of Irish Music in three volumes between 1902 and 1905. This conversancy is manifest in the Irish rhapsodies where Stanford employs the most obvious device available to a composer intent on conveying a nationalist aspect: direct quotation of a recognizable folksong. These he presents in typical late romantic guise with an orchestration which, while conventional, is always deftly handled. There is nothing to suggest that Stanford regarded these works or their companions as exordial attempts to integrate two traditions; on the contrary, their treatment proposes that he was proud

to introduce to a wider audience ancient airs of beauty which deserved wider currency; and these he presented in the manner with which he was so familiar and competent. He was of the orthodoxy that gloried in melody; he deprecated the fashionable 'exaltation of detail over design',²⁵ it was at the heart of his alienation from coterminous departures. He was unsympathetic to the contemporary rejection of an effulgent musical grammar; the canorous had ever more appeal for him than the schematic. It is no surprise that such a temperament should find such solace in folksong.

There is no diet so life-giving and so life-preserving as the natural out-pouring of the songs of the soil. They have the sanctity of age coupled with the buoyancy of youth. As far as any art-work can be, they are in their nature immortal. Their claim to immortality is founded on their spontaneity of utterance and their inherent sincerity. There is no flummery or sophistication about them. They do not scruple to be coarse, and are not ashamed to be refined, when the sentiment or the environment demands. How well and truly they represent the spirit and tendencies of a nation is obvious even to the least tutored ear.²⁶

In such a passage, as also in Stanford's music, we can observe again the connection between national expression and conservatism. The interest and pride in the indigenous and unadulterated tradition combines positive and negative motivations: it is a patriotic declaration alongside a repudiation of modernity. For composers such as Stanford who had little sympathy with 'modern musical machinery' and who railed against the 'elaboration of details at the expense of invention',²⁷ the exploration of folksong offered one path forward. Folksong was also the musical badge of nationality, the great source of invention. This notion is given voice in A History of Music which Stanford wrote with his colleague Cecil Forsyth.

Now, somewhere about the third quarter of the [nineteenth] century various people in various countries of Europe, such as Denmark, Russia, and England, began to stop their superficial inquiries into the latest mental ingenuities of the German composers, and to ask themselves instead the much more serious question as to what was the fundamental

factor on which the Germans depended for their inspiration. And the answer was on their 'nationality'. This led composers to a further inquiry - the perplexing search for the existence of a musical sanction for their activity. This search was taken up eagerly in many countries and it resulted in the re-discovery of folk-song.²⁸

While this volume explores this issue in some depth with references to the musical emanations of various nationalities, there is no comment on Ireland's position, which suggests that in reality it had made little discernible impact and that Stanford regarded himself as a pioneer in this respect. The history refers to him as

an earnest collector, editor, and arranger of Irish folk-song, he has always shown himself an upholder of his national artistic ideals - purity, clarity, and beauty of expression.²⁹

The six Irish rhapsodies, written between 1901 and 1923, provide good example of Stanford's approach to the Irish mode, and it was Thomas Dunhill's opinion that they would 'outlive all his longer orchestral works'.³⁰ Each is an independent piece structured like a symphonic movement with numbers 3 and 6 including solo parts for cello and violin respectively. The first, op.78 in d minor, dedicated to Hans Richter, was initially performed widely and achieved even greater popularity when later championed by Hamilton Harty.

No.1... became obstinately popular to the exclusion of the others, a fact which so displeased him [Stanford] that he expressed extreme annoyance whenever he heard it was to be played.³¹

Evident here as throughout this series is Stanford's practice of developing each work on a contrast or a blending of traditional airs, and his penchant for uniting each round a single image or programme. Thus is Irish Rhapsody No.1 concerned with the ancient saga of love between Cuchulainn and Emer. It commences with a figure in timpani which is characteristically reminiscent of Brahms. Repeated chords confirm the home tonic before a rendering of the traditional martial tune 'Leatherbags Donnell' (Ex.21). Stanford was evidently fond of the air which is more restrained than its name might suggest. He refers to

and quotes it in his essay 'Thoughts Concerning Folk-Song and Nationality', where he points it as a good example of a 3/4 air which almost has the character of a jig.³²

Ex.21

Allegro



It is succeeded by a plaintive cor anglais which leads to the major mode and the spiritual centre of the piece where is heard the traditional air which Moore set as 'Emer's Farewell'. Stanford was well acquainted with this beautiful and popular melody as he had arranged it as the second song in his joint publication with Graves Songs of Old Ireland where it appears under the title 'Emer's farewell to Cucullain' (sic). Better known as the 'Londonderry Air', Stanford presents it in the rhapsody in rich harmonization, and while he proceeds to investigate the melancholic aspects of the air and betrays a symphonic nature by concentrating on particular figures, this is never allowed to detract from the integrity of the melody. Direct employment of folksong has many advantages, but it has attendant difficulties: having stated the theme, the composer or arranger faces the problem of preserving momentum without resorting to the obvious variation form or compromising the original melody. The ease with which he manages is indicative of Stanford's facility in the handling of larger forms. The work concludes with a blustery and assured finale which is an hallmark of the series. The equally popular fourth, or 'Ulster', rhapsody in a minor, op.141 of 1913, demonstrates a similar approach. Its subtitle, 'The Fisherman of Lough Neagh and what he saw', reveals the programme and gives fair indication of the work's perspective. Again it is built on traditional airs and displays the discursive nature which, consistent with the composer's views, never concentrates on detail at the expense of line. Evident in this work,

as in its companions, is the commanding, if conservative, orchestration with characteristic contrasts of orchestral families. The sedate opening finds its foil in a triumphant brass passage heralding the lively central section prior to the return of the initial theme and the usual optimistic ending. Of the remaining rhapsodies, mention may be made of No.5 in g minor op.147 completed on St Patrick's Day 1917 and dedicated to the officers and men of the Irish Guards, which helps explain the prominent place afforded the air 'Oh for the Swords' announced first in triumphant brass (Ex.22). It is not so frequently performed which is unfortunate given its energy and attractive lyricism.

Ex.22



Preceding the rhapsodies by some 14 years is the largest orchestral work in which Stanford portrays his particular nationalism. This is the Third Symphony, his most popular work in the form not least because of its picturesque designation 'Irish', which is appropriate as Stanford set out to create a work embodying the spirit of his native land. It was completed and first performed in London by Richter in 1887, and was given in Hamburg and Berlin the following year by von Bülow. This initial success, in part a factor of the work's easy accessibility, worked to its long-term disadvantage. This too is founded on contrasts; contrasts which Stanford obviously felt were central to the Irish psyche. The most pronounced is the contraposition of gaiety and brooding melancholy, and his choice of traditional airs plays its part in pointing these antipoles. The final two movements provide example of the centrality of opposition. The third, a tender Andante con moto, opens with a meditative harp solo which leads to the old air 'The Lament of the Sons of Usnach' where Stanford's facility as an orchestrator is clearly evident. This finely-wrought movement finds

its antithesis in the lively finale which is encumbered by too heavy a reliance on the traditional airs 'Molly McAlpine' and 'Let Erin remember the days of old', the latter of which is stirringly introduced in soprano brass and a quartet of horns. This endeavour to provide the symphony with a noble and triumphant conclusion neatly encapsulates Stanford's aspiration to present a confident and proud account of the Irish musical spirit even at the expense of the overall balance of the movement.

Stanford was not the first to pen an 'Irish' symphony. Arthur Sullivan was not a little peeved when Stanford's work appeared to acclaim, as he had composed his Symphony in E some twenty years earlier which he and his friends regarded as the Irish symphony although they had been reticent about proclaiming it so. In a letter to his mother written from Belfast in 1863, Sullivan, then just 21, stated:

Why, the other night as I was jolting home from Holestone (15 miles from here) through wind and rain on an open jolting car the whole first movement of a symphony came into my head with a real Irish flavour about it...³³

The gestation period proved long; the symphony was not completed until 1866 when it was first performed by Augustus Manns at Crystal Palace. It is a light lyrical work of small design which fulfils its humble objective competently. While it does not bear comparison with Stanford's creation, it does signal something of the common motivation underlying both works. Sullivan was undoubtedly conscious of the appeal of picturesque works and in particular of the success of Mendelssohn's Italian and Scotch symphonies; he had after all won the Mendelssohn scholarship in 1856 and spent some three years of study in the Leipzig Konservatorium. Mendelssohn's works were written in the second quarter of the century and are engaged with an exotic rather than a nationalist design. Notwithstanding his Irish parentage, Sullivan embarked upon his task with the same picturesque spirit; he sought not a profound examination of the peculiar Irish condition, but rather the more superficial ambition of achieving 'a real Irish flavour' and he did so from the vantage of the detached, albeit kindly, observer. What results is a youthful and approachable work with its

jocose third movement, rather self-consciously Schubertian Andante espressivo, and an accomplished if naive treatment of the haughty fourths with which the symphony begins (Ex.23).

Ex.23

The musical score for Ex. 23 consists of three staves: Violins (Vlns), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc.). The tempo is marked "Andante" and the dynamics are "pp" (pianissimo). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a prominent fourth interval in the strings. The Vlns staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The Vla staff has an alto clef and a 3/4 time signature. The Vc. staff has a bass clef and a 3/4 time signature. The music is in a key of D major (one sharp). The Vlns and Vla parts have a melodic line with a prominent fourth interval. The Vc. part has a bass line with a prominent fourth interval. The music is in a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked "Andante" and the dynamics are "pp".

It would be unjust to suggest that Stanford presents a similar, if more learned, approach. His work on Petrie and Moore and his acquaintance with the more visible elements of the tradition left him better equipped than his predecessor. There is evident in his symphony a more profound sincerity even if his motivation has more of propagation than of exploration about it. And this is to take the positive view. There was quite a debate during Stanford's lifetime over the efficacy and, more to the point, the musical morality, of his Irish note. Reactions were divided between those who perceived in him the selfless proponent, and those whose observed only an opportunist.

It was his fellow countryman, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), who proved the fiercest critic. His censure was not directed at the man, nor even at the desire to fashion a distinctive expression, but at the manner of Stanford's approach and, in particular, at the reliance on folksong.

The beginning of this 'return to nature' in music has been effected, not by a sudden repudiation of the whole academic system, but by the smuggling into academic music of ancient folk-music under various pretences as to its archaeological importance; its real recommendation, of course, being that the musicians like the tunes, and the critics and programists [sic] find it much easier to write about 'national characteristics' and 'the interval of the augmented second' than to write to the point.... The Irish Symphony, composed by an Irishman, is a record of fearful conflict between the aboriginal Celt and the Professor. The scherzo is not a scherzo at all, but a shindy, expending its force in riotous dancing. However hopelessly an English orchestra may fail to catch the wild nuances of the Irish fiddler, it cannot altogether drown the 'hurroosh' with which Stanford the Celt drags Stanford the Professor into the orgy.³⁴

Shaw's typically firm opinions accentuate a truth which was to take many Irish musicians a long time to accept: a determined concentration on the traditional heritage did not offer a musical panacea. True, the very quality of native music was tempting, but the artefacts of folksong were each in themselves complete, they were decidedly not the ideal basis for extended composition.

Now the greatest folk-songs are final developments themselves: they cannot be carried any further. You cannot develop God Save the Queen, though you may, like Beethoven, write some interesting but retrograde variations on it. Neither can you develop Let Erin remember. You might, of course, develop it inversely, debasing it touch by touch until you had The Marseillaise in all its vulgarity; and the doing of this might be instructive, though it would not be symphony writing. But no forward development is possible.³⁵

A reading of Shaw's critique suggests an ironic but inescapable conclusion, and one corroborated by the record: that the very splendour of indigenous music, and the attention it has commanded, has inhibited the emergence of any substantial school of composition. The consequence of this suffocating burden of tradition has been a succession of miniaturists who have essayed but few exercises on a grander scale.

Stanford was capable of filling a larger canvas, but he was prone to compromise this facility by attempting the incorporation of complete folksongs. This absorption of the very material, rather than the spirit, of the tradition resulted in his falling between two stools. His accommodation failed to find favour with either of the two musical camps. In an age increasingly conscious of diversity and the need to demonstrate it, Stanford's labours were regarded as peripheral and, along with the central fact that the Irish note was for him only an occasional voice, this left him open to the charge of superficiality. It is this failing that underlines the contrast between the attitudes of Stanford and Bax. Both turned to the Irish idiom only on occasions; but for all his genuine pride in a splendid tradition, the native Irishman never penetrated beyond the periphery, while the incomer, with a totally different approach, managed to focus on the intrinsic spirit and yet to invest his work with a universal significance. It was none other than Bax who voiced the opinion that

Stanford was not Irish enough. An Irishman by birth he belonged to that class, abominated in Irish Ireland, the 'West Briton'. There are intimations in some of his work that he started not without a certain spark of authentic musical imagination, but quite early he went a-whoring after foreign gods, and that original flicker was smothered in the outer darkness of Brahms.³⁶

This indictment is often levelled in respect of his larger vocal and orchestral works. Compositions featuring voice constitute an important part of his his output, and the songs are particularly fine. Many of the songs and partsongs are concerned with Irish themes although there are none in the native tongue. That the language was a closed book to him is indicative of his distance from a whole area of

the very tradition he was celebrating. The short cycle 'Cushendall', op.118, of 1910 for solo voice of medium register with piano accompaniment bearing the subtitle 'An Irish Song Cycle', provides example of Stanford's approach. The texts are taken from Pat McCarthy and his Rhymes by John Stevenson; the title of the cycle being that of the third of the seven songs. Stevenson's poems are light in stature and not of a quality to elicit the optimum musical response, but nonetheless Stanford's treatment is accomplished and even here is one conscious of his sensitivity to a poetic text. The fifth poem of the cycle, 'Daddy Long-Legs', obviously appealed to his sense of humour (Ex.24).

Ex.24

Allegro leggiero

Faith, Nature was benevolent the
 day she gave you legs, Six o' them, and such troll-o-pin, dis-
 j'in-ted kind o' pegs

Dated texts are also a feature of the two large choral works with an Irish flavour, Phaudrig Crohoore and Shamus O'Brien, both of which were first performed in 1896. Phaudrig Crohoore op.62, described as an 'Irish Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra', was given at the Norwich Musical Festival. Stanford treats Sheridan Le Fanu's unbalanced and overwrought poem in suitably dramatic fashion. He allows the hero, Phaudrig, a simple Leitmotiv which he invests with grammatical indelicacies, doubtless to indicate the rudeness of the character. This Leitmotiv is set in the minor mode which is noticeably predominant in those works in which Stanford employs his Irish note (Ex.25). The chorus carries the action in the ballad, acting as omniscient narrator with a consistently syllabic style. The orchestra functions primarily

Ex.25



Oh! Phau- drig Cro- hoore was the broth of a

Oh! Phau- drig Cro- hoore was the broth of a

Oh! Phau- drig Cro- hoore was the broth of a

Oh! Phau- drig Cro- hoore was the broth of a



boy, An' he stood six foot eight; An' his arm was as

boy, An' he stood six foot eight; An' his arm was as

boy, An' he stood six foot eight; An' his arm was as

boy, An' he stood six foot eight; An' his arm was as



round as an- o- ther man's thigh 'Tis Phau- drig was great!

round as an- o- ther man's thigh 'Tis Phau- drig was great!

round as an- o- ther man's thigh 'Tis Phau- drig was great!

round as an- o- ther man's thigh 'Tis Phau- drig was great!

as an accompaniment although the lively jig it presents for the wedding festivities of Kathleen and Michael O'Hanlon, Phaudrig's inamorata and rival respectively, provides the true gaiety and sapidity of the native dance and shows Stanford clearly imitating a native style (Ex.26). However, the abiding question must be how Stanford could become involved with such unpromising material.

Ex.26



The same may be asked of the opera Shamus O'Brien which had been completed in January 1895. There are echoes of Handel's experience in Stanford's dedication to opera, a dedication which in both cases met with little fortune. Stanford expended considerable energy on writing for stage but it was only Shamus O'Brien which won for him a measure of success when it was first presented at the Opera Comique in London. This light romantic comedy is hampered by its enthrallment to the stereotype, which finds its closest correspondence in Samuel Lover's Handy Andy, the humorous but essentially confused Irishman as perceived through English eyes.³⁷ For this reason the appreciation of Porte, the author of an early biography, was unlikely to find wide favour in Ireland.

Shamus O'Brien is an opera that abounds with the broad and individual humour of the Irish

temperament. It is a national work to the core, abounding with sparkling music, full of the native wit and joviality of the typical Irishman.³⁸

Again the foundation was a poem by Sheridan Le Fanu, which in this case was adapted by George Jessop. Lines such as the following from the opening chorus of Act I were hardly likely to educe a profound musical setting:

If Romulus and Ramus
Had lived along with Shamus
They'd be like two puppy jackals with a lion:
Spake up now, can you blame us,
If the boys of Ballyhamis
Shout 'Faugh a ballagh' Shamus the O'Brien!

Shamus O'Brien is of the Singspiel tradition of vernacular opera with linking sections of spoken dialogue. But even within the limited confines of this genre - Mozart's sublime contributions are very much the exception - it is a work of little merit. While its quaint and humorous story and accessible music earned immediate acclaim, this has not proved enduring, nor does the opera contribute to the reputation of Stanford as a creative artist.

As stated earlier, opera was a principal vehicle for the portrayal of nationalism through music. Shamus O'Brien is the pioneering work in this respect and its nationalist credentials seem assured by its subject, the tale of a fugitive rebel in the wake of the rebellion of 1798. However, this merely forms the backdrop for the central concern of the opera which deals with the universal theme of love and particularly with the oft-encountered dilemma between love and duty. These themes alongside the strong element of caricature and the exotic approach to the Irish setting meant that those nationalists who looked to the cultural effusion to provide propaganda for a political programme found little of inspiration in this work, whereas Yeats's play Cathleen ní Houlihan (1902), for instance, exercised considerable influence. In later years Shamus O'Brien proved something of an embarrassment to a community desirous to assert a separate aesthetic personality. The image of the jolly but feckless native propounded in the choral opening to the finale of Act I was not calculated to endear the work to the forthcoming generations of Irishmen (Ex.27). Thus

Allegro giusto

Lords may sip their port, But to fight or court,
Lords may sip their port, But to fight or court,
Lords may sip their port, Tay may do for wim- men, But to fight or court,
Lord's may sip their port, Tay may do for wim- men, But to fight or court,

f *f* *f* *f*

8

Poth- een, Poth - een's what we swim in!
Poth- een, Poth - een's what we swim in!
Poth- een, Poth - een's what we swim in!
Poth- een, Poth - een's what we swim in!

cresc. *ff* *ff* *ff*

sf *ff*

Stanford fails on two fronts: his picturesque nationalism proved to have but ephemeral appeal for English audiences, while it alienated his own countrymen who were, in the majority, becoming increasingly self-conscious and even chauvinistic, and were correspondingly sensitive to any perceived slight on the quality or sobriety of the life of the nation. Even the inclusion of 'Father O'Flynn', one of the two folksongs employed in the opera, and allotted to the character of the same name, failed to redress the balance. Stanford was well acquainted with this air having set it in Songs of Old Ireland, his first collaboration with Graves.

Stanford is presented here as an innovator, as the first to emerge with a distinctive nationalist voice. Yet there is so much that is paradoxical about the man and his achievement. He was an improbable pioneer in that he was innately conservative, concerned to proclaim the glories of the past rather than herald the possibilities of the future. He was distinctly uncomfortable with modern departures and indeed with the twentieth century. It needs be conceded that he wrote at a time when the characteristics of Irish music were not yet fully appreciated either at home or abroad. Thus to portray a distinctive note his works had to be unmistakably Irish. In the vocal works this was achieved through texts which were often so facile as to leave him open to the charge of superficiality. His instrumental works provide a keener response, although the attempt to make such pieces unmistakably Irish inevitably leads him to direct quotation of folksong. Here we encounter another paradox concerning these compositions - and each contains sufficient original material to warrant the designation - which were built on the labours of the antiquarians who had first pointed to a proud cultural heritage, and one that again demonstrates how Stanford is rooted in the nineteenth century. It is ironic that the criticisms of the antiquarians' methods, although not of their intentions, and particularly of the fruits of their labours as presented for instance in the Melodies of Moore, originated in no small measure from Stanford himself. Yet it is upon this very work that Stanford builds his distinctive compositions. If the foundations are perceived as unstable so too the edifice constructed upon them must also be precarious. This helps explain why Stanford occupies a peculiar place in Irish memory: admired but not honoured; recognized as

somewhat detached, engaged with the old order, espousing a dilettante approach to a tradition only partly understood, and as one who treated this in a picturesque fashion. His musicianship and technical facility are not in question; but his achievement has not won for him the unalloyed acclaim of his countrymen. That much of the criticism is justified is partly a factor of Stanford's position as a pathfinder; he was a victim of his own pioneering work. But he can not be dismissed as irrelevant; he was to exercise a greater influence on the subsequent development of a distinct musical voice than he is often given credit for.

Earlier mention of 'Let Erin remember' suggests another aspect of the conservative aspect of the national note as presented not only by Stanford but also by those who succeeded him. The opening lines of Moore's verse set to the traditional air 'The little red Fox' state:

Let Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her;

and it concludes:

Thus shall the memory often, in dreams
sublime,
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over.
Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time
For the long-faded glories they cover.³⁹

Yet another of his verses exhorts its listeners to

Remember the glories of Brien the Brave
Though the days of the hero are o'er.⁴⁰

The theme of remembrance is a particularly powerful one in Ireland's history and was especially so to the Anglo-Irish intelligentsia of the nineteenth century. The memories they encouraged were selective; as in the poetry of Moore, they harked back to a distant age when Ireland, it was claimed, was a focus of European learning, an island of saints and scholars. It was, more important, an arcane age predating the early plantations and the Reformation, which could be looked to by all as the basis of a common heritage free from the rancour that a later focal point would inevitably bring. It was contention of this class that the elemental and distinctive Irish character had been occluded by the

expanding influences of Christianity and science. This was, of course, to place members of this intelligentsia at variance with established religions, which, in a revival advocating a populist culture based on folk practices, was at least unfortunate, particularly in a society with a strong traditional attachment to a dominant church. That many who advocated the celebration of an era so remote that all Irishmen could share in its glories were themselves descendants of Tudor and Stuart plantations was a fact conveniently overlooked. It was imperative that this intelligentsia construct such a unified heritage, for only on such a basis could a unity of culture be fashioned. The ascendancy was acutely aware of the shifting tide; the catalogue of government reforms, which included the extension of the franchise, land reform, and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, all pointed to the waning influence of the Anglo-Irish. This gradual amelioration of the lot of the majority which attracted the term 'killing home rule by kindness' - a term incidentally often erroneously attributed to John Dillon, who in fact took it from Gerald Balfour, brother to Arthur James, sometime prime minister, and himself a chief secretary for Ireland and responsible for the Local Government Act of 1898, who coined the term during a speech which he delivered on the Irish question to his constituents in Leeds Central - was indicative of the shift in polity which threatened the survival not only of the ascendancy but of the broader culture which they sponsored. The Anglo-Irish retained considerable influence in the economic sector: the commitment to the creation of wealth on the part of figures such as the distiller, Andrew Jameson, the brewer, H.S. Guinness, and the advocate of industrial expansion, Sir Nugent Everard, was to be a critical constituent of the claim to be able to support a sovereign state. But even in this field, a once dominant position was being increasingly assailed by the rising Catholic middle class. The outstanding example of practical leadership aimed at the integration of the communities was that provided by Sir Horace Plunkett (1845-1932) through his cooperative campaign which he launched in 1889. It was a singular and visionary scheme for which George Russell [AE] was later to work diligently, but it was greeted with scepticism by those it was designed to assist, which indicates the extent of the suspicion and misunderstanding which persisted between the nations. According to an observer, in evidence was

the slight degree of ridicule which... Sir Horace Plunkett's movement always encountered, in spite of the recognised disinterestedness and beneficence of his labours. The problem, in fact, which Sir Horace and AE proposed to themselves... [was] to create in Ireland an economic initiative and to unite this with the spirit of nationalism.⁴¹

If the minority community were to maintain a voice in the future Ireland and to have their ethos respected and reflected it would be necessary to integrate culturally and, more important, to ensure that this culture was constructed on a basis which allowed them equal access. Thus the focus of much of the nineteenth century, and particularly of the three decades following 1890 when the direction of events was becoming undeniably clear, was on the fusion of the native and the Anglo-Irish cultures. Stanford's Shamus O'Brien might at first appear as the exception to this trend, set as it is in the period following 1798. Yet for nationalists this has always been a significant period as popular memory has ascribed to it the honour of being the last occasion on which the divers nations on the island combined in an agreed political course. That this is a simplistic reading does not take from the fact that Stanford's use of the age is wholly consistent with the general desire to concentrate on emphasising the unity of Irish experience. In purely musical terms, he faced the same problem as did those who followed him, that of discovering a suitable musical basis for the construction of a distinctive expression. The achievements of the eighteenth century were too closely identified with the dominant culture to be employed as such. There was little option but to extend the work of the antiquarians and utilize the popular traditional culture, and to attempt a coalition between it and the grammar and structures of the broader aesthetic. Not only was there, through the range of artistic endeavour, a conscious fusing of cultures but also, it must be admitted, a forging of culture. Alongside diligent and sincere research went a measure of speculation; the glories of seventh-century and eight-century Ireland on which the new state was to be modelled were so distant that inevitably myth and reality became confused. Thus the 1890s were interesting not just because the veil was finally drawn back revealing

a resplendent inheritance, but even more so because it was the period when much of that heritage was engineered.

This of course suggests a measure of calculation. This underlying design, evident from the 1890s, is the principal factor differentiating the third cultural effusion from its predecessors. Alongside this expedient fusion of the principal cultures on the island went a collateral fusion of culture and politics. The writings of Thomas Davis had anticipated this union, but never before had the work of so many across the whole spectrum of artistic enterprise been so directed to vindicating a distinct Irish identity with an ultimate purpose of achieving a measure of legislative independence. This third cultural flowering was the culmination, the drawing together, of so much of the commitment evident through the nineteenth century. It was ultimately successful precisely because it established the link between culture and politics and because it managed to conjoin the separate traditions, although this latter fusion proved superficial and even to this day Ireland has difficulty accommodating the two with ease. It is the pragmatic nature of this programme which helps explain why music played a secondary role in the period from 1890. A work of art with a propagandist design needs to be accessible and to make a direct statement. Literature, theatre, and the plastic arts thrived in this milieu; more abstract expressions prospered less well. Music's failure to make a salient contribution within such a fertile cultural climate has attracted criticism. How could a nation with a reputation for musicality prove so reticent at a time of such opportunity? The question is valid; too often credence is given to claims for the innate musicality of the race without consideration of what has been in the era of modern history a meagre record of achievement. On the other hand, it is invalid to employ this record to argue that the Irish nation is unmusical, that this is das Land ohne Musik. In the last chapter practical reasons were proffered for the low level of musical activity in Ireland. Alongside these may be added the fact that music's poor response to the opportunities of the 1890s was in part a function of its own nature. An abstract, non-referential art was not best calculated to make a telling contribution to an awakening national sentiment. Music is a powerful expression, but it is not definite enough for such a purpose; indeed, music of stature does not lend

itself easily to programmatic limitation. For this reason music is better calculated to be a secondary expression of nationalism, as a Wagner might follow in the wake of a Fichte, or Verdi in the wake of Mazzini. Music, being a conservative amongst the arts, can better comment upon, and embolden a preexisting and widely-recognized sentiment, than create it. This has been the experience within the many European nationalisms. John Clapham makes just this point at the outset of his essay on 'The National Origins of Dvořák's Art':

Well before the time that Dvořák was beginning to make a name for himself as a composer, a vigorous struggle had taken place in Bohemia to secure for indigenous literature, art and music a secure position in the cultural life of the country, a struggle that had been brought to a successful conclusion.⁴²

If there is a measure of consistency throughout Europe, then one might logically anticipate that the emergence of a distinct and original Irish musical voice would occur some decades after 1890. It will be a purpose of the following chapter to establish whether in fact this was the case.

Chance or design?

This is not to suggest that the first years of the revival were without musical representation. The emergence of Stanford's Irish note was sufficiently early to be regarded as one of the first fruits of the third cultural expression of the nineteenth century. This emanation had commenced in 1891 and was ultimately to lead to the Rising of 1916 and the achievement of the Free State in 1922. There is today widespread agreement among historians of various disciplines that the 1890s represent a watershed in Irish affairs and that the line of separation is marked clearly by the fall from grace and subsequent death of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891. He was possessed of a magnetic personality which has earned him a romantic stature far in excess of that warranted by his achievements; his true glory was in the attempt rather than in the attainment. That coalition of disparate interests which he so carefully formulated and preserved in the quest for a measure of independent rule crumbled in his absence and with it

passed the aspiration for an equable resolution to Ireland's political demands. The argument frequently proposed is that the abatement of political energy was compensated for by a remarkable increase in artistic enterprise most notably in the field of letters. This thesis is given powerful support by the dominating figure of the literary revival, W.B. Yeats, who told the Swedish Academy in 1925 when accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature that

The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish war, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891. A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived and the race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event's long gestation.⁴³

Yeats later developed this point in the introduction to the drama The Words upon the Window-Pane (1930).

The fall of Parnell had freed imagination from practical politics, from agrarian grievance and political enmity, and turned it to imaginative nationalism, to Gaelic, to ancient stories, and at last to lyrical poetry and to drama.⁴⁴

In the grasp of lesser intellects this notion became oversimplified: a later commentator, Herbert Howarth, claims that all writers of the Irish movement owe their inspiration to the fall of Parnell.⁴⁵ That such naivety is sadly reflected in other historical readings is in part related to the predominant figure of Parnell himself. He was a practical man who energetically pursued his defined political aims; he was possessed of no vision of a future Irish society which passed beyond practical details, and the Irish national consciousness was grounded in utilitarian concerns during his tenure. He professed himself ignorant of Irish history, and the critique of Edward Norman, referred to earlier, is endorsed by F.S.L. Lyons:

Music, the theatre and the arts generally remained closed doors to him all his life and he had no notion of the historical origins of the western civilization within which he grew up.⁴⁶

Such accounts naturally centre on the political excitement of this period; with high promise of political advance, there was little need for cultural justification. The contrast between Parnell's reign and its aftermath again points the cyclic manner in which the nineteenth century unfolded in Ireland. If the new age was politically less promising it was nonetheless formative; there was the realization among perspicacious commentators of 'the sudden certainty that Ireland was to be like soft wax for years to come'.⁴⁷ But occasionally the contrast is employed to support a shallow reading which posits that the cultural flowering of the late nineteenth century arose in response to the political vacuum left by the passing of Parnell. There is no doubt that the political focus was dissipated with his departure and that many of the Irish intelligentsia, despairing of a diplomatic solution, turned their attention from London to Dublin and directed it towards demonstrating the distinctive character of the Irish nation. What could not be won by reasoned argument could be claimed in the manner of so many European peoples by a proclamation of individuality. While there was a clear measure of calculation about the process, this does not suggest a preordained scheme; many different individuals and societies contributed, each ploughing its chosen furrow. But all were united in the fundamental desire to proclaim a unique nation. Thus while the revival was not centrally planned, neither was it totally arbitrary. The most salient factor which distinguishes this third cultural emergence from its heuristic predecessors is the calculating nature of the different programmes which emerged. This machination is evident even in the work of Yeats, who had himself condemned the propagandist nature of Davis' writings. The very title of Conor Cruise O'Brien's impressive article 'Passion and Cunning' suggests the duality at the heart of Yeats's work.

Throughout his life as a writer Yeats had abiding, and intensifying, political interests and passions. It is misleading to make him essentially non-political, on the strength of certain disclaimers, refusals and ironies.... The prudent Yeats, the sound calculator of chances, is as it seems the manager of the poet. A poet, if he is to survive long enough to be recognized as a great poet, has need of such a manager.... It helps to perpetuate Yeats's myth of himself as a 'foolish passionate man',

whereas the weight of the evidence suggests he was something much more interesting: a cunning passionate man.⁴⁸

Those who take a contrary view and argue that Yeats was essentially apolitical, frequently point to his estimation of Davis. Yeats acknowledged Davis' sincerity and influence but he had a poor opinion of his poetry, work which was, in his view, too indentured to its cause. He stressed this attitude by contrasting Davis with a more literary contemporary, William Allingham (1824-89).

Allingham and Davis have two different kinds of love of Ireland. In Allingham I find the entire emotion for the place one grew up in which I felt as a child. Davis on the other hand was concerned with ideas of Ireland, with conscious patriotism. His Ireland was artificial, an idea built up in a couple of generations by a few commonplace men. This artificial idea has done me as much harm as the other has helped me. I tried to free myself from it, and all my enemies come from fighting it in others.⁴⁹

In a determinedly nationalistic age such an assessment was guaranteed to attract many enemies. But Yeats did receive the support of William Kirkpatrick Magee, an astute commentator who, in a famous passage written under the allonym John Eglinton, hoped

to live to see the day of what might be termed, without any disrespect to Davis, the de-Davisisation of Irish national literature, that is to say, the getting rid of the notion that in Ireland, a writer is to think, first and foremost, of interpreting the nationality of his country, and not simply of the burden which he has to deliver.⁵⁰

What Yeats and Eglinton castigated was not an artistic expression cognizant of a polity, but bad art monopolized by speculative sentiment or, more important, art which consciously confined itself to a particular and restrained view. It was an age when artists were compelled to declare an allegiance. Musicians faced precisely the same dilemma; the fabrication of a distinctive expression meant a conscious decision between complete artistic freedom and the pursuit of a more limited design. Stanford, as we have seen, found his answer in

divorcing his compositions with a nationalist flavour from the remainder of his output.

A somewhat different approach, but one none the less contriving, is presented by Yeats's contemporary and colleague, Douglas Hyde. Although they shared much in common, notably membership of the Church of Ireland with a family clerical tradition, and a strong consciousness of a western rural background, yet their commitment to the revival reveals a subtle disparity in motivation. Hyde is frequently presented as a purely cultural being, a man devoid of political intention, passion without cunning; his resignation as president of the Gaelic League in 1915 when that movement sought to espouse a more forceful programme is frequently cited as evidence of his disavowal of politics. But what this incident demonstrates is his renunciation of a particular kind of politics. It is interesting to record the comment of a shrewd contemporary observer who said of Hyde that 'he had the genius for propaganda'.⁵¹ The kernel of Hyde's beliefs is disclosed in his copious writings. Many of the early articles consider the autochthonous songs of Ireland. In the essay 'Gaelic Folk Songs' published in 1890, he argues for the need to collect and preserve these 'countless little gems of music'.⁵²

But people, even the few-and-far-between people who are acquainted with Irish literature, may think that if that were so, the Irish being a born nation of scribes would have committed them to paper, and that now they would be extant in some one or other of those innumerable hosts of MSS. which circulated amongst the people in the last century and the beginning of this, and of which so large a number have been saved from the destruction to which that unsavoury thing called the advance of civilisation, but in reality the carelessness and discouragement of ourselves have been consigning them for the last sixty years.⁵³

Revealed here is the point to which Hyde was frequently to return, and the one which was for him the central actuating factor: the crusade to preserve a moribund heritage from insidious modernization. His aims were as noble as they were atavistic, but his agenda was undermined by a fundamental flaw. Like Yeats, he was cognizant of the scissions in

Irish society, but he observed the central division not in terms of culture or of polity but of class.

It is an irreparable loss that there has never arisen a poet in Ireland who might do for us what Burns has done for Scotland or Schiller for Germany, or Beranger for Paris - who might, in other words, form an intellectual bond of union between the upper and lower classes, and whose strains might be equally familiar to cabin and to drawing-room.⁵⁴

Hyde's most telling pronouncement in which he seeks to 'combine in a union of sympathy both the upper and lower classes'⁵⁵ is his oft-quoted de-Anglicization speech which he delivered to the National Literary Society in Molesworth street, Dublin on 25 November 1892. He opened by presenting his purpose:

When we speak of 'the necessity for de-Anglicising the Irish nation', we mean it, not as a protest against imitating what is best in the English people, for that would be absurd, but rather to show the folly of neglecting what is Irish, and hastening to adopt, pell-mell, and indiscriminately, everything that is English, simply because it is English.... I wish to show you that in Anglicising ourselves wholesale we have thrown away with a light heart the best claim which we have upon the world's recognition of us as a separate nationality. What did Mazzini say? What is Goldwin Smith never tired of declaiming? What do the Spectator and Saturday Review harp on? That we ought to be content as an integral part of the United Kingdom because we have lost the notes of our nationality, our language and customs.⁵⁶

This evinces Hyde in his political mode, which is precisely why this speech had such appeal; cultural achievements had political goals. His attack on Anglicization was not an attack on England or even Englishness, it was rather a denial of the innovative, a point appreciated by Declan Kiberd:

It has been said of Hyde that if he had any politics, he was probably a Unionist with a small 'u'. He never said anything in favour of Home Rule and he ended his career as he

began it, a golf-playing grouse-shooting Anglo-Irishman. His real enemies were not Unionists or Nationalists, but something far more powerful - modern ideas, the city and the socialist ideal. He could never quite come to terms with the fact that circulation of Larkin's paper, The Irish Worker, was always far higher than that of An Claidheamh Soluis. It is the socialist analysis of Hyde's work which most sharply exposes his own shortcomings and those of the movement he led.⁵⁷

An important aspect of the 1890s was the sense of continuity which was exhibited from the previous cultural eclosion; there was throughout the later age a sense of building on the work of the antiquarians and their colleagues. Stanford presents one example, enlarging on the achievements of Bunting and Petrie, and on the publications of Moore, while Hyde is often seen as a successor to Thomas Davis. On a superficial level this latter pairing provides a fair comparison; both were sincere in their commitments and both were propagandists. But Davis was more practical, more open to innovation. Hyde concentrated on the symbols of nationhood, thereby manifesting his indebtedness to the German romantic tradition. He expended considerable energy arguing for the rehabilitation of original Irish surnames and place names. The teacher and composer, Robert Dwyer, who was born in Bristol in 1860, the same year as Hyde, and moved to Ireland in 1897 where he produced the first opera on an Irish libretto, Eithne in 1909, changed his surname to O'Dwyer as a result of this debate. This is a minor and practical example of the reciprocity which existed between those labouring in different disciplines. Such was the aesthetic ferment of the age that all arts and their disciples were enveloped in the momentum. To live as an artist in Ireland was to be part of this movement; it was to be possessed of a spirit and a direction which transcended the work of any one individual; it is precisely why O'Grady was so anxious for Yeats to return to his country. To be absent from Ireland at this period was to miss the immediacy of this atmosphere; that this was the case with Shaw is apparent from his comment that 'power and culture were in separate compartments'.⁵⁸ On this count Stanford too was at a disadvantage; being in London he was constantly at one remove from the eye of this cultural storm, and it can be argued that the distance is manifest in his music; it is precisely this lack

of engagement with the critical centre of Irish consciousness that leads some to question his nationalist credentials. And this cross-disciplinary influence worked in many directions. Hyde's interest in the old order and its folklore led him to express concern for the indigenous music.

Our music, too, has become Anglicised to an alarming extent. Not only has the national instrument, the harp - which efforts are now being made to revive in the Highlands - become extinct, but even the Irish pipes are threatened with the same fate. In place of the pipers and fiddlers who, even twenty years ago, were comparatively common, we are now in many places menaced by the German band and the barrel organ. Something should be done to keep the native pipes and the native airs amongst us still. If Ireland loses her music she loses what is, after her Gaelic language and literature, her most valuable and characteristic possession.⁵⁹

Hyde's well-intentioned and positive view was inverted by some of later generations into a negative aesthetic. To be clearer about what you are not rather than what you are is not a peculiarly Irish trait; it is evident in all separatist movements. But it was particularly pronounced in Ireland due to the dominance of the imported culture. Irish culture came to be defined by what it was not; it was was not progressive, nor European, and decidedly it was not British. This mode of thought led to the insularity and cultural protectionism which inhibited aesthetic endeavour throughout the first half of the twentieth century. That is why Hyde's stance is stressed here; the later misrepresentation of his views is in no small measure a cause of the difficult milieu within which aspiring composers had to work. It proved an aposematic environment unsympathetic to any expression which was not in harmony with the now dominant Gaelic ethos. Furthermore, this dominant view was often insincere inasmuch as it was impelled more by reasons of polity than culture. Evidence for this is provided by the whole record in respect of the most cogent emblem of national identity, the language. Eglinton, for one, railed against an hypocrisy which rejected the affirmed glories of the literary revival in order to support a moribund tongue.

All the great literatures, in their supreme moments, have seemed in retrospect to have risen like emanations from the life of a whole people, which has shared in a general exaltation: and this was not the case with Ireland. How could a literary movement be in any sense national when the whole interest of the nation lay in extirpating the conditions which produced it?⁶⁰

Hyde's affinity with the German romantic tradition is clear from his dedicated advocacy of the Gaelic tongue. Again this corroborates the continuity between the second and third periods of cultural expression, and Hyde was to develop the work of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language and of the broad philological school described in Chapter III.

The centrality of education

The first salient contribution to the language debate during this period was made by Father Eugene Grouney (1863-99) who published 'The National Language' in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, a monthly journal under episcopal sanction, in November 1890. The article proceeds from the recent death of Cardinal John Henry Newman and charts his contribution to the cause of Irish studies. Explicitly noted is his foresight in creating a chair of Celtic Literature and the appointment to this position of the influential Eugene O'Curry (1796-1862) at the outset of Newman's tenure as rector of the Catholic University in 1854. Grouney regards this as a singular act and recognizes that it is the Anglo-Irish community which has taken the lead in cultural matters including the preservation of the language. He laments the contribution of Catholics to the study of Irish and notes that only 45 schools encourage its teaching and that 'only about three or four hundred people in Ireland have a respectable knowledge of the written language'.⁶¹

We are forced, then, to ask ourselves, does education mean Anglicisation?... is it not right to encourage a regard for national characteristics?... Granted that there are, as I believe there are, more to-day than there have been for the last two centuries who can write and read Irish, there are surely far more who can write and read

French, German and Italian - languages almost useless after four years to the vast majority; while a magnificent language, which it ought to be our pride, as it is our duty, to foster and cultivate, is despised and allowed to die.⁶²

There was considerable cross influence at work between Growney and Hyde. The latter learned much from his older colleague, who in October 1891, the very month of Parnell's demise, was appointed to the reconstructed chair of Irish at Maynooth where he was to have a telling input to the language revival. The influence proved mutual: Growney was to attach the fashionable patronymic prefix 'O' to his surname and was eventually to adopt the Irish version, Ó Gramhna. He unconsciously returned the favour by lauding in 'The National Language' the Welsh practice of printing school-books with Welsh and English texts on adjoining pages. Hyde appreciated the value of this and published some of his own Irish books in this fashion. This was but one simple example of Growney's legacy; for his most salient contribution to the age was his identification of the didactic nature of the Celtic Revival in all its aspects. The purpose of the revival was not just in Lyons' phrase

to secure for the language, the monuments and the literature of an ancient country their proper place in the history of western culture.⁶³

but to educate the mass of Irish people to an appreciation of this heritage. Education, in its broadest application, was to prove the real seed-bed of revolution. This instructive and proselytizing aim was shared even by those who held opposing views on more immediate matters; it was shared for instance by Yeats and Hyde even though their opinions were at variance on the significance of the Irish language in the future Ireland which they proposed. It unified all the divers movements which constituted the revival. It underpinned the work of the literary societies, of the Irish Literary Theatre and its successors, and even of the Gaelic Athletic Association which sought to inculcate in generations of young Irishmen an awareness of their unique sporting traditions and a pride in their local area, although the extreme anti-English attitude of the association, reflected in the infamous ban which proscribed its members' involvement with foreign

games, smacked of 'cultural apartheid' to borrow Tom Garvin's phrase.⁶⁴ For music this educative purpose equated not with technical instruction, but with an acquaintance with the indigenous folksong literature, a view with which Stanford concurred.

Where the love for a nation's songs is nurtured, there are the great possibilities for a nation's artistic welfare. 'Honour thy father and thy mother' is a commandment which applies to the children of Music as well as to the home. The days of a nation in the world of music which obeys it will always be long on the earth.⁶⁵

This was but one example of the increasing awareness of the need to nurture the nation's store of folksong. The Irish Ecclesiastical Record published a long article in 1900 on the deplorable 'want of appreciation of the educational and social value of music, strange as it may appear in the "land of song"',⁶⁶ but it took encouragement from the recent initiatives promoted by Peter Goodman.

This new legislation of the National Education Board affords a suitable opportunity for pointing out the existing low state of music in our schools, and putting forward its strong claims to a place of the first importance among subjects of educational value, with a view to interesting managers and teachers, and, as far as possible, the public generally, in this new scheme of musical education.... Let us show the world that 'the soul of music' has not fled from 'the land of song'. Let us prove to ourselves and to the world, in this and in everything else, that Ireland, once the 'Island of Saints and Scholars' and 'the land of song', can and will be the same again if she gets but encouragement and reasonable chances.⁶⁷

Others concurred, but felt that such joyous optimism would be better warranted if the design were founded on a surer practical base. Brendan Rogers, organist of St Mary's pro-Cathedral, Dublin, from 1890 to 1902, was amongst the first to propose the creation of a national conservatoire. This he did in a paper read before the National Literary Society in 1900. He trusted that such a foundation would

foster true Irish school in the sense of 'a class or style of musical art'.⁶⁸

I wish to help in creating in our own country demand and support for a school of musical composition which shall fully echo and satisfy the national sentiment, shall thus deserve and excite interest in itself, and so lead on our public from the appreciation of what might be too exclusively local and peculiar to the enjoyment of what is essential and great in the music of all nations and all times.⁶⁹

Dr Annie Patterson was one of the many prominent figures who subsequently stressed the importance of musical instruction and reiterated the call for a national conservatoire.⁷⁰ While not a major creative figure, Patterson was a leading advocate of a distinctive national musical idiom. She was born in Lurgan in 1868, but was educated in Dublin, in Alexandra College and at the Royal Irish Academy of Music where she studied organ with Sir Robert P. Stewart. In 1887 she took primary degrees in arts and music from the Royal University of Ireland and sued for her doctorate there two years later. She moved to Cork in 1909 where remained until her death in 1934. During her period there she taught in the Municipal School of Music and at the university and was permanent organist at St Anne's in Shandon. Her compositions, from the early cantata Finola (1888), and including two unpublished operas, Ardriugh's Daughter and Oisin, do not suggest a unique imagination. More representative of her style and its guiding sentiment are a march for four-part choir Ireland for Ever and the Rallying Song of the Gaelic League scored with orchestral accompaniment, an anthem dedicated to the association she supported with consistent fervency.

Edward Martyn and the Gaelic League

The educative design was also central to the most formative society of the period, the Gaelic League, which was founded in July 1893 by Hyde, Grouney, and a bright young civil servant from county Antrim, Eoin MacNeill (1867-1945), with the twin objectives of preserving and extending the use of spoken Irish, and the promotion of research into the literature and the cultivation of new works in the

language. The Gaelic League exercised immense influence even beyond the confines of its own immediate interests and it is noteworthy that its greatest achievements were all connected with education: it successfully mounted campaigns for the introduction of Irish into the primary school syllabus, for the retention of the language at secondary level, and it was victorious in its efforts to have the language included as a compulsory subject for matriculation to the National University founded in 1908 as successor to Newman's Catholic University. The didactic nature of the League was well understood by Paul-Dubois:

The Gaelic League... may be said to be a faithful representative of the general ideas underlying the new Irish movement. It has declared its objectives to be, the preservation of Irish as the national language, the study of ancient Irish literature, and the cultivation of a modern literature in the Irish language. But we must be careful not to judge it by its name. The Gaelic League is not a society of scholars, and leaves to others all that concerns literature and philology, pure and simple. It is occupied with propaganda, the application of its doctrine of a national renaissance on the basis of the national language. It intends to confer anew upon the country a psychological education, and, by means of the national language, by the revival of national art and literature, and the reconstitution of the national social system, to regenerate its soul from within and teach Ireland how she may again be a nation.⁷¹

Paul-Dubois is a percipient and sympathetic observer and his failure to mention music provides further evidence of its peripheral role. This begs the question as to why in an age so concerned to educate people to the quality of their heritage did music fare so poorly? Much of the answer has already been suggested. Indigenous music, with which we are here concerned, was an oral tradition which was as yet incompletely understood. Nor was there anywhere one could turn to study this heritage; there were after all centres of Celtic studies in Berlin, Washington, and in the Irish colleges, but there was no comparable focus for the study of the native music. This was largely because much of the music remained to be collected and codified, and a true

knowledge of its styles and characteristics could not be had until the completion of this task. As in all European countries, this tradition was increasingly endangered by technical innovations which brought about enormous social change and posited a more cosmopolitan and urban-based society. Moreover, in Ireland's case the erosion of the language further threatened the survival of folksong as a living culture. The division of tradition was also largely responsible, in that there were few with the necessary technical expertise and a sufficient acquaintance with the native musical store and the language to engage in the work of preservation; to qualify on one count almost automatically indicated that one was debarred on the other; there were few in the musical field possessed of Hyde's access to the western aesthetic and excellent education combined with such familiarity and empathy with native culture. It was his contention that the Irish people could 'only be emotionalised through their own ancestral culture'.⁷² With his blessing the Gaelic League set about this mission with a concentration on the language. But the League's growing ascendancy was soon to be extended to other areas including that of music. The case for such involvement was set out in an article in The Irish Review by a leading supporter of the League and a man justly remembered for his munificent patronage, Edward Martyn.

The Gaelic League is not a musical society. It was instituted to restore the Irish language as the speaking language of Ireland, and to foster the study of the poetry and sagas in old and modern Irish. As subsidiary work, it strives to keep alive whatever other Irish characteristics are good and likely to distinguish in an interesting manner our country from the rest of the world. Among such characteristics subsidiary to the language, by far the most important is the store of ancient and beautiful folk music. Therefore the Gaelic League has rightly decided to encourage and preserve it as well as possible in its native purity and accurate tradition of rendering.⁷³

Martyn continues by announcing that a new musical society, Cumann Ceoil, has been established under the aegis of the League. As the membership of the League grew so too did the range of its interests which was to extend well beyond its primordial commitment to the

language. Yeats regarded the organization's influence with mixed feelings.

As is natural in a country where the Gaelic League has created a preoccupation with the countryman, the greatest number of our plays are founded on the comedy and tragedy of country life, and are written more or less in dialect.⁷⁴

A similar rural bias, and even a suspicion of urban culture, pervaded the League's attitude to music, to the extent where its involvement consolidated the musical fissure. But this initial venture was made in good faith and was a notable departure especially as it was to be a structured commitment which was to benefit from the guidance of two eminent practitioners, and thereby provide a response to the persistent complaint that the enterprise of preservation lacked proper technical leadership.

...now that two such distinguished professionals as Mr Carl Hardebeck and Mr Vincent O'Brien have taken a serious interest in our folk music, the others need not fear to tarnish the blameless respectability of their calling by having anything to do with what a certain wiseacre called 'that traditional vulgarity'. But we must not be too sanguine: for of all the professionals in the world, the most inane and tasteless probably are our average Irish musicians. Many of them think it beneath their dignity to train choir boys, an art which is practised by the most celebrated musicians in other countries. Nearly all are without feeling for great works. In this respect, to be sure, they are the fitting representatives of our half-educated and over-dressed public, whose musical taste is on a par of savagery with the fashion of wearing rings in the nose, and who would destroy great music in the Church, as by their vulgar and commonplace predilections they have made it impossible in our theatres.⁷⁵

Such a passage is characteristic of Martyn; it is typically forthright and exposes an issue close to his heart while at the same time demonstrating his latitudinarian artistic stance. He could, as here, embrace the indigenous tradition and be openly critical of those who were 'hostile to what they considered barbarous and "low down"',⁷⁶

without feeling any compunction to reject the broader aesthetic. Such maturity was not common in an increasingly polarized milieu. The seemingly incongruous reference to sacred music is significant for, as we have seen, he was to take a particular interest in this area. And his comprehensive viewpoint is discernible in his encouragement of the most formative musical society of the period, the Feis Ceoil.

The Feis Ceoil

The arduous gestation of this organization and its development encapsulates much about the complexities of the age. It was not, as is sometimes stated, the only, or indeed the first, organized musical response to the cultural revival. That honour went to the Incorporated Society of Musicians, the Leinster section of which held its inaugural meeting in the rooms of the Arts Club, 6 St Stephen's green on Saturday 30 December 1893. The attendance was impressive and included J.C.Culwick, who was the recipient that very year of an honorary doctorate from Dublin University, Sir Robert Stewart, who was to die within three months, Dr Joseph Smith, Signor Esposito, and Vipond Barry, while Dr T.R.Jozé was elected to the position of honorary secretary. An account noted:

It had never before been known amongst them that the leading men and musical artists of consideration had banded themselves together with a common object, and with hopeful and lively expectation of mutual pleasure and social and intellectual profit.⁷⁷

There was nothing nationalistic about this organization; it was, by its constitution, Anglocentric, being a branch of the larger British-based body. Founded in Manchester in 1882 and incorporated a decade later, The Society of Professional Musicians was concerned to protect professional interests and it was the view 'that all who were now entirely devoting themselves to music as a profession, and were of good report in their own neighbourhood, must be allowed on its register'.⁷⁸ But the society proved more than a focus for the practical concerns of its members; it encouraged research and sponsored an annual congress devoted to academic discussion and recitals. It honoured its youngest section by holding this conference during the opening days of 1895 in

the new hall of Dublin's Mansion House. Amongst the papers presented were 'Does music train the mind?' by Sir John Stainer, professor of music at Oxford, and an illustrated lecture 'On the growth of Handel's Messiah' by his redoubtable colleague Dr A.H.Mann, organist and director of the choir at King's College, Cambridge.⁷⁹

The objectives of Feis Ceoil, the Irish Musical Festival, were quite different. While its original aims and subsequent maturation were not always in concord, it was yet indubitably nationalistic in design; a design noteworthy for the influence exerted on it by other leading movements of like tendency. It is a tribute to the dedication of its originators that it so quickly became one of the catalytic organizations stoking the cultural ferment of that exceptional age. It was fuelled by the burgeoning interest in folksong which occasioned numerous articles in contemporary journals.

Ireland's musical heritage is very far from being, legally, in nubibus, thanks to such writers as Bunting, and Petrie, and O'Curry, Holden, Wrightson, and Stevenson. It is a real possession, pure, distinctive, characteristic, and cultivated, though limited through the unappreciative apathy and sceptical neglect of those who were insensible to its worth and beauty because it breathed not their feelings, and because it was a jewel of whose value they were ignorant. Perhaps this heritage may become more actual to those who care, first, to appreciate the history of Irish music and its historic associations; secondly, to note the characteristics of Irish melodies; and, lastly, to make themselves familiar with those beautiful old airs which are still preserved to us in their original form, and surrounded by those circumstances and associations which gave them their especial colour and interest.⁸⁰

The impetus for the project came initially from the National Literary Society which, in the course of its ongoing survey of the heritage, invited papers on the musical tradition from Dr Annie Patterson and Alfred Perceval Graves. As a result members were spurred to advocate further investigation of this area and to question 'as to the most advisable steps to be taken for the cultivation of Irish National music'.⁸¹ Accordingly an approach was made to the Gaelic League, which

also declared itself in sympathy with any design to preserve and cultivate indigenous music. A meeting of the League on 12 October 1894 was addressed by Dr Patterson

who laid before the members her proposals for the revival of the ancient annual festivals of music and literature, such as were held at Teltown, Emania, or Carman. Her hearers pledged themselves to aid the project to the fullest extent in their power. Dr Patterson gave a very lucid exposition of her views, going in detail into all the steps which should be taken to set the work on foot.⁸²

It is interesting to record that Dr Patterson

apologized for being unable to address the meeting in Irish, being as yet but a student of the old tongue.

At the close of her address, the motion was put and carried unanimously

that Messrs Meehan (chairman), Lloyd, Quinn, Hayes, Gordon, Colbert, and MacNeill be appointed a preliminary committee to arrange initial steps with the National Literary Society for the institution of the Irish Musical and Literary Festival.⁸³

Overtures to other societies met with similar favourable results which led to the announcement in the national journals that a delegates' convention on the question of a national musical revival would be held on Saturday evening 27 October 1894 in the Verdon Hotel, Talbot street. Along with the representatives of the National Literary Society and the Gaelic League, there were also present that evening delegates from the Sheridan Literary Society and the Celtic Literary Society, from the Workmen's Club York street, and from the Walton Leslie Choir, and curiously from the Dublin School of Shorthand and the Dublin Shorthand Writers' Association. Some others attended as interested individuals and the preparation for the evening is evident in the number of letters of support received from those unable to be present. Included amongst this number were Dr George Sigerson, the eminent Dublin doctor who was a crucial figure in the gestation of the literary revival and who had given the inaugural address at the National Literary Society in August 1892; T.M.Healy, the Nationalist politician who had come to the fore

following the passing of Parnell; John O'Leary, the veteran republican who was at this juncture exercising such influence on W.B. Yeats; and from John (Eoin) MacNeill the honorary secretary to the Gaelic League. Yet another missive was received from the archbishop of Cashel and first patron of the Gaelic Athletic Association, Dr Thomas Croke, whose encouragement demonstrates that he, for one, valued the propagandist angle as highly as the musical purpose.

No clearer proof can, I think, be given of the deplorable extent to which Irish national degeneracy has gone in our days than the melancholy fact to which you call my attention, that in most places of public amusement in Dublin, no less than in private circles, the vulgar slang and contemptible inanities of the London music halls are much more in favour with a large section of our people than Moore's unrivalled melodies or the soul-stirring songs of Davis. Whatever tends to check in any way or wholly to counteract this shameful state of things shall have my unqualified support.⁸⁴

Dr Croke's sentiments were doubtless welcome to the delegates gathered that evening and they suggest that intrinsically the whole movement of revival was felt not only to be desirable but even imperative if Ireland were to avoid what were considered the social excrescences of her neighbour; an unproven notion, incidentally, underpinning much contemporary thought, which was blatantly propagandist in propounding that English morals and manners, and the associated culture, were inferior to their more natural Irish counterparts. A different reaction was afforded a letter of apology from Annie Patterson whose presence had been advertised in advance notices. Her absence occasioned some annoyance and was a contributory factor to the many divisions which surfaced during the course of the evening. The meeting commenced with the tabling of a motion by J.C. Barry of the Sheridan Literary Society:

That this meeting of delegates is of opinion that a concert of Irish music should be held towards the end of December, 1894, to further the project of an Irish musical revival.⁸⁵

It was seconded by J.H. Clarke, from the outset a prime mover in the project, who added that 'receipts of the concert could be used in

promotion of the proposed Irish Festival in May'.⁸⁶ Mr Thomas Hayes, one of the Gaelic League representatives, having registered his colleagues' disquiet at the absence of Dr Patterson, expressed concern also about the nature of the proposed concert.

A concert of music with English words would not be Irish, but West British. They could not in the space of two months train a chorus of 200 voices to sing Irish words. He moved an amendment that the musical performance be postponed until next May, in order to give time to organise a really Irish festival.⁸⁷

The terms 'West British' and 'West Briton' were employed habitually as pejoratives; the latter was met with earlier in Bax's estimation of Stanford, and can be encountered also in Hyde:

I have no hesitation at all in saying that every Irish-feeling Irishman, who hates the reproach of West-Britonism, should set himself to encourage the efforts which are being made to keep alive our once great national tongue. The losing of it is our greatest blow, and the sorest stroke that the rapid Anglicization of Ireland has inflicted upon us.⁸⁸

It can be met with also in the poet, James Stephens, whose application of the phrases is even more representative in denoting the Irishman who apes English behaviour:

This miracle is known as a West Briton. He stands fore-front to God and man square, squat, saturnine, and silly, and doesn't appear to know that he is sufficiently funny to tickle the risibility of the equator.⁸⁹

A delegate of the Celtic Literary Society, Mr William Rooney, took umbrage at notion of the less-than-committed nationalist and its association with the Anglophone. He spoke with the authority born of being a noted nationalist, an estimation attested by his Prose Writings published in the first decade of the new century.⁹⁰ He argued that a proposed concert

should include music with English words. Who could say that the songs of Davis and Walsh were West British?⁹¹

Mr Hayes withdrew his amendment, and along with his colleagues from the Gaelic League, the most influential of the societies present, withdrew from the meeting. While the original motion was subsequently carried, it was inevitable that the project was damaged severely. Even such a consistent supporter of the League as Edward Martyn would publicly reprimand it for its straitened attitude to the musical revival, and in so doing points again the defensive motivation of the more extreme nationalist position.

I do not think that the indiscriminate campaign undertaken by some thorough-going Gaels against comic songs with English words is at all likely to win over the general laughter-loving public, or even the better part of it, to sympathy with the Gaelic revival. Let these sons of Oisín reflect that not all comic songs are vulgar, and not all comic songs are anti-Irish; nay, that not all whose humour is drawn from Irish life and character are necessarily either vulgar or anti-Irish.⁹²

The League's disengagement was the first in a series of reversals. Within a week, Mr Rooney reported to a meeting of his Celtic Literary Society that

he and his co-delegates having attended there felt bound, as no practical scheme had been laid before the meeting, to withdraw on behalf of the Society from the movement.⁹³

This initial attempt foundered on the lack of consensus regarding objectives. That petty matters dominated the proceedings indicates that the purely musical element was, for many, not central to the design. A clear separation existed between those who sought immediate results and those whose concentration was on more distant but permanent goals. There was also in evidence a division between a minority, motivated solely by the desire to increase the range of musical activity, who advocated a catholic approach, and the majority who were concerned not with such an inclusive enterprise, but with a circumscribed design which was not even to be exclusively musical but would, in imitation of the older Welsh Eisteddfod which had provided the model for Patterson's initial plan, be based on a gathering of the

bards with a strong literary element, which in essence represented a celebration of national culture as opposed to a musical festival. Even among those who took the more comprehensive view there was manifest a sensibility of the political overtones.

Ireland, once the home of a living art, still possessed of traditions of greatness in the higher things, still endowed with a spirituality and imagination which centuries of misgovernment and misunderstanding on the part of the ruling race have not eradicated, Ireland, the land of song sings no more, the happiness of her people is gone, and discontent - 'the divine discontent', if we could but rightly trace its source, eats out the heart of her people.

Some few stifle the aspiration for higher things, and with dogged and heartless endurance devote themselves to the pursuit of material well-being. Others strive to assimilate the foreign ideals and culture, and make English standards their models. But Irish men and women can never be English. However they may try, at best they are but imperfect imitations. Some old sweet memory of half-forgotten days steals in, and while it mars, endears, the copy. There is rather a difference in kind than in degree in the civilizations and cultures of English and Irish people, and it is hopeless to imagine that legislation can make the sum of different entities the same, or alike.⁹⁴

Within a month of the meeting at the Verdon Hotel, the National Literary Society had returned to its more refined consideration of the musical tradition when it presented a lecture on 'Irish Minstrelsy' by A.P.Graves illustrated 'by an accomplished group of local artistes' who were accompanied and conducted by Annie Patterson.⁹⁵ During the evening, Graves referred to the proposed festival and some caution is evident in his advice that it should not be held early unless it were assured of success.⁹⁶

The failure of the intended concert to materialize before Christmas provoked a vigorous correspondence pursued through the Dublin Evening Telegraph which served further to point the lack of definition surrounding the proposed festival. Renewed efforts to establish such a congress were made early the following year. On Saturday 2 February a

meeting was held at 11 Clare street 'to discuss the advisability of organising during the present year a grand Irish national festival, chiefly for the purpose of reviving Celtic music'.⁹⁷ It was on this occasion that the title of 'feis' was proposed. The record shows that moral support for the enterprise was forthcoming from Dr V.Stanford [sic], A.P.Graves, Plunket Greene, and practical assistance from the prominent retailer, Mr Lipton, who was described as 'an Irishman of wealth'.⁹⁸ But again the fundamental divisions proved too difficult an obstacle to surmount. Some wanted a series of concerts, others an annual competitive festival; some advocated that the project concentrate on traditional Irish music and where texts were to be employed that they be exclusively in the native language, while the opposing view proposed that the event be a musical celebration in the broadest sense where the skills of Irish composers and executants be given a platform. Such antipathetic conceptions were not easily reconciled, and it was to be a further two years before the project became a reality. It was indeed one of those archetypal Irish situations where the split was the first motion on the agenda. And it was precisely a split that provided the solution to the diverse objectives evident from the project's conception. Not one, but two, festivals were inaugurated in 1897: the Feis Ceoil which was an inclusive musical festival encompassing both the Irish and European traditions, a design extended under the direction of an early secretary, Miss Edith Oldham, a distinguished pupil of the late Sir Robert Stewart; and An tOireachtas, the smaller of the two assemblies, which concentrated exclusively on the native cultural traditions, not solely in music but also in language and literature, a convocation wholly consistent with the initial design as elucidated by Dr Patterson. It speaks volumes for the underlying aesthetic divisions and for the circumscribed perspective of much nationalist ideology that such a separation proved necessary.

There was, however, no antagonism between the two bodies. Dr Patterson was musical advisor to both, and there was considerable cooperation during the first year, although both subsequently went their separate ways. The Oireachtas commenced on 17 May while its sister festival opened the following day. The heterogeneous nature of

the former, also known as the Irish Literary Festival, was immediately discernible in the anticipation.

The programme is of a diversified character. Competing essays, songs, poems, and stories in the Irish language offered in competition will be read. A prize Rallying Song, which has been set to music by Dr Annie Patterson, will be sung by a choir of trained voices, Dr Patterson conducting.⁹⁹

But even this limited inclusion of music was not to everyone's taste in the realization.

The Assembly [the literal translation of Oireachtas] was designed as a sort of literary reunion, but its scope was extended for the purpose of making it more attractive to the general public by the introduction of musical items.... There was a good deal of music in proportion to the literary budget, and in view of the Feis Ceoil more perhaps than was altogether acceptable to the audience.¹⁰⁰

The Oireachtas was, in essence, the literary congress of the Gaelic League and naturally reflected its primary concerns. Matters musical were increasingly seen as the province of the Feis Ceoil, which from these humble beginnings matured into the major promoter of the developing musical consciousness of the nation. The prospect of this inaugural Irish Musical Festival, the more commonly employed title which was yet to be superseded by the Irish designation, was the source of optimism among commentators.

This festival marks an epoch in the history of Irish music. It is intended to be a gathering of Irish musicians assembled to do honour to those world-famous musicians, dead and living, whom Ireland can claim as her own. It will be this; but it is meant to be more than this. The idea which has animated and inspired the promoters of the Feis is nothing less than the initiation of a musical renaissance in Ireland. Ireland, in spite of her magnificent musical tradition, has of late years lagged a little way behind the other nations in practising the divine art.... If we ask why this is so, the answer will be found in the fact that in Ireland the transition from the old aristocratic order of

things to the modern democratic spirit is not even yet complete.¹⁰¹

There is substance to this argument. The ascendancy in Ireland was but an outpost of the English aristocracy with correspondingly finite resources and influence. It sponsored cultural enterprise, particularly during its eighteenth-century meridian, but it was never on an extensive scale, nor was this culture sufficiently secure to survive the waning leverage of the sponsoring class. The Anglo-Irish culture was as limited as it was brilliant; the majority had neither the access nor the education to partake or to endow. In this we discover the critical importance of Feis Ceoil: it represented the first specialized and yet accessible forum which offered the opportunity of participation to a broad constituency. This element of involvement was evident in the initial festival which took place over a week. It comprised competitions and concerts which were held in the hall of the Royal University. The competitions attracted 417 entries and there was a total prize fund of 419 pounds and five shillings.¹⁰² One of those who emerged victorious was Harold White, later a music critic of The Irish Independent and a teacher in the Leinster School of Music, who was awarded the laurels in the solo sight-singing contest. White was eventually to achieve some prominence as a composer publishing under the nom de plume Dermot Macmurrough. His light opera Seán the Post was given during the Tailteann Games of 1924, another occasion which looked determinedly back to an earlier era. A later work, the Hymn of Saint Patrick at Tara, is less nationalistic than the earlier piece by Glover. This relatively slight work for solo bass, chorus, and orchestra was premièred by the Dublin Philharmonic Society on 29 March 1930, and was published in the same year by the Dublin house of Pigott. White draws his text from the Breastplate of St Patrick in a translation from the old Irish by Olive Meyler. The treatment is efficient, if conventional, and displays the composer's liking for the mildest of dissonance (Ex.28).

Andante spianato

To- day at Ta- ra may God ev- er

pp

To- day at Ta- ra may God ev- er

pp

To- day at Ta- ra may God ev- er

To- day at Ta- ra may God ev- er

guard me, May His power up- hold me, His judg- ment

guard me, May His power up- hold me, His judg- ment

guard me, May His power up- hold me, His judg- ment

guard me, May His power up- hold me, His judg- ment

guide me

guide me

guide me

guide me

The competitions for composition were a particular feature of the festival. In 1897 Carl Hardebeck was awarded three pounds for his winning partsong while Esposito won ten pounds for an overture and the substantial prize of 30 pounds for his cantata Deirdre, the major work of this first festival, which was also premièred at the third of the week's concerts on Thursday 20 May. The concert series proved the highlight of the week and it received warm public support. It echoed the character of the competitions, being also of a diverse nature with just a section of one evening devoted to old Irish music, while the remaining performances were more catholic in outlook as was noted by a contemporary observer:

The committee decided to invest the Feis with a present day rather than an archaeological interest. Only portion of one concert was set aside for ancient Irish music.... The test pieces were mainly classical, consisting of selections of Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Weber, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Gounod. Sir Robert Stewart and Balfe were the only representatives of Ireland who furnished texts for musical supremacy in this section, with the exception of an Irish selection for the harp and the bagpipe tunes.¹⁰³

On the other hand many Irish composers were represented in the concerts including Thomas Cooke, Field, Balfe, Wallace, Robert Stewart, the Paris-based Augusta Holmès, and Stanford. The finale of the latter's Irish Symphony was given in the same concert as Esposito's Deirdre, a juxtaposition which illustrates the multifarious nature of programmes with an educative and even proselytizing design. This first festival enjoyed success and The Irish Times, in the course of its review of the opening concert, captured well the general response.

The development of the movement which might have been considered insignificant in its inception, has been remarkable to a degree.... of the object for which the Feis has been organised and inaugurated little need be said here. In the highest sense a patriotic movement, it has a significance and a value far beyond the artistic performance of programmes of Irish music.¹⁰⁴

In the succeeding years the Feis Ceoil developed slowly but consistently with the attention increasingly focused on the competitive

aspect of the festival. In 1910 it attracted 587 entrants; 1013 in 1930; and it reached its zenith in 1945 with 1545 competitors.¹⁰⁵ Despite this growth and its critical influence, and the agreed success of the inaugural festival, the initial years proved difficult. In 1900 a rumour which found wide currency suggested that the feis would not take place; it was felt that the conduct of the Second Boer War would force its abandonment.¹⁰⁶ Backing for the feis came from the persuasive editor of the All Ireland Review, Standish O'Grady. He was, as W.B. Yeats recalled with characteristic perceptivity and concinnity, 'at once all passion and judgment'.¹⁰⁷ A Protestant in religion and a unionist in politics, O'Grady had upbraided his own people for their failure to respond to the changing social circumstances.

Aristocracies come and go like the waves of the sea; and some fall nobly and others ignobly. As I write, this Protestant Anglo-Irish aristocracy, which once owned all Ireland from the centre to the sea, is rotting from the land in the most dismal farce-tragedy of all time, without one brave deed, without one brave word...¹⁰⁸

In sentiment and style this passage echoes Yeats who admired O'Grady and shared his rage which

was as a swan-song over all that he had held most dear, and to whom for that very reason every Irish imaginative writer owed a portion of his soul.¹⁰⁹

Yeats was conscious of his debt to the older writer and shared Ernest Boyd's opinion that O'Grady's History of Ireland: Heroic Period 'must be regarded as the starting point of the Literary Revival'.¹¹⁰ These two volumes published between 1878 and 1880, while incomplete and speculative, earned for their author the sobriquet 'Father of the Revival'.¹¹¹ They provide the earliest and best example of that investigation of primeval Irish history calculated to furnish a common cultural base for all races on the island; these volumes also evince that characteristic confusion between myth and reality. O'Grady's scholarship might be in question, but never his motivation; he was responsible for bequeathing to the nation the heroic figure of Cuchulainn. Like Hyde, he was a propagandist, and in the first week of the new century he launched his provincial periodical. Published in

his base in Kilkenny, the All Ireland Journal became, for the seven years of its existence, in Boyd's estimation

a real centre of culture and ideas, and was the soil from which some of the best fruits of the Literary Revival sprang.¹¹²

It was accordingly a powerful voice which in its third issue addressed the whisper that the Feis Ceoil may fall victim to the Boer War.

The importance of the Feis Ceoil as an element in our National culture is so great that its prosperity ought to be, and I make no doubt is, a matter of interest and solicitude to the readers of this Review. It has done much to foster and develop the study of music generally, and our own old music in particular; it has so aided the language movement, helping to popularise the rich and flexible tongue, whose suitability for music has been proved by the success of its Gaelic song competitions; and it has played so distinctive a part in the efforts which are going on in our time towards the reunion of all Irish folk on a non-sectarian National basis that its eclipse would be a national calamity.¹¹³

The festival of 1900 did take place but, as on a previous occasion, in Belfast rather than Dublin. On its conclusion the All Ireland Review found itself embroiled in controversy when it reprinted an article which had first appeared in The Magpie, a periodical of humour and satire published in Belfast between 1898 and 1900 and edited by Alf S. Moore. This journal clearly did not share O'Grady's high opinion of the Celtic commitment of the feis. The caustic discourse, submitted under a pseudonym, opens by noting the conclusion of 'the Itinerant German Philharmonic Society, facetiously termed "Feis Ceoil"',¹¹⁴ and proceeds to draw unfavorable comparisons between it and the historic Belfast Harp Festival.

That the so-called 'Feis Ceoil' was founded with intentions somewhat similar we freely admit but in the four years of its existence it has so far departed from them, that it has now no pretensions whatever in these directions. It is an utter fallacy and a fraud, and will, we have no doubt whatever,

if permitted to continue on its present lines, do more for the total extermination of our country's music than any Act of Parliament ever devised during the Penal Code.

It is not the first time Ireland has sheltered a serpent in her bosom, fondly hugging it to her breast, and what all the Acts of a hostile Legislature have failed to accomplish, so-called friends have often brought about. The sentiment of the preservation and popularization of our National instrument and ancient airs has brought nine-tenths of the subscriptions into the coffers of the Society. Without this not one penny would have been subscribed to teach our choirs from the country to trill a composition of T. Luis de Vittoria, or teach the many clever young daughters of the well-got-on people of Belfast to perform with skill and ability rivalling an acrobatic performance a scherzo of some obscure German composer, no matter how excellently taught by clever local German musicians, desirous of thus obtaining free advertisements of their wares in an acceptable market. Let such foreign professionals devise other means of polishing their brass plates, which, by the way, is a very commendable thing to do; but let it not be at the expense of societies founded for other purposes. Let the compositions of the German 'masters' be conducted by German experts at our Philharmonic concerts, drawing big houses if you will (and we are glad to see it so), but let our 'Feis' be Irish in everything - composition, conducting, and judging - or let us drop the farce. We are accused as a people of being West Britons - not a very serious offence, we admit; but to be West Germans is surely disgusting to everyone desiring a National individuality. Ireland has well nigh lost her tongue; largely by her own neglect and stupidity, and now her very music, the last survivor of the arts of a Nation, is to be waked by the stranger with music from a foreign land as different as the wild strains of our own melodies as the broad flowing Shannon and the blue Mourne Mountains differ from the pine slopes on the banks of the Danube. If this Festival be continued on the present lines for another year, we would suggest that it be called Musik Feste. Then the works of Robert de Lassus, R.L. de Pearsall, Luca Marenzio, G.E. Stehle, Wendler and Marschner could be performed with pride by such men as Koeller, Esposito, and Werner,

and adjudicated upon with equal satisfaction
by Chevalier L. Emil Bach and Herr Professor
Kruse.¹¹⁵

Music in general and the Feis Ceoil in particular did not arouse sufficient interest to be the source of large-scale controversy, but such a diatribe from a position of extreme insularity, which often, as here, finds release in xenophobia, illustrates the depth of feeling which the division in the musical culture could discover. Such an attack was unlikely to pass unanswered and a quick reply came from Edward Martyn who took exception to the anonymity, which he vigorously deprecated, the tone, and doubtless to the slight on great masters of the High Renaissance such as Lassus and Victoria. He refers in his response to the constitution of the festival which was founded 'to promote the general cultivation of music in Ireland', and continues:

By all means let us cultivate our national music; but let us not accuse the Feis Ceoil of fraud because it turns out to be an association different from what we imagined it to be in our carelessness and ignorance. The Feis Ceoil is a sincere artistic institution, faithful to its constitutions, and free from all anti-national servility, and should be supported by everyone who has the artistic interests of Ireland at heart.¹¹⁶

But the Feis Ceoil of 1900 was notable for more than this contretemps. The venue encouraged a strong northern response not least in the compositional competitions. Carl Hardebeck was again successful in the original unaccompanied partsong, while the awards for anthem and hymn tune were won by Revd Dr G.W. Torrance who had recently returned to his native country after some 20 years working in Australia and was at this time based in Armagh. The All Ireland Review which, whatever Yeats's estimation of its proprietor, occasionally allowed enthusiasm to outrun judgment, noted that

It is safe to say that Dr Torrance is the greatest living composer of Irish birth who is at present resident in his own country.¹¹⁷

George William Torrance was a close friend to Sir Robert Stewart and is yet another of that small group of Irish musicians whose

achievements, though modest, maintained some measure of activity during an inauspicious period. His creative legacy is principally concerned with vocal music, oratorios, anthems, and a late madrigal 'Dry be that tear'. He was born in Dublin in 1835 and, in accord with the natural progression of his calling and class, became a chorister in Christ Church. He later held appointments as organist in various city churches including Blackrock and St Anne's. In 1855 he produced the largest of his early compositions, the oratorio Abraham, which was given in the Antient Concert Rooms. A term of study in Leipzig which he commenced in the following year suggests that he was a committed and skilled musician. He moved to Melbourne to assume the post of rector at St John's in 1869, three years after his ordination. While there, Torrance submitted his Te Deum and Jubilate to Dublin University as exercises for the degrees of Mus.B. and Mus.D. Stewart graciously wrote to acquaint him of his success in June 1879.

My dear friend, - I am very glad to say the deed is done, and you are now a Mus.D. in full bloom!... There was not much likelihood of any non placet in Dublin when your name was mentioned.118

Torrance returned to Ireland in 1897 where he served in a number of appointments including that of librarian at St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny. He died in 1907.

The assessment of the All Ireland Review on the standing of Torrance is particularly interesting as the awards for string quartet and for a violin and piano duet in 1900 went to the young Herbert H.Harty who was then residing in Bray, Co. Wicklow. This marked Harty's introduction to the Feis Ceoil and the String Quartet in F was to be regarded as his opus 1. Of the compositional awards which came to Dublin that for concert overture is notable, going to Robert Dwyer who had yet to append the prefix to his surname.

Notwithstanding its broad aesthetic attitude, the Feis Ceoil did valiantly attempt to justify O'Grady's perception of its national function; alongside its commitment to competitions and concerts, it sought further to contribute to the cultivation of the musical heritage through the collection and publication of folksongs. This work was

advocated by those such as Graves and Patterson. But it required painstaking application and was labour-intensive which put great demands on an organization with limited resources. Furthermore, with the expanding interest in preservation and the growth in the number of collectors, the Feis Ceoil found that it was in many instances merely duplicating the work of others. It did, however, publish in 1914 the Feis Ceoil - Collection of Irish Airs edited by Arthur Darley and P.J.McCall with 85 airs which were not included in any other volume. Eventually the festival committee thought it wiser to forfeit the field, and allow others better equipped to pursue the work.

The principal contributions of the festival to the resurgence in musical activity were, first, in constituting the very focus of that resurgence by providing annually a platform for generations of young executants and thereby the purpose and occasion for music-making, and second, by encouraging creative enterprise with a specifically Irish flavour. The composers' competitions, especially in the early years of the feis when there were generous financial awards, provided a crucial stimulus to the nationalist movement through music. The awards were so highly respected that the leading musicians were happy to enter their works for adjudication; indeed many compositions in both large and small forms owed their existence to this incentive. And there was the not inconsiderable attraction that the work was guaranteed a hearing, as Hamilton Harty noted:

It was more the certainty of a good performance than the actual prize that appealed to me and to others, I suppose, who competed for these prizes.¹¹⁹

While figures such as Hardebeck, Torrance, and O'Dwyer all featured in the award lists, it was Harty and his mentor Esposito who were the foremost contributors to the imaginative renaissance sponsored by the Feis Ceoil. Reference has already been made to Esposito's Deirdre as the first fruit of this harvest. This secular cantata was written to a text by T.W.Rolleston and dedicated to a staunch paraclete and officer of the festival, Miss Edith Oldham. The choice of Rolleston is significant. It marks the first cooperation between a major musical figure and a leading member of the formative literary movement. Rolleston, another disciple of O'Grady, was, as Yeats

recalled, a 'serene man' who is better remembered for his administrative skills rather than his creative powers; his tact and 'knowledge of the technical business of committees' were crucial to the foundation of the Irish Literary Society of London (1891) and the National Literary Society in Dublin (1892).¹²⁰ The long narrative poem Deirdre is, however, a work of some quality which offered Esposito material far surpassing that upon which Stanford had earlier worked. As one might expect of a figure closely involved with the genesis of the revival, the poem is based on an old Irish legend, that of the slaying of the sons of Usna. The tale tells of Deirdre, betrothed to the high king, Conor (referred to as Conchbor in John Millington Synge's play which deals with the same episode), who elopes to Scotland with Naisi, a valiant warrior and chief of Usna's clan, and of Conor's subsequent violent retribution. Esposito allots a solo part to each of the three main protagonists: Deirdre (soprano), Naisi (tenor), and to Conor's agent, Fergus (baritone). The menacing closeness of the high king is the more powerful for being left at one remove from the centre of the action, although Esposito does assign a bass solo to those few lines when Conor speaks directly. The four-part chorus carries the narrative and thereby the brunt of the work. And Esposito's respect for his text is evident in his consistently syllabic treatment and by the manner in which he restricts the independent orchestral involvement to short preludes to each of the cantata's three parts. The poem also provides all of the work's indigenous flavour; there is nothing peculiarly Irish about the music, a fact apparent to a coterminous commentator:

Although the story is Irish, Esposito does not seem to have aimed at throwing any characteristic Irish strains into his composition, which is entirely after the model and manner of the great modern writers of the Continent.¹²¹

From the very opening, with its tonic of c minor and the early insistence upon the interval of the diminished seventh, it is evident that this tragedy is to be presented in characteristic romantic fashion (Ex.29). There are reverberations of Phaudrig Crohoore in the late hope which springs from such a sad tale: both pieces switch to the major mode for their conclusions reflecting texts which affirm

Ex. 29

Allegro assai

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a common time signature. It features a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and a triplet of eighth notes. The lower staff begins with a bass clef and contains a series of eighth notes, some of which are marked with a *v* (accents).

The second system continues the piece. The upper staff has a dynamic marking of *f* and a triplet. The lower staff continues with eighth notes and accents.

The third system shows the continuation of the eighth-note pattern in the lower staff. The upper staff features a triplet and a slur over several notes.

The fourth system includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking in the lower staff. The upper staff contains several triplet markings over eighth notes.

The fifth system features a complex, rapid eighth-note pattern in the upper staff, with multiple triplet markings. The lower staff continues with eighth notes and accents.

The sixth system concludes the piece with a final triplet in the upper staff and a few notes in the lower staff.

confidence in a brighter future. It may be an indication of the country's then political position, but these are but two of a number of artistic statements which fall shy of confronting tragedy, pure and stark, but require ultimately that element of optimism. This was an age that espoused an heroic art confirmed by a mythological base; the plays of Yeats speak as much of glory as of tragedy, and even those of Synge are, according to Deane, 'subversively comic'.¹²² Nor is this the only point of comparison with Stanford's ballad. Deirdre also belongs to the picturesque school of nationalism. While it is constructed on a finer text, it is Esposito's musical approach which decides the matter.

The reliance on a text to provide a national flavour is equally conspicuous in two smaller works by Esposito. The two one-act operas, The Tinker and the Fairy on a text by Douglas Hyde, and The Post Bag based on the work of A.P.Graves, are slight pieces which have survived only as curiosities.

Also born of a collaboration with Graves was the more substantial offering provided by the integrated song cycle Roseen Dhu op.49, which, when taken with some other of Esposito's works, intimates a crucial aspect of his reaction to burgeoning nationalism. Like Stanford before him and Hamilton Harty after him, Esposito reveals a decided division between the general corpus of his creative work and those compositions which foster a distinct idiom. His approach also offers interesting comparison with that of Bax. Both came as outsiders to a country to which they were each to become deeply attached; but it is the Englishman who ultimately preserves a distance from the indigenous idiom sufficient to allow him fashion the more embracing statement. The Italian was captivated by the voguish racial spirit and the resultant compositions, of which Roseen Dhu is an example, suffer from the contiguity. It can be noted that such works in which Esposito cultivates an Irish voice or where he embraces nationalist sentiment all date from the decade following the inauguration of Feis Ceoil. The song cycle for instance was written in 1901. This concentrated pursuit of a peculiar expression is equally apparent in the work of other creative musicians and it evidences the particularly strong cultural trend of the time and also the considerable impact of the national

Ex. 30

Lento

The first system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a whole rest for the first three measures. The middle and bottom staves are joined by a brace on the left, representing a grand staff. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf* in the second measure. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with a whole rest in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.

The second system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a 3/4 time signature, containing a whole rest for the first three measures. The middle and bottom staves are joined by a brace on the left. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf* in the second measure. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with a whole rest in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.

The third system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a 3/4 time signature, containing a whole rest for the first three measures. The middle and bottom staves are joined by a brace on the left. The middle staff has a treble clef and contains a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *mf* in the second measure. The bottom staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with a whole rest in the first measure and a half note in the second measure.

o!

dim.

p

This system contains the first musical staff. The vocal line begins with a whole rest followed by a half note 'o!'. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a melodic line and a left hand with a bass line. Dynamics include 'dim.' and '*p*'.

sor- row- ful dream of the past That dis-

This system contains the second musical staff. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'sor- row- ful dream of the past That dis-'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same melodic and bass lines.

sol- ved in- the morn's mag- ic ray,

This system contains the third musical staff. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics 'sol- ved in- the morn's mag- ic ray,'. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

musical revival as embodied in the Feis Ceoil. Roseen Dhu is a set of seven songs, each adapted from a traditional air with new lyrics by A.P.Graves. The work is united in telling the tale of the hero, an Irish patriot serving with the forces of James II, and of his love for Roseen Dubh (the dark little rose), a figure representing Ireland. Esposito brings the full wealth of his harmonic resource and of his understanding of pianistic technique to bear on these airs, and the opening to the first song of the cycle, 'The Shadow of a Dream', demonstrates the dramatic response which he provides (Ex.30). The work won particular acclaim following performances by the leading vocalist, Denis O'Sullivan, and was published by Breitkopf and Härtel.

The finest example of Esposito's nationalist style is an instrumental work, the Irish Symphony op.50, which, like the String Quartet in D major and the cantata Deirdre, was written for the Feis Ceoil. The decision in 1901 of the festival committee to offer a prize for a suite or symphony based on traditional airs was significant. While at first it appears consistent with the original objectives of the feis as delineated by Patterson, in practice it was likely to attract extended arrangements rather than promote an original approach in a distinctive national style. The very institution of such a competition signified a further turning away from the strict interpretation of the exclusively national note towards a liberal encouragement to accommodate traditional airs within the framework of European art music. Furthermore, such a design which required the incorporation of folksongs was inevitably calculated to produce works which, like the Irish Symphony or the rhapsodies of Stanford, were examples of the exotic nationalist mode. In the face of such restriction, Esposito's response through his symphony which won for him the inaugural prize in 1902, was commendable. More than the cantata or the quartet, the symphony consciously sought to cultivate a truly Irish complexion. The arpeggiated opening figure of the Allegro con brio presented in strings and upper woodwind is reminiscent of the traditional air 'An Mairín Rua'. The intentionally national idiom is particularly evident in the scherzo with its joyous dance rhythms, its drone-like low strings in the short trio, and lively percussive effects. The movement provides an acute contrast with its companions which are more introspective in nature. An initial jig theme, again

Ex.31

Vivace

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with two accents (>). The second staff is also in treble clef, marked with *pizz.* and *p*, and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The third staff is in bass clef, marked with *p* and *pizz.*, and contains a melodic line similar to the top staff. The fourth staff is in bass clef, marked with *p* and *pizz.*, and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The fifth staff is in bass clef, marked with *p*, and contains a rhythmic accompaniment.

The second system of the musical score continues the notation from the first system. It consists of five staves with the same clefs and key signature. The top staff continues the melodic line with accents at the end. The second and fourth staves continue the rhythmic accompaniment. The third and fifth staves continue their respective melodic and rhythmic parts.

founded on an arpeggio figure, is announced by strings with clarinets and horns marking the phrase ends. The accompaniment is sufficiently restrained to allow the dance an uninterrupted flow (Ex.31). The first movement is the most typical of Esposito's habitual style; it is conservative in construction, with romantic use of horn, and echoes of his beloved Brahms and even of Dvořák. That this work has not survived as a regular in the repertoire even in Ireland is primarily because it was written to order. It is cleverly wrought but is essentially a response to fashionable demand rather than an original statement. Consequently Esposito's finest works are those in the late romantic idiom, the style which is at the core of his creative personality.

His many piano compositions provide example of this approach as does his prize String Quartet in D major, op.33, which brought him success in the festival of 1899. Dedicated to another advocate of Feis Ceoil, W.P.Geoghegan, it too was published by Breitkopf and Hartel. From the very outset it is a testimony to Esposito's catholic outlook, although the recurrent flattened seventh in the first theme might suggest some Irish influence. It is set in four movements the first of which, Allegretto moderato, is in 6/8 rhythm. The initial two bars confirm the home tonic of D before the viola introduces the lively cell spelling a rising fifth which is at the core of the movement. It evinces a ready use of chromatic harmony and is technically challenging for each member of the quartet. It also provides the theme for its succeeding movement, an intermezzo set in the tonic minor, which is characterized by a lyrical melody set in the lead violin with its gentle shift from d minor to the relative major (Ex.32). This movement also exhibits a short contrasting section, more dramatic in mood, which is reminiscent of the scherzo in the symphony in its drone effect. Indeed, this rather obvious device was frequently exploited by Esposito and even more so by his pupil John Larchet. The intense slow movement which follows agonizes through twenty bars before it arrives at its home centre of B major. The finale is an energetic alla breve set in the home tonic and with a theme which is derived from the opening movement. It provides a joyous conclusion which delights in its conversational style with much use of fugal writing. It is through such a work that one can best discover Esposito's creative manner, although it was his commitment as a teacher, administrator, and his

Ex. 32

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature, containing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff is in treble clef, providing harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes, also marked *p*. The third staff is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature, containing a bass line with eighth notes, marked *p*. The fourth staff is in bass clef, providing a low-frequency accompaniment with eighth notes, marked *p*.

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff continues the melodic line with slurs and accents, marked with *mf* and *p* dynamics. The second staff continues the harmonic accompaniment, marked with *mf* and *p*. The third staff continues the bass line, marked with *mf* and *p*. The fourth staff continues the low-frequency accompaniment, marked with *mf* and *p*.

The third system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff continues the melodic line with slurs and accents. The second staff continues the harmonic accompaniment. The third staff continues the bass line. The fourth staff continues the low-frequency accompaniment.

sheer dynamism which constitutes his critical contribution to the creation of a distinctive musical environment. While his few determinedly Irish compositions are of comparatively lesser significance, yet his reputation and judgment as a creative musician earned him the respect of the other composer who was most to benefit from the Feis Ceoil, Hamilton Harty.

Herbert Hamilton Harty

Herbert Hamilton Harty (1879-1941) stands as the immediate successor to Stanford in the unfolding commitment to the creation of a distinct national idiom. The comparisons, and even the contrasts, between the two are illuminating. Out of these striking similarities and differences, one finds that the national note is more central to Harty without being innate.

Harty's early years provide a first point of contrast. He was one of a large family, the fourth of ten children born to William and Anne Elizabeth. Both parents were from the South of Ireland and had settled in County Down one year before the birth of Herbert Hamilton. William Harty had moved his family north when he assumed the post of organist and choirmaster at the beautiful church in Hillsborough, a rural parish some 12 miles south of Belfast. It offered a healthy and secure environment in which to nurture his growing family. Hamilton Harty's reminiscences reveal these to have been idyllic days.¹²³ But the benefits to the aspiring musician of being at the heart of a large and evidently happy family in a serene setting can be set against the advantages enjoyed by Stanford in being the only son in a comfortable urban situation in close communion with skilled and interested teachers. The close connection between father and son in the Stanford household was even more apparent, and necessary, in the Harty home. William was his son's sole guide during these formative years, and Harty was to remain ever conscious and appreciative of his father's crucial influence.

He had unerringly good taste in music and had managed to acquire a large and very complete library, not only of church music and organ music but of oratorios, symphonies, operas, chamber music, and of music for piano. His

habit was to say - 'There is most of the greatest music that has been written: play through it, all of it - everything - and at the end you will have gained a good musical education'. For my part I took him at his word and consider the experience thus gained as the basis of any musical powers I may possess.¹²⁴

From his father he gained his knowledge of the keyboard, and he played viola in the string quartet which was an important component of domestic life. His was a native talent. In this absence of formal training one is reminded of Edward Elgar who was also from a provincial background and was largely self-taught, although it must be said that Broadheath probably offered more opportunity for experiencing music than did Hillsborough.

Discussion of the early training of Stanford and Harty suggests a further contrast with another Irish musician, Charles Wood (1866-1926). Like Harty, he hailed from Northern Ireland, but he had the advantage of studying with T.O.Marks, the organist of Armagh Cathedral. Thereafter his career follows closely that of Stanford with whom he was to study in the Royal College of Music. On the death of his former master in 1924 Wood was elected to the professorship at Cambridge. The pursuit of a national idiom did not frequently engage his creative faculties, although his treatment of folksong was widely admired. The set of symphonic variations on the air 'Patrick Sarsfield' given in one of Beecham's concerts in 1907 is the exception in an eclectic output.

Wood's impressive educational record serves to emphasize the singular course of Harty's development. The latter's evident musicality saw him appointed organist and choirmaster of a neighbouring parish at the absurd age of 12. His recollection of the period demonstrates that sense of fun, a trait in common with Stanford, which so informs his music and his whole life.

The church was about 4 miles from my own home and there were the usual two services on Sundays. I used to return home between the services, either driving, or cycling, or walking. The organ was small and the services simple and I was chiefly interested in the belfry-tower because of the birds'

eggs which could be taken there. Many a time during the sermon I slipped off the organ stool and with the aid of Ellen the old sextoness climbed the crazy ladders to the nests, filling my hat with eggs, mostly starlings' eggs, and coming back just in time to finish the service.¹²⁵

He was still short of his seventeenth birthday when he moved from home to take up another such position at Christ Church, Bray, south of Dublin, in 1896. Most crucially, it brought him into contact with his future mentor, Michele Esposito. Harty's memory of their first meeting is interesting:

I saw him entering a train at Bray and followed him and asked him if he would take me as a piano pupil. 'Show me your hands', he said abruptly - 'no, they are not good for piano - the thumbs are too short! I was rather downcast, but this did not prevent my applying to him for a position in the orchestra he had just founded. He made an appointment at his house and I presented myself with viola, for the necessary audition. While waiting for him I noticed a MS full score lying open on a table, and glanced at it. It was a symphony and lay open at the Scherzo. Presently he came in and I proceeded to play something for him - an ordeal for us both. In a few minutes he stopped me and said seriously and with kindness - 'you know, it is 'orrible! You cannot play that piece of music!' Feeling both nervous and disappointed I said 'Oh - do you think so? Well perhaps you like this piece better', and played from memory some bars of the principal theme of the Scherzo I had glanced at while waiting for him. His face changed - 'But - but nobody knows that. How you get it? I explained and from that day I became, not indeed a regular pupil of the 'Maestro' but, a close friend who could look with complete confidence to him for help and advice. Indeed with the exception of my own father his was the ruling influence in my musical life.¹²⁶

The scherzo mentioned was that of Esposito's Irish Symphony, and doubtless inspired by this example and its success, Harty set about writing his own Irish Symphony for the Feis Ceoil. He completed it in time to enter for the festival of 1904 where it emulated Esposito's

achievement in winning the prize for a major orchestral work based on traditional airs. It was a remarkable attainment in view of Harty's inexperience. He had admittedly earned some local distinction as a composer in smaller forms, but this was his first large orchestral exercise, the only exception in the catalogue being an overture, The Exile, which has remained unpublished. While the overture demonstrates a limited attempt to affect a peculiar Irish note, it is the symphony which stands as the first example of that characteristic joy in distinction which was to become so dear a part of Harty's creative personality.

The symphony raises another point of contrast between Stanford and Harty. Bolstered by his comprehensive formal education, Stanford was at home in larger forms, whereas Harty was not. He, like so many Irish composers after him, was a miniaturist, more content and more expressive on a smaller canvas. It can be suggested that the symphony gives the lie to this argument, but, in truth, it is a composite of four finely-wrought but independent orchestral essays. The desire to integrate the work was one motivating factor behind the two thorough revisions, first in 1915, and then in 1924, the latter undertaken in preparation for performances with the Hallé. On this occasion he was not averse to announcing the first performance of his 'new' Irish Symphony, as indeed he did when, with his orchestra, he presented the symphony in Belfast in late January 1925.¹²⁷ A reviewer recorded the enthusiastic response with some surprise, 'the more remarkable when one remembers that Mr Harty is really not very well known in his native North'.¹²⁸ It is this final reconstruction with which we are today familiar and this accounts for the refulgent orchestration which is perhaps best heard in the second movement, 'The Fair Day' based on 'The girl I left behind me', or under its Irish title 'Spalpín fánach', a lively and attractive scherzo with effective use of percussion, notably xylophone and side drum, and with an effervescent humour so well captured in the affectionate imitation of that Northern institution, the flute band. The programmatic titles to each of the movements are likewise a legacy of this revision, and it is notable how refreshingly open Harty was in his willingness to append programmes to his works, a practice in which he surpassed Stanford, and one which no doubt increased his works' accessibility.

The revisions should not detract from the symphony's initial success which is corroborated by contemporary appreciations.¹²⁹ It was equally important for the practical opportunity it offered, for as Harty recalls:

The first time I ever faced an orchestra was when I conducted my symphony, a strange and rather bewildering experience...¹³⁰

It is unique among his works in its reliance on folksong, a requirement of the competition for which it was written, and which, moreover, is a factor in its popularity. While he subsequently cultivated a distinctive Irish style, never again was he to rely on folksong for its achievement. In this again there is a contrast with Stanford who was ever willing to employ traditional airs with which he was familiar as an editor and arranger. When set beside the other Irish symphonies discussed in this chapter, Harty's emerges as the most accessible and memorable, but it does not display the individual voice discernible in the tone poems. A contemporary evaluation arrived at a similar estimation of the symphony's comparative worth, but the appreciation is perhaps more notable for its realistic postscript.

As an 'Irish' work it possesses a glow and richness of colour, a vivacity and variety of mood, and a mastery of means - melody, harmony, instrumental colour and subtlety in the laying out of the palette - that no other Irish work, not even Stanford's, can parallel. Stanford's love of Brahms is always apparent in his technique in spite of his folk idioms and rhythms; his window was ever open to the east. Whereas Mr Harty in England has a window open to the west, and this symphony is an expression of his hankering after, and his memories of country sights and sounds of the homeland. He is at a sufficiently safe distance to let the glamour work, and avoid the disillusionments of a too immediate experience.¹³¹

Such a sceptical conviction suggests that the reality was at some distance from the image, and it is indicative of the poor state of the musical infrastructure in Ireland that musicians such as Stanford and Harty were obliged to look abroad to fulfil their ambitions. It was Harty's ability as an accompanist - an ability which incidentally says

something of his early training that encouraged such skill without equipping him technically to follow a career as a soloist, although Esposito would have argued that there were good physiological reasons for this - that won for him the advice of the acclaimed cellist, William Henry Squire, that he could better pursue these ambitions in London.¹³² He accepted the counsel and followed the path of Stanford; but he had not the same experience of travel nor the cosmopolitan outlook that it engenders, his approach was more parochial, and the prolonged absence appears to have sharpened Harty's identification with his homeland. It was absence rather than departure because he returned home frequently. The Feis Ceoil offered one such occasion annually as he was official accompanist to the festival; in 1903 he accompanied John McCormack to success, and the two were to remain lifelong friends; just as three years earlier he had played for the then more celebrated Agnes Nicholls, the dramatic soprano, who was eventually to become his wife. Harty gave voice to this rapport with his native land in his fine tone-poem With the Wild Geese. It is a seminal work in the history of Irish music, being the first original composition in an Irish idiom which succeeds without recourse to quotation of folksong. Its introspection is in contrast to the general jollity of the symphony and it reflects the work's programme which is based on the poetry of Emily Lawless. Harty gives full rein to his ingenerate sentiment in treating the themes of departure and exile with which he could so well empathize. He achieves a distinctive flavour here, as always, through melody, by employing characteristics such as gapped scales, short decorative flourishes, and repeated tonic notes, which inevitably remind the listener of Irish folk music. Such a determined statement needs to be fashioned consciously, and it must be conceded that Harty was apt to exploit the vogue for the national idiom. But like Stanford, he demonstrates that he recognizes no musical division between the autochthonous and universal expressions by setting these melodies with the full panoply available to the composer who retained an allegiance to the diatonic system. It was precisely this innate orthodoxy which occasioned criticism of even such a signal work. An advocate of a modernist expression, John Beckett, writing in The Bell, compared Harty's tone-poem with the Violin Concerto of E.J. Moeran and pondered the significance of their achievement in relation to the course of Irish music. His conclusions are not at all flattering.

In both these works folk, or folk-like material is used; the use of such material in relation to modern art music is uncreative and shows a misunderstanding of an art which, if its significance is not to be shattered, must remain inviolate within its own tradition. In their position in the tradition of 'Western art music, both these works are contained within the old, within the known; the means of expression used in them, the tonal, melodic, and formal idiom, are the means of expression of a dying tradition. In as far as in them their composers use these means of expression, means, the significance of which towards the new is no longer vital; their achievement is redundant.¹³³

At the time of its creation, Harty may not have been too concerned by such considerations. With the Wild Geese was written for the Cardiff Festival of 1910. There is a disarming honesty about Harty's account of the motivation behind the work:

My own simple plan was to write works for different festivals knowing by this means that I would be invited to conduct them, and in that way have the chance of handling a first-class orchestra.¹³⁴

There are reminders here of his experience with Feis Ceoil, but the quality of the tone-poem suggests that opportunity was not its sole inspiration. Whatever the truth, this composition was instrumental in launching Harty's conducting career. Richter invited him to conduct it at a London Symphony Orchestra concert in 1911, and while Harty's subsequent rise was not meteoric he was eventually to establish himself among the finest interpreters of his era. Stanford again comes to mind when one considers that the commitment involved in this process left Harty little time for composition. A key difference was that Stanford was at core a composer, Harty was not: composition was always incidental to his career. Thus an appreciable number of his works come from either the beginning or end of his years of dominance on the podium. He wrote little original work during his heyday with the Hallé.

Raymond Warren, in an excellent exposition of Harty's orchestral music, recognizes three categories: Irish works, 'classical' works, and the transcriptions.¹³⁵ The classification suggests that while the Irish works constitute an important part of his output, Irishness was not innate to Harty's style. Thus while there were significant differences in degree in this respect between Stanford and Harty, it is the similarity of approach that is most telling. The concertos for violin and piano reveal Harty without his Irish mantle, particularly the former. The Piano Concerto (1922) and the earlier Comedy Overture (1906) while of the 'classical' group do betray something of the native flavour, and both incidentally are inscribed to Esposito.

This concentration on larger compositions should not conceal the fact that Harty's national voice is equally evident in smaller forms. His ability as an accompanist and marriage to an eminent vocalist no doubt honed his interest in vocal music. The 'Six Songs of Ireland', op.18 (1908), represents an early collection written when Harty was conscious of his absence from his homeland. Much of this sentiment is captured in the first two songs, 'Lookin' Back' and 'Dreaming', while the fourth of the collection, 'Grace for Light', evokes that natural humour at the memories of childhood (Ex.33).

He regularly turned to Irish authors for the texts of his songs; along with the work of Moira O'Neill, who provides the text for 'Grace for Light', the poems of Emily Lawless, Elizabeth Shane, whose work was later to prove so attractive to John Larchet, and P.W.Joyce were among those he set. Padraic Colum was another favourite and Harty's settings of his 'Cradle Song' and 'A Drover' are amongst his finest and demonstrate his sensitive approach to a text. Mention of the former calls to mind the dedication of a contemporary Ulster musician, Herbert Hughes (1882-1937), who produced many sensitive settings of Irish folk tunes. He too set this text by the Longford-born poet under the title 'O Men from the Fields', written interestingly in 1913, the same year as Harty's setting. Both are responsive to the text and are equally fine, but it is the attractiveness of the melody in Hughes' setting which has earned it wider favour.

Ex.33

Moderato e scherzando

When

The first system of the musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4. The piano accompaniment features a series of triplets in the right hand, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes.

we were lit- tle chil- der we had a quare wee

The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "we were lit- tle chil- der we had a quare wee". The piano accompaniment continues with triplets in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand.

house, A- way up in the hea- ther by the

The third system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "house, A- way up in the hea- ther by the". The piano accompaniment continues with triplets in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand.

head o' Bra- bla' burn;

The fourth system concludes the vocal line with the lyrics "head o' Bra- bla' burn;". The piano accompaniment continues with triplets in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand.

Harty's chamber music also provides example of a distinctive idiom. The Irish Fantasy for Violin and Piano (1912) and In Ireland (1915), subtitled a 'Fantasy for Flute and Piano' which Harty later orchestrated, can be cited as further models of the ethnic note. He was very much at home in these miniatures. Such pieces expose much less his limitations as a melodist, and particularly the difficulties he experienced in extending a melody. Yet it is his largest and most personal composition, the second of the tone-poems The Children of Lir (1938), that provides the finest testimony of Harty's attachment to his native land. He embarked on its composition after a serious illness and it is surely poignant that conscious of his deteriorating condition he should choose an Irish legend and an Irish idiom for this last and greatest work. The beautiful tale of King Lir's children, who can only achieve peace through death, must have had resonances for Harty.¹³⁶ From the very initial timpani beats and the following chord of A major, one is conscious of the dramatic power of this statement. The opening is one of Harty's finest passages with its enormous blocks of modal sound like a great hymn, so powerful yet restrained which, if reminiscent of any other voice, puts the listener in mind of Sibelius (Ex.34). The subsequent unfolding is wholly consistent with the programme which encourages some especially sensitive writing. At the conclusion, it is the defiant last chord rather than the tolling bell which precedes it that encapsulates the true significance of the composition: it marks a beginning not an end, a promise of a new musical dawn. While the work is unflinchingly conservative and romantic, not least in the introduction of a vocalizing soprano, yet one is conscious of an individual voice which, through this composition and its earlier companion, had finally provided Ireland with an original and distinctive expression.

Ex.34

Lento e con dignita

sfz *ff*

mf

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123. See Early Memories, ed., D.Greer, as n.119; for a fuller account see Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music, ed, D.Greer (Belfast, 1978). It can be noted that early in his career Harty dropped the Herbert and made do with the Hamilton.
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CHAPTER VII

Racy of the soil

'Ireland, we are forced to admit', wrote the music critic H.L.Morrow in 1924, 'has not produced a single symphony of any account; not even a piano concerto. Again do we ask, what is the explanation? It is hard to see why since we have in the other arts so many men and women of genius, we should be so poor in the matter of music.'¹ This was the question which increasingly exercised the minds of those sensitive to the welfare of music in the afterglow of a splendid cultural revival. Among the musical community it was a source of embarrassment and even of recrimination that their art had failed to make its proper contribution, and the whole history of musical endeavour in first half of the twentieth century can be regarded as an attempt at redress. Morrow gives vent to a popular perception, but it is an appraisal that is unfair to the achievements of Feis Ceoil and to the initiatives of Stanford and Harty. The compositions of these two pioneering creative talents were for long not familiar in Ireland, and even where they were they were often regarded as picturesque exercises with no direct contribution to make to the development of a distinctive expression. The critique of the former by a young Aloys Fleischmann, who had just been appointed acting professor of music at University College Cork, is representative.

Stanford, undoubtedly a pre-eminent craftsman and the greatest musician this country has produced, differs from the foregoing [Field, Balfe, and Wallace] in that he associated himself with Irish folk-song and made extensive use of it in his music. But then even English critics have nowadays become aware of Stanford's inability to rid himself of the stage Irishman's conception of his country, and of the extent to which the folk-song element in his music is ingrafted, and obviously so, rather than an inherent growth. Stanford may be termed an Irish composer in much the same sense as Maria Edgeworth may be termed an Irish writer - they both embody the ascendancy outlook, an outlook which would interpret Ireland to England rather than to Ireland itself.²

This was written in 1934 when the country enjoyed the services of a permanent, albeit small, orchestra, which marked a signal improvement on the situation pertaining in the preceding decades. That there were then only occasional performances from visiting orchestras or from amateur ensembles was also a factor in the general malaise. Esposito's Dublin Orchestral Society stands alone as the one attempt to establish a professional body. This helps account for the lack of acquaintance not only with the works of Irish-born composers but with the whole repertoire. Many were quick to point to the paucity of music-making and the restricted opportunities offered the public to hear music as crucial factors in the precarious state of the art's health. In the period preceding the attainment of the Free State, it was convenient to lay the charge that such conditions were an ineluctable consequence of distant and unsympathetic government. The temptation to blame others for all manner of domestic problems became all too easy.

One can never dare to find fault with one's countrymen but he will be instantly told that there are historical causes which explain all our defects.³

These are the words of the journalist Denis Patrick Moran (1871-1936) who, while sharing many of the views of Douglas Hyde, replaced the latter's gentle urbanity with an articulation that was always trenchantly direct. Born in Waterford, he had lived some ten years in London before the impetus of the revival prompted his return where he committed himself to help in shaping what he trusted would be the new Ireland. He argued that the experience of exile endowed him with an objectivity denied the resident Irishman.

I suggest that the native who has lived for years among a different people is usually the best equipped for the role of observer and critic.⁴

Moran was as good as his word, proving a most uncomfortable critic, quick to slay the sacred cows of his countrymen. His was an influential voice through the first thirty years of the century, and particularly so in that period preceding the insurrection of 1916. He expounded his forthright views first through the pages of The New Ireland Review, then in the Leader which he founded in 1900 and edited,

and also in his seminal book The Philosophy of Irish Ireland (1905). He was undoubtedly extreme in his vision, but his relevance lies in the searing honesty with which he held a mirror up to the foibles and illusions of his compatriots. His contentious pragmatism is discernible in his assertion that 'at the present time the capital of Ireland is London'.⁵ He argued 'that the nineteenth century had been for Ireland mostly a century of humbug'⁶, and that the country had 'invented nothing of importance during the century except the Dunlop tyre'.⁷ He was especially contemptuous of efforts to develop what he regarded as an exportable culture. His criticism in this area was focused on the very visible literary expression, but his censure would apply equally to the compositions of Stanford and Harty.

A certain number of Irish literary men have 'made a market' - just as stock-jobbers do in another commodity - in a certain vague thing, which is indistinctly known as 'the Celtic note' in English literature, and they earn their fame and livelihood by supplying the demand which they have honourably and which much advertising created. We make no secret of the reason why we have dropped our language, we have shut out our past, and cultivate Anglo-Saxon ways. We have done them all in the light of day, brutally, frankly - for our living. But an intelligent people are asked to believe that the manufacture of the before-mentioned 'Celtic note' is a grand symbol of an Irish national intellectual awakening. This, it appears to me, is one of the most glaring frauds that the credulous Irish people ever swallowed.⁸

This is but one of many examples of the disposition to autarky - economic, cultural, and political, - which was to become increasingly conspicuous in the wake of the Second Boer War when anti-English feeling was in the ascendant. Arthur Griffith, a leading member of the Gaelic League and a founding father of the Celtic Literary Society, was one of a number of Irishmen who fought for the the Boers. On his return he became even more actively involved in domestic politics and in 1906 launched the periodical Sinn Féin which, while difficult to translate adequately, being variously described as 'Ourselves', 'Ourselves Alone', or 'Our Own Thing', was a title that encapsulated the mood of the age to perfection. This absorption with the nation, with what was racy of the soil, was to inform endeavours across a whole

spectrum. It became a communal espousal of insularity which, to those such as George Russell, was the source of concern for they saw in it the path to isolation and cultural stagnation.

We need world culture no less than we need Irish culture. The last cannot by itself suffice for us. The cultural implication in the word[s] Sinn Féin are evil. We are not enough for ourselves. No race is. All learn from each other. All give to each other.⁹

The Irish Ireland view, as it came to be known, was the especial bête noir of Yeats who anticipated Russell:

No nation, since the beginning of history, has ever drawn all its life out of itself.¹⁰

An Irish opera

The Irish Ireland view, of which Moran was the principle apostle, found its musical outlet through the Oireachtas and its parent body the Gaelic League, both of which embodied the desire to fashion an indigenous music with, where appropriate, Irish texts, created by composers resident in Ireland and working with traditional materials and, most important, free of any responsibility to conform to a preconceived image acceptable to a foreign audience. But in a society with such a low rate of musical activity there were few composers willing and able to confront the problem of constructing a distinct art-music from an essentially linear tradition with small and primitive forms which offered little promise as suitable material for extended composition. They were, in the main, in agreement with the later thesis propounded by Constant Lambert in Music Ho!, that reliance on folksong inevitably leads to weaknesses in formal structure.¹¹ Indeed, Fleischmann commented on the 'shortwindedness in construction' which resulted from a folksong-centred approach, and he noted

Once one has played a folk tune through, there is nothing to be done but to play it through again.¹²

Opera presented one solution: its referential quality; the reliance on text; its relation to drama, so dear to the Irish heart; and the sectional nature which absolved the composer, or at least a particular

kind of composer, from the requirement to extend and develop ideas to the degree necessary in a large orchestral composition, all combined to suggest that this was the ideal vehicle for a nationalist expression. This assessment was seconded by one prominent Irish critic, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, who in time was to write a number of small works for stage.

With a drama upon the stage dealing in emotions that are part and parcel of its own life, such an audience may be held, and, subconsciously will begin to acquire musical equivalents in design, in tone and colour, for the various mental and emotional states that are portrayed upon the stage. In other words, the relationship of music to life, emotion, experience, will be manifested, even if only understood by the audience sub-consciously; and the musical education of such an audience will have begun. This is the importance of opera as a vehicle for the furtherance of musical culture, a particularly valuable vehicle in the circumstances obtaining in Ireland.¹³

Yet the first years of the century delivered only two operas of note: Muirgheis by O'Brien Butler, and Eithne by Robert O'Dwyer. Both were founded on Irish themes and were consistent with the aims of the Gaelic League, and each represented the principal achievement of its composer. Neither is a commanding figure in the history of Irish music, but together they are important as the chief musical representatives of the cultural response to the most radical nationalist perspective.

The imposing denomination, O'Brien Butler, suggestive of a venerable Irish chieftain, was a pseudonym adopted by a man called Whitwell (?1862-1915) who hailed from County Kerry.¹⁴ Accounts of his life propose that he enjoyed a colourful progress, was well-travelled, with periods of study in Italy, and in London at the Royal College of Music with Stanford and Parrat.[†] Edward Martyn was sympathetic to his nationalist concept of music and, in expressing this appreciation and his high evaluation of O'Brien Butler's contribution, recorded also what is unhappily perhaps the most interesting fact about his career.

The one musician who followed - perhaps unconsciously - Grieg's example, was the late O'Brien Butler, who perished, with the half score of his opera too, I fear - to the irreparable detriment of Irish music - on the Lusitania in 1915.¹⁵

It is not known which opera Martyn is referring to here, but it was not the original version of Muirgheis which remains O'Brien Butler's most substantial undertaking in a catalogue of works which also shows a sonata for violin and piano based on Irish themes and some songs. The composer's account of the work's genesis however might suggest that he had either written, or projected to write, another opera.

The plot of this opera was planned by the Composer himself, the idea being to weave the story of his first opera around the scenes of his childhood, in and about his Native place, with all the local colour possible. The plot was further developed by the late Nora Chesson, and Mr George Moore.¹⁶

That George Moore, one of 'the dreamers of Ireland',¹⁷ concerned himself directly with this undertaking in itself provides some assurance of quality. Moore would welcome an art founded on peasant life, and O'Brien Butler was again to emphasize the import of his early experience of a rural upbringing.

The scene of the opera is laid in Waterville on the Coast of Kerry, Ireland at the dawn of Christianity.¹⁸

Muirgheis is a love story dealing with Diarmuid (tenor), chief of Iveragh, who is loved by both Muirgheis (soprano) and her foster-sister Maire (contralto). Muirgheis wins Diarmuid but only at the cost of Maire's life. The opera opens with an overture of respectable length that is a synopsis of the major themes. The first of the three acts is consistent in style, comprising narrative dialogue between the central characters. There are no great set arias, and the few arioso sections are placed unobtrusively in this progression. The subsequent acts are different in character, being more in the manner of a ballad opera. There are choruses aplenty of fairies and wedding guests and traditional dances in the jig and reel styles, and the second act contains the opera's only extensive vocal ensemble, the sextet which

Ex.35

Moderato

p *dim.*

The ve-ry spi-rit of all sad-ness seems to

look with bright-er eyes be-hold-ing you, E'en

look with bright-er eyes be-hold-ing you, E'en

age for-gets its wea-ri-ness of limb, and

age for-gets its wea-ri-ness of limb, and

mf

those long years it has out-lived its dreams. And watched

those long years it has out-lived its dreams. And watched

mf

involves all the major players. This contrasts with Act I where the only choral section is short and in unison and appears at the very end. The large four-part chorus that opens the second act is conventional and lacks technical excitement. The rather naive melody is characteristic; another example is provided in Diarmuid's short air 'The very spirit of all sadness' which is lyrical but innocuous (Ex.35). The music is original throughout with the exception of some dance sections and the Banshee's caoine at the close of the work which signals the death of Maire (Ex.36).

Ex.36

Caoine 

Ul- la, ul- la gone - - - - oc- hone - - -

Of this lament, O'Brien Butler notes in the score:

On the death of my parents, and other members of my family, my Nurse, Mrs Norah Fitz-Patrick, who lived with us for over forty years, wailed this traditional ancient Caoine in her anguish the effect, of which I can never forget, her wringing of hands and sobs to heighten her grief.¹⁹

It is evident that the composer consciously aspires to a distinct Irish style. This is apparent in the duet between Maire and the blind harper, Hugh Dall (baritone), which is set in the minor mode; it is equally manifest in his first arioso with its gapped scale and repeated tones which precedes the duet (Ex.37). But the aspiration is not consistently pursued, the choruses and vocal ensembles are decidedly conventional and even commonplace; the technically unexciting and transparent chorus of wedding guests at the opening of the second act is representative (Ex.38). O'Brien Butler deploys his material with a stringent economy; this engenders unity but at the price of monotony. Short idiosyncratic phrases recur in various guises; throughout the work one encounters the rising third by step between tonic and mediant with or without a preceding dominant anacrusis. A mixture of major, minor and modal scales are employed and sections of the opera are

strongly pentatonic in feel, although not strictly pentatonic in structure.

Ex.37

Piu andante

p
Rose of the world she has chosen me
Out of the world full of men that see, She
fills my dark with a core of light, When the
neigh- bours think I am steeped in night.

Despite its technical limitations and its marked unevenness, Muirgheis is a work of some merit. Edward Martyn would not have concurred with such stinting praise; his patent regard for this work is affirmed by a glowing review:

After my first hearing a complete performance of O'Brien Butler's opera Muirgheis in the Theatre Royal in December, 1913, where it ran for a week with great success, I became aware that its chief defect was in the libretto.... With these reservations, however, I have nothing but praise for the work. The music is most beautiful, refined and original. There is not a trace of vulgarity in it from beginning to end. The orchestra is always well balanced and often disclosed exquisite devices of instrumentation.... Except in the Rheingold or Götterdämmerung or Parsifal I have heard no choral writing in modern times more beautiful than this. The songs, too, have reminiscences of the old traditional singers' melodies, and are

Piu Allegretto rit.

Though our cups to-night held the taste-less water, Your
Though our cups to-night held the taste-less water, Your
Though our cups to-night held the taste-less water, Your
Though our cups to-night held the taste-less water, Your

name would change it to honey mead. If you but passed over a
name would change it to honey mead. If you but passed over a
name would change it to honey mead. If you but passed over a
name would change it to honey mead. If you but passed over a

field of slaughter The wounds of the vanquish would cease to bleed
field of slaughter The wounds of the vanquish would cease to bleed
field of slaughter The wounds of the vanquish would cease to bleed
field of slaughter The wounds of the vanquish would cease to bleed

accompanied often by most charming and characteristic themes with great skill on certain instruments in the band.... it will be a real delight to see it performed again, for it contains some of the most beautiful modern music I know.²⁰

Martyn was the living proof that beauty was indeed in the eye of the beholder. It is difficult to endorse his eulogistic assessment; on the contrary, the suspicion that judgment is here subordinate to enthusiasm - which, as his writings make clear, was wont to happen in such a generous nature - is supported by the evidence of contemporary accounts. For one, Martyn's recollection of the date is incorrect; Muirgheis was first performed in December 1903 when it was staged nightly for a week in the Theatre Royal. On Monday 7 December, alongside their announcement of that afternoon's recital by the Brodsky Quartet at the Royal Dublin Society, the national journals advertised that the evening would see the

Production for the first time on any stage of the first Irish Grand Opera.²¹

Considerable attention was afforded the event; there was anticipation of the new costumes especially commissioned for the opera and of the elaborate dancing to be executed by the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League, and there was elucidation of Norah Harper's libretto, based on an ancient legend of Ireland. Harper is referred to freely as the author although the published score gives the name Nora Chesson, an alteration which may be explained by marriage. And of course there was the music and the performers, many of them O'Brien Butler's singing pupils, all of which promised a memorable evening with

everything being sung from first to last.... All are more or less stamped with the character of Irish traditional music, save in some of the recitatives, the wedding and fairy choruses, and also the trio and sestette [sic] which occurs in the second act.... The band parts yield none of that strepitus which many modern composers are so fond of, but are always full enough for the requirements of the situation.²²

The reviews demonstrate a marked change of tone. One such, while finding much to admire, stated:

It would be too much to say that Muirgheis is equal to the grand operas of other composers; but as an effort to produce a new type of opera - namely, one based on a thoroughly Irish subject, and having music more or less racy of the melody of the country, it deserves the highest commendation. Mr O'Brien Butler, if he is not a genius, is at the very least a very accomplished musician who has brought to his task a knowledge of the resources of modern musical art, and at the same time a thorough sympathy with his subject.²³

Some of the criticism relates as much to the production as to the work itself, but a second account is forthright in its stricture which concentrated on two aspects, and concludes with a comparison pernicious to the composer desirous of creating an indigenous expression.

In the first place no copy of the libretto was available; in the second, the singers being amateurs, and knowing little of the art of pronunciation, it was almost impossible to follow the story of the work, and absolutely impossible to form any notion of the character of the libretto. One would fain encourage Irish art, but it must be confessed that Muirgheis does not possess the elements of popularity. We do not think that it is more characteristically Irish than Stanford's Shamus O'Brien. Musically and dramatically it is very weak compared with that fine work. Mr O'Brien Butler has not yet attained the art of writing a good opera.²⁴

While this work was novel being the first grand opera by a composer resident in Ireland and dealing with an Irish subject, Harper's libretto was in English, although Martyn assures us that there had been the intention to translate it into Irish. This did transpire in the published score issued by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1910. The title page proclaims the first Irish opera dedicated to Clann na h-Eireann (the Irish nation), with English words by Nora Chesson and Irish translation by Thadgh O'Donoghue. It is this matter of the ensuing translation that allows Robert O'Dwyer's Eithne to stand as the first opera with an Irish text.

O'Dwyer (?1862-1949) was an unlikely agent for the representation of an Irish Ireland view through music.²⁵ He was born in Bristol of Irish parentage, and the redoubtable W.H.Grattan Flood has him as sometime conductor of the Carl Rosa Opera Company.²⁶ He conducted the Rousby Opera Company from 1891 until 1896 and the following year he moved to Dublin where he settled. In his subsequent career he never focused his efforts, being at different periods a conductor, composer, teacher, and critic. As the latter, he contributed to D.P.Moran's Leader where he demonstrated like sentiments but expressed them with more vitriol and less polish than was his editor's wont. His commitment to the symbols and ideals of Irish Ireland is apparent in the appending of the patronymic prefix then fashionable in Gaelic circles and in the part he played in forming and then conducting the Oireachtas Choir which 'since its inception in February 1902', noted one newspaper, was concerned for

those who love Irish music, those who think it should be sung in the simple melodic form as it falls from the lips of the peasant, or as given with many variations and weird accompaniments by traditional fiddlers and pipers; those who desire that it should advance side by side with the language to whose matchless beauty it may lend a grace; or even those sceptics who deny that there is any truth, beauty, or reality in Irish music....²⁷

With such a purpose, and especially given O'Dwyer's trenchant opinions, it is somewhat ironic to note that the same report keenly anticipates the choir's first concert of 1904 in which it intends to present Stanford's The Voyage of Maeldune.

The 'simple melodic form' is certainly in evidence in Eithne which remains O'Dwyer's most significant composition. Described as a romantic Irish opera, it was written to a libretto by Revd Thomas O'Kelly of Sligo, based on a mythical legend, and was composed specially for the Oireachtas of 1909. The tale tells of the history of Ceart, eldest son to the High King of Ireland, of his struggle against the treachery of his jealous stepbrothers and their minions, and of his love for the beautiful Eithne. The Journal of the Ivernian Society, a Cork-based quarterly sponsored by those committed to an Irish cultural

revival, afforded it a warm welcome when it was first given in the Rotunda in Dublin during the opening week of August that year, and it was staged for a further week in the capital's Gaiety Theatre during the third week of May the following year, although the death of Edward VII on the sixth of the month and his subsequent lying in state and interment on 20 May could not have been more untimely.²⁸

O'Dwyer's nationalist credentials are apparent from his sole stage direction:

The scene is laid in Eirinn, before the coming of the Stranger.²⁹

Like O'Brien Butler's work, it is a grand opera inasmuch as it has no spoken dialogue, but it is less folksy and is altogether more challenging. While it employs characteristic decoration and consciously cultivates a modal style in sections, its overall harmonic approach betrays more of a debt to a figure such as Sullivan and evidences no attempt to fashion a novel treatment. The choral writing is competent throughout, providing evidence that O'Dwyer was well versed in the conventional harmonic language of his day, but it portrays little of a personal character. A chromatic harmonic palette is utilized capably, but the repeated use of the chromatic passing-note especially at phrase endings is cloying and dates the work. His intelligent handling of the chorus suggests that he learned from his experience with touring opera; it is employed in sections, divided between warriors and maidens or as representatives of opposing chieftains. Thus the chorus, which in these several guises is central to the progress of the work, affords O'Dwyer dramatic and musical opportunities which he exploits to the full, with vocal orchestration, antiphonal passages, and writing for double choir. It is this concentration on the chorus and on ensemble writing that chiefly distinguishes the ambitious Eithne from its predecessor. O'Dwyer is not, however, an inspired melodist; the lines of choral melody and the arias are not ungracious but they are often naive and predictable in their regular rhythmical conformity. The dramatic momentum is maintained admirably, partly through the consistently syllabic treatment of the text which in the published score is given both in the original Irish and in English translation. The paean to the young

prince which recurs through the opera is indicative of the choral writing (Ex.39).

It is interesting to record that while O'Dwyer was committed to the Gaelic cause, he did not speak the language. The review of the première in August 1909, suggests that a macaronic approach was adopted in this production, and it also reveals that O'Dwyer's attempt to assume an Irish note was not universally acclaimed a success.

The latter scenes of the opera are distinctively and emphatically suggestive of anything except what one would be led to associate with the purely Celtic musical style. In fact the reminiscences of Verdi and of the good old Italian method are made so strikingly manifest as to induce one to say that merely to convey the well-accustomed scena, duet, and choral refrain which recall 'Ernani' or the 'Troubadour' does not, because conveyed in partial Gaelic, constitute the work Irish in any sense or form. This, however, is a defect which the merits of the work may be said to overshadow.³⁰

The element of qualification in such laudatory records became more pronounced as time went on. It was soon established that both O'Dwyer and O'Brien Butler before him were more anxious to create a distinctive expression than their qualifications would allow, and they consequently attracted criticism from those sympathetic to the Irish Ireland view for being less than they appeared.

O'Brien Butler in Muirgheis and Robert O'Dwyer in Eithne produced each a full length opera. But they knew no Irish and were dependent entirely on the librettist for their verse songs or prose recitative. The Italian pattern (Verdi forsooth) was their ideal. Eithne I have before me; I have never seen the score of Muirgheis - perhaps it never saw print. The few solos from Eithne are - for an Irish speaker - unsingable, the words go so falteringly to the melody.³¹

Ex. 39

Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our

Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our

Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our

Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our

Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal parts, each with the lyrics "Sing his name, Ap- raise his fame, Our". The fifth staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring a treble and bass clef. The piano part includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above the notes) and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte).

he- ro oft vic- to - rious,

he- ro oft vic- to - rious,

he- ro oft vic- to - rious,

he- ro oft vic- to - rious

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal parts, each with the lyrics "he- ro oft vic- to - rious,". The fifth staff is the piano accompaniment, featuring a treble and bass clef. The piano part includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above the notes) and a dynamic marking of *f* (forte).

cresc.
Our Tan-ist he a-lone shall be,

cresc.
Our Tan-ist he a-lone shall be,

cresc.
Our Tan-ist he a-lone shall be,

cresc.
Our Tan-ist he a-lone shall be,

cresc.

long may he reign o'er us

long may he reign o'er us

long may he reign o'er us

long may he reign o'er us

That an appraisal could be so fashioned manifests the primacy of linguistic considerations. Interestingly, both criticisms mention Verdi; and there are many moments, in Eithne particularly, when the Italianate influence is all too obvious, such as in the short refrain which the High King sings to his Queen, Nuala, towards the end of the work (Ex.40).

Ex.40

Andante

She's my love, my love is she! My heart's de-
light a- gain I see. - Her
voice, this heart, long dead in me, - Hath
waked to life and - ecs - ta- sy.

The orchestra in Eithne is employed to support the vocal lines, only rarely is it given an independent role, such as during the Herald's announcement of the entry of the High King which is animated by fanfare trumpets and horn fifths. Incidentally, it is ironic that the chorus which greets this entrance is given in translation as 'Long live our gracious king, long live our noble king'. O'Dwyer provides no overture only a 14-bar introduction to the opening recitative, and he begins the second act in like manner. He does, however, utilize the orchestra dramatically, allowing it, for instance, to depict the bird calls that are required at the opening of Act II. It also presents some of the specific decorative figures which are calculated to reflect the ethnic flavour. This design is equally apparent in the vocal lines

with the use of triplet motifs and chromatic inflection, and even with some complex choral flourishes which raise questions as to their practical feasibility. Furthermore, these decorations are not employed consistently, and overall the marriage of a feigned national quality to the conventional western resource lies uneasily. The eclectic flavour of the many choruses has stylistically little in common with the studied ethnicity apparent in the short romance which Ceart presents in Act II scene I (Ex.41). In reality it is the non-musical elements - the story, libretto, and the language - that impart the distinctive flavour, which may account for Annie Patterson's assessment that this was but the first essay in the 'endeavour to work out a distinctive school of our own'.³²

It may take generations to do so, but meanwhile laudable efforts like Mr O'Dwyer's opera are worthy warm encouragement. Were more openings available, it may be assumed that more such native works would be produced, until at length, let us devoutly hope, we should unearth a masterpiece which would take away for ever from Erin the reproach that she has produced nothing deserving of record in the higher phases of musical art.³³

It is surprising that given the success of Eithne O'Dwyer did not venture to complete any further large compositional exercises. He was active in other musical areas. During that period when the opera was composed and first produced he conducted a brass and reed band with the parochial title 'Ireland's Own' which had been formed specially for the purpose of travelling to play in the St Louis Exhibition of 1904, an occasion also graced by the young John McCormack.³⁴ The formation retained its identity upon return and quickly established a reputation by dominating the Feis Ceoil band competition for three years in succession from 1908-1910. O'Dwyer was particularly proud of the fact that the band achieved the distinction of winning the Crystal Palace

Ex.41

Lento e dolce

My - youth's years in

p

p

This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a half note 'My' followed by a dotted half note 'youth's years in'. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand plays chords and the left hand plays a simple bass line. A piano dynamic marking (*p*) is placed below the vocal line.

sad- ness Un - var - ied, un -

This system contains the next two staves of music. The vocal line continues with 'sad- ness Un - var - ied, un -'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A large oval is drawn around the first two measures of the piano accompaniment.

var - ied went by,

This system contains the final two staves of music. The vocal line concludes with 'var - ied went by,'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line. A piano dynamic marking (*p*) is placed below the piano accompaniment.

competition for civilian brass and reed bands in 1910.³⁵ Such successes taken along with the commitment to Irish music which it was considered Eithne represented were undoubtedly factors in O'Dwyer's appointment to the newly created chair of Irish music in University College Dublin. He held this part-time position, which for its first 13 years was funded by Dublin Corporation, from 1914 until 1939, but his influence was minimal.

John F.Larchet

A more substantial contribution was made by O'Dwyer's long-time colleague in the university, Professor John F.Larchet (1884-1967), who was one of a small but distinguished group of subscribers who facilitated the publication of Eithne. It was a practical example of support between two men who, while associates, were essentially very different in manner, ideology, and approach. In contrast to O'Dwyer, Larchet was native-born but cosmopolitan in his writings, with a liberal outlook which owed much to his urban upbringing and the influence of his teachers. An early encounter with the music of Wagner decided him on a musical career which he pursued through studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and by taking at a more advanced age a primary degree in Trinity College in 1915 and his doctorate in the same institution two years later.³⁶ He benefited there from the influence of Dr Thomas Richard Jozé (1853-1924) and Professor Charles Herbert Kitson (1874-1944), the latter of whom undoubtedly inculcated upon his charges the importance of a firm and systematic technical grounding. But it was the more permanent guidance of Esposito in the Royal Irish Academy of Music which did most to open Larchet to the European aesthetic and particularly to the German academic tradition, an influence he shared with his contemporary Hamilton Harty. It is the first in a number of similarities between the two, not least of which was that composition, while important to each, was not the central motivation for either. Larchet was to a great extent a prisoner of the age; the nationalist idiom he espoused was very much what was expected and what was fashionable, although it must be said that he was a willing disciple. But what the age required even more was a teacher who had the authority and the dedication to build upon the foundation laid by Esposito and to imbue that inchoation with a distinctive ethnic

character. Larchet prepared the way for generations of Irish composers, and providing this leadership when it was necessary constitutes his crucial legacy.

Larchet's belief in the primacy of education was set out in a seminal article published in the first years of independence. He wrote from a position of authority as professor of music in University College Dublin, a post to which he was appointed in 1921, following a period as deputy to Dr Kitson, and one he was to retain until 1958. Although written early in his career, this article, appropriately entitled 'A Plea for Music', constitutes a personal credo born of a frustration with the state of music as he perceived it.

A dispassionate analysis of the present position of music in Dublin is rather discouraging. It possesses no concert hall, good or bad, and no permanent orchestra which could be called a symphony orchestra. Except for occasional visits from some of the English orchestras, there has been no performance of any importance or educative value in Dublin for ten years. This means that most of the people have no knowledge of Strauss, Brahms, and the great volume of modern orchestral music. Few are acquainted with any important works of later date than Wagner's 'Ring of the Nibelungen'. Little interest is taken in chamber music or choral music; a large percentage of music lovers in Dublin have never heard a string quartet. Solo instrumental recitals, or classical song recitals, are few and far between, and are only attended by a small circle of enthusiasts, or by those personally interested in the artist. In such circumstances, it is inevitable that Dublin should contribute nothing to the support or progress of music. The Feis Ceoil and similar institutions cannot really be called music festivals, as they are purely of a competitive nature, intended only for the education of students.³⁷

That a leading musician should disclose such despondency is indicative of the truly unhealthy diagnosis revealed by a critical examination of the art at the dawn of a new political era. This article set the tone for a succession of critical analyses which were in large measure a reaction to the glib assertion that this was the land of song. Having

catalogued the sorry situation in some detail, Larchet demonstrates that he has no doubt as to the underlying reason:

The real cause of the failure to appreciate good music in Dublin is that the people have never been taught to do so: that is the reason for their apathy and their impoverished taste. Our system of musical education is not merely wrong, it is fundamentally unsound. From the primary and secondary schools all the way up through the circuitous paths and byways of individual teaching and private endeavour, the whole mental attitude is at variance with common sense. It is not possible to develop a real love of music in our children, and an ever-developing taste, from a musical education that never aims at producing either. The position allotted to music in most of our secondary schools is, with a few honourable exceptions, lamentable. Music is generally pushed into the darkest corner of the curriculum. As a rule the children are lucky if the time given to it is not filched from their recreation; their musical talent is stultified, and, in the case of the boys, successfully crushed.³⁸

These convictions translated into a life primarily devoted to the teaching of music, and it is in this role that Larchet made his primary contribution to the development of music in Ireland. His distinguished pupil and successor in the chair of music at University College Dublin, Professor Anthony Hughes, noted in appreciation:

I feel he would best like to be remembered for his teaching. The fastidious taste and careful craftsmanship we find in his own music impressed all his students. He had a great gift of humorous analogy, which ensured that any point or correction he made was indelibly engraved on the pupil's memory.³⁹

Larchet's identification of the momentousness of education was apparent even at the outset of his career as were his pedagogical gifts.

In the teaching of music Dr Larchet takes a tremendously keen interest, an interest which could only come from one to whom music has a great significance. Where music is concerned, he is filled with ideas, which, if not actually revolutionary, are, at all

events, those of an ardent and thorough reformer. He believes that the whole basis of teaching should be ear training; and he lays special stress upon the value of the development of the rhythmic sense and the teaching of theory through the medium of time and tune.⁴⁰

This enthrallment with time and tune led Larchet to a range and measure of didactic involvement that is remarkable. His motivation doubtless has its practical side too; many of the diverse posts which he held simultaneously were part-time and poorly paid, a fact which in itself says much about the position of music in the newly-independent state. Some measure of the remuneration may be had from the fact that when Colm Ó Lochlainn was appointed by Larchet as lecturer in Irish Folk Music, thereby succeeding Robert O'Dwyer who retired in 1939 from the post which he had held as a professorship, Ó Lochlainn was paid 'the princely salary of 36 guineas a year'.⁴¹ Larchet's own position at the university was not converted into a full-time appointment until 1944. Thus the energy expended in supporting a young family resulted in his writing relatively little original work. Along with his appointment in the university, he was also deeply committed to the work of the Royal Irish Academy of Music where he succeeded Esposito as senior professor of composition, harmony, and counterpoint. He lectured in the Alexandra College, and taught in a number of Dublin schools where he developed some fine choirs; he was active as an examiner particularly for the local centre examinations of the Academy of Music and also as principal examiner for the Department of Education; and he was for some time musical advisor to the army. Nor did he neglect the making of music; his most notable involvement in this respect being the long period he gave as music director in the famed Abbey Theatre. This was a particularly onerous commitment occupying much of his time, despite the fact that it too, according to Lennox Robinson, was a poorly-paid job.⁴² Larchet was required to be present each evening excepting Sunday with an additional matinee on Saturday.⁴³ His responsibilities included the provision of music for the interval and, when required, the writing of incidental music for plays. It proved a formative appointment. The Abbey, which had opened to the public on 27 December 1904, was not only the focus, but also the conscience, of the revival, and Larchet had accepted the invitation to take charge of the small

orchestra there in 1908 when the theatre was enjoying its greatest period of influence.⁴⁴ Initially there had been no music in the theatre, and then for a time the distinguished violinist, Arthur Darley, had been engaged to entertain the audience with selections of traditional Irish airs during the intervals. The genteel Cork-born playwright and sometime manager and director of the Abbey, Lennox Robinson (1886-1958), was an advocate of music in the theatre.

At first there was no orchestra, but a year or two later Mr Arthur Darley formed a small orchestra. Arthur Darley, descendant of our poet George Darley, was a very distinguished musician. He excelled in his traditional Irish airs, he was a beautiful violin player. He went on tour with the company to England, but disliked being made a show piece, and when he left the Theatre young J.F.Larchet took up his baton. For many, many years to come the little Abbey orchestra was to be one of the features of the evening; indeed there were people who would leave the theatre for what they called 'the intervals' (i.e. the plays) and return for what the players did call 'the intervals'.⁴⁵

Larchet made his debut on 1 October 1908 and he remained at the Abbey for 26 years. His first evening coincided with the première of The Suburban Grove the second of two short realistic plays by William Francis Casey (1884-1957) who was to become editor of The Times from 1948-1952. The only mention of the orchestra comes at the close of one review:

The orchestra, under the direction of Mr John J.Larchet [sic], played an admirable selection of music.⁴⁶

To write incidental music for the plays of W.B.Yeats and Lennox Robinson, and to be at one with the work of that intelligentsia, which also included Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and, for a time, George Moore, was to share in the ideology at the heart of the greatest cultural concentration this country has known. Furthermore, the obligation to provide appropriate music at the interval for the small theatre orchestra must have been a marvellous training ground for an aspiring composer and must also have helped hone Larchet's facility in arranging Irish airs. These short recitals became an integral part of

an evening in the Abbey and were appreciated by patrons as is attested to by the following correspondence in a Dublin journal:

Sir, - As you correctly state this week, Senator Yeats said all that was necessary regarding the Abbey Theatre so far as drama is concerned. It is the plays that have attracted attention abroad for the Abbey and Ireland, but there is another important factor which is worthy of notice, especially to patrons of the Abbey.

The music under Dr Larchet for the last eighteen years was an important feature of the theatre. Dr Larchet set a standard for all the theatres and picture-houses in Dublin. This fact must have manifested itself to all patrons of the Abbey Theatre, for the appreciation of the music has always been marked. We are all inclined to associate good plays and good acting with the Abbey, and hence inclined to forget the other important factor - Dr Larchet and his colleagues.⁴⁷

Larchet employed these years to perfect his technical fluency not through compositions but through arrangements of traditional airs. A fine example and a particular favourite of Larchet was the Lament for Youth (Caoineadh na hÓige).⁴⁸ Some catalogues show this as dating from 1939; in fact it was written some 20 years earlier, although it was considerably later before it was published by the central stationery office (Oifig an tSoláthair). In so many respects it is a characteristic piece. Here, as so often, he constructs a work from a pair of contrasting themes; in this case he employs the slow air 'My Gentle Harp' from Moore's Melodies, and the 'Galway Reel' from the Feis Ceoil Collection to represent respectively the reflectiveness of old age and the spontaneity of youth. Larchet's contribution is in first contrasting and ultimately combining these two attractive airs, and in setting them so sensitively. As one would expect of a work which had its origin in the Abbey, it is scored for a small orchestra of strings, woodwind, two French horns, and timpani. A simple ternary design points the essential contrast; following statements of the slower air first in strings and then in full orchestra, the skipping reel is introduced in clarinet and travels through the ensemble before a dramatic interruption by a plaintive oboe. The return of the first theme is accompanied by gentle echoes of the gaiety of youth set in

Ex. 42

Con brio

Fl. *f* *arco*

Ob.

Clar. (A) *f* *arco*

Fg. *ff*

Horn (F) *ff*

Timp. (D & A) *f*

Vln 1 *ff*

Vln 2 *ff*

Vla *ff*

Vcl. *ff* pizz.

C.B. *ff*

Allargando a tempo primo

rall.

Allargando a tempo primo

arco

pizz. A

arco

The image shows a page of musical notation for a string orchestra. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has six staves: the top two are for Violins I and II, the next two are for Violas and Cellos, and the bottom two are for Double Basses. The second system has four staves: the top two are for Violins I and II, and the bottom two are for Cellos and Double Basses. The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and triplets. The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system continues the piece.

high woodwind leading to a resigned but peaceful ending (Ex.42). The ascendancy of the melodies is never in question, and the early vintage of the work is affirmed by the simple but effective diatonic setting.

Larchet was a miniaturist, and his small output is composed of short compositions and arrangements. Even those few examples of medium duration are in essence compilations of shorter independent sections. His penchant for linking contrasting pieces is also evident in the two pairings for string orchestra, the Dirge of Ossian and Macananty's Reel (1940) and Carlow Tune and Tinkers' Wedding (1952). The Dirge of Ossian is a particularly fine piece of writing. It is an intense elegy which retains a dignified restraint over its long course. Larchet

achieves this by opening the orchestra to eight individual lines making for a rich sonority. The lyrical first theme in violin is characteristically ambiguous, opening in a minor mode but quickly suggesting the major tonality (Ex.43).

Ex.43



The initial minor sixth of its second period, also rendered by the first violin, is especially poignant (Ex.44). While it is naturally more limited in its technical ambitions and scope, it might yet put the listener in mind of Strauss's Metamorphosen.

Ex.44



The accompanying reel is the complete antithesis being lively and light, and even the trio with its rather obvious drone effect is rescued from the commonplace by some adroit scoring. It too is an arrangement, on this occasion of 'John Macananty's Welcome Home' a traditional air given as 314 in the Joyce Collection. Harmonically it is far simpler than its companion, and Larchet's ability to work contentedly within a diatonic framework is affirmed by the interesting fact that there is not in this piece a single accidental. The gaiety of the initial idea is preserved throughout the movement (Ex.45), while the theme of the trio is equally joyous.

Ex.45

Vivace

The mild dissonances observable in the third phrase are a feature of Larchet's style (Ex.46). The work as a whole is dedicated to Sir Granville Bantock.

Ex.46

Vivace

The Two Characteristic Pieces, the name given to the combination of Carlow Tune and Tinkers' Wedding, are also based on traditional airs, in this instance taken from the Petrie and Joyce collections, and are dedicated to Sir John Barbirolli. The imitative opening of the gentle Carlow Tune set in an uncluttered accompaniment with the short semiquaver of the first violins echoing the air is also representative (Ex.47). The lyrical first movement is well complemented by the humorous Tinkers' Wedding which adds a xylophone to the string

Ex.47

Grazioso e calmato

Musical score for the first system of Ex. 47. The score includes six staves: Solo vln, Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, Vcl., and C.B. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo/mood is 'Grazioso e calmato'. The Solo vln, Vln 1, and Vln 2 staves are mostly silent, with a single note marked *mf* appearing in the second measure of each. The Vla staff has a melodic line starting in the second measure, marked *mf*. The Vcl. staff is silent until the second measure, where it has a chord marked *mf* and 'Divisi'. The C.B. staff is silent until the second measure, where it has a note marked *mf* and 'pizz.'.

Musical score for the second system of Ex. 47. This system continues the instrumental parts from the first system. The Solo vln staff has a melodic line starting in the second measure, marked *mp*. The Vln 1 and Vln 2 staves have dotted quarter notes. The Vla staff has a melodic line starting in the second measure, marked *p*. The Vcl. staff has a dotted quarter note, marked *p*. The C.B. staff has a dotted quarter note, marked *p*.

The image shows a musical score for six staves. The top three staves are in treble clef, and the bottom three are in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music consists of a melodic line in the upper staves and a cello part in the lower staves. The dynamic marking 'mp' (mezzo-piano) is used in the third, fourth, and sixth staves.

orchestra. The appeal of this piece has much to do with the light and intelligent scoring which allows the tune to be heard initially in the cellos (Ex.48).

Yet another example of Larchet's mature orchestral style is the late work By the Waters of Moyle (Ar Thaobh sruth na Maoile) completed in 1957. It carries the subtitle 'Nocturne for Orchestra' and is scored for a small ensemble. Based on the legend that inspired Harty's Children of Lir, it is a fine arrangement of the traditional modal air 'Arrah, my dear Eveleen' better known by Moore's title 'Silent, O Moyle', a tale of such power and an air of such beauty that together have held an enduring fascination for Irish composers (Ex.49). Stanford had been drawn to the air in his 1895 restoration of Moore's melodies and had condemned his compatriot for destroying the character of the tune and obliterating its scale by sharpening the seventh. The little-remembered Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer, who was born in Middlesex

Ex.48

Allegro giocoso $\text{♩} = 120$

Vla
Pizz. *p*

Vcl. *pp*

C.B. Pizz. *p* *mp*

pp

Pizz.

in 1882 and had studied with Stanford at the Royal College of Music before settling in Ireland in 1909, employed both the saga and the air to fashion an opera Sruth na Maoile (The Sea of Moyle) which was produced in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre under the direction of Vincent O'Brien in July 1923, and during the Tailteann Games the following year. The libretto was supplied by Thomas O'Kelly, who had earlier collaborated with O'Dwyer on Eithne.⁴⁹

Ex.49

Espressivo

Sil- ent O Moyle! be the roar of thy wa- ter,
Break not, ye breez- es! your chain of re- pose,

By the Waters of Moyle can claim to be one of the best known of Larchet's works. He invests this arrangement with sensitive writing for individual instruments, notably flute, horn, and viola. The austere and atmospheric opening provides little indication of the glorious melody to follow. As is his wont, Larchet provides a central contrast with a lively dance set in the Dorian mode. The modal feeling, so necessary for a satisfactory setting of this air, is retained when the home tonality of B flat major returns. The piece concludes with the recall of the initial mood expressed in a recitative-like flute line and a doleful descending viola line.

One especially interesting piece which is not recorded in the catalogues and survives only in the original manuscript having received just one performance is the ballet music Bluebeard's Castle composed for the Abbey at a time when the theatre was desirous of founding a school of dancing. More engaging perhaps is the fact that among the young dancers who took part in that sole performance was the Blessington-born Ninette de Valois, later Dame Ninette, who was largely responsible for the creation of the Royal Ballet in London.⁵⁰

Ex. 50

Andante *mp*

And

per- fumes, there was one big jar of scent, I

mp

cresc.

brought it in, and there in the still air It was too

much, It ov-er-power'd me, I was so

hap-py that I could lie down.

Dame Ninette shared her Huguenot ancestry with Larchet, and had returned to her native country at the express invitation of Yeats to assist in the proposed venture. The ballet in which she appeared was dedicated to Lennox Robinson, the score showing the work to have been completed on 2 September 1932. It calls for a substantial orchestra, chorus, and two narrators. One of these is a spoken part but the other is supplied by a tenor, Cyril, whose rich opening aria was a particular favourite with the composer (Ex.50). It is surprising, to say the least, and a further indictment of the paucity of opportunity for performance through the subsequent decades, that such a sizable creation has remained silent for over half a century.

The modest proportions of Larchet's orchestral output are not only a factor of a heterogeneous talent inclined to accept a taxing burden

of work. As the history of the ballet demonstrates, they are equally a reflection of the scarce opportunities for performance. Larchet had achieved middle age before there was available a permanent ensemble capable of rendering such works. That is why his involvement in the Abbey was so important, but even here there was but a small group of musicians. Thus many of the arrangements written for the theatre were conceived for humble forces and were only later rescored. The Lament for Youth affords one example, while the two popular sets of Twelve Irish Airs (1917 and 1922) furnish another. The latter were initially written for violin and piano, were then transcribed for string quartet, and only later scored for orchestra. These airs are simply wrought with each melody clearly in the ascendant over a warm and conventional accompaniment, the latter evincing some characteristic traits such as the penchant for chromatic movement in inner parts.

The inclination to rescore smaller works is apparent also in connection with his songs, and indeed the vocal works provide the best examples of Larchet's original voice. He was singularly fond of an early song Padraic the Fiddler (1919) written to a text by Padraig Gregory. This evocative melody won deserved acclaim in a memorable recording with John McCormack accompanied by Edwin Schneider and with the haunting violin obbligato played by Fritz Kreisler. The same poet is responsible for the text of another fine early work An Ardglass Boat Song composed the following year. Larchet was particularly complemented by the assessment of his friend and fellow academic, Walter Starkie, who stated that these two songs 'are true evocations of the Irish spirit'.⁵¹ There is a marked similarity in taste for authors between Larchet and Harty. Larchet turned to Emily Lawless for one of his last and finest songs The Cormorant (1947), while Elizabeth Shane provides the text for two of the most popular The Wee Boy in Bed (1943) and Wee Hughie (1947), the last of which is dedicated to his wife Madeline, whom he had met as a student in the Royal Irish Academy and who was a formidable musician in her own right, eventually joining her husband as a teaching colleague on the staff there. Larchet was to transcribe these three late songs for small orchestra.

One of the most accessible and immediate mediums for the portrayal of a distinctive note is the choir, and Larchet's association with

Ex. 51

Andante

p
 Be- lieve me if all those en- dear- ing young charms which I
p
 Be- lieve me if all those en- dear- ing young charms which I
p
 Be- lieve me if all those en- dear- ing young charms which I

cresc. gaze on so fond- ly to day, *dim.* Were to
cresc. gaze on so fond- ly to- day, *dim.* Were to
cresc. gaze on so fond- ly to day, *dim.* Were to

cresc. change by to- mor- row, and fleet in my arms, like
cresc. change by to- mor- row, and fleet in my arms, like
cresc. change by to- mor- row, and fleet in my arms, like

dim. fai- ry gifts fad- ing a way.
dim. fai- ry gifts fad- ing a - way.
dim. fai- ry gifts fad- ing a - way.

various schools allied to his paramount concern for the advancement of musical literacy and desire that the nation be better acquainted with the traditional store of melodies, led him to produce a wealth of arrangements which taken together constitute a valuable contribution to the creation, at very least, of a distinctive consciousness. Such songs as Ailliliú na Gamhna (1929), and An Spailpín Fánach (1939) are finely wrought and for many a boy and girl represented their introduction to the native musical heritage. They are but two of a number of settings for two-part choir. The earliest such piece, in this case for SSA, is an arrangement of Moore's Believe me if all those endearing young charms (1918) which was published by Pigott & Co. in 1918 (Ex.51). Another of Moore's melodies, At the Mid-Hour of Night (1923), is the earliest of the published settings for full mixed choir. With his urban background and training, Larchet was himself a victim of the division of tradition which he devoted himself to removing. His introduction to the indigenous practice came largely through Colm Ó Lochlainn, a Dublin printer, with whom Larchet published in 1933 an influential collection of 12 traditional Irish songs for voice and piano under the title An Claisceadal.⁵² But Ó Lochlainn was none too impressed with this cooperation, nor indeed with any of the trained musicians with whom he came into contact.

It is a matter for deep regret that in my long life-time, associated with Gaelic activities and with a special interest in keeping alive the true traditional style of singing, none of the professional musicians bothered their heads to learn Irish or seek to understand to the full the traditional renderings of Irish Song, the bedrock and foundation of all musical development.⁵³

The Legend of Lough Rea provides best example of an extensive early composition by Larchet. Subtitled 'The Death Sign', this solemn setting of a poem by Lageniensis for unaccompanied mixed voices was dedicated to Dr Culwick's daughter, Miss Florence, and to her able choir and was published in 1920 by Stainer and Bell in London. It is rather strict and academic in construction, its ternary design being a favoured form. It opens with a fugal idea in c minor, the four voices entering in ascending order from the bass and with answers in the expected g minor tonality (Ex.52).

Ex. 52

Woe to the land! for the warn- ing is giv'n, the

death- sign is seen from the shores of Lough Rea. The

Woe to the land for the warn- ing is giv'n, the
death - sign is seen, The

death- sign is seen from the shores of Lough Rea. The
death - sign is seen, The

mp

Woe to the land! for the warn- ing is giv'n
 death - sign is seen,
 death - sign is seen,

The central passage is a slow march with a chorale-like melody presented first in tenor and then in soprano and set in the relative major. The recapitulation of the initial fugal theme sees each of the lines dividing allowing the work conclude with a rich eight-part sonority that anticipates the later Dirge of Ossian. The allure of the voice is evidenced in the fact that Larchet's final compositions are for choir. A pair of motets for three equal voices and organ written in 1959 was followed two years later by a further set of three motets for four-part a cappella choir. This final group with the Lenten tract Domine, non secundum, the sequence for Easter Sunday Dic Nobis Maria, and a setting of psalm 107 Cantate Domino, was written at a time when Larchet freed of his multifarious responsibilities could again turn to the task of composition. They are dedicated to the memory of his wife and exhibit some of his finest original writing, and fittingly they were performed at his funeral service in 1967. This set of three motets is not typical of his work as a whole, but it is telling, and indeed appropriate for such a Francophile, that his ultimate statement is stylistically consistent with the late French romantic school.

Larchet's is a crucial role in the evolving history of music in Ireland. His was not a great original creative voice, nor would he have claimed to possess such. The fact that he was a miniaturist was in part a consequence of his formal limitations which showed in a disinclination to manage larger designs. The all too obvious attraction to simple ternary patterns which resulted was also in part a factor of his allegiance to the indigenous heritage, which did not lend

itself to extended construction. His essential contribution was made through his teaching in University College Dublin and especially in the Royal Irish Academy of Music where every leading composer for generations, even those who attended Trinity College, benefited from his tutelage. He was also singular in another crucial respect: he followed the path of Sir Robert Stewart and was in consequence one of the few Irish-born composers who was wholly educated at home and subsequently made his career here. That this was so demonstrates in a practical way that there was real improvement in the situation, despite his justifiable and frequently-aired dissatisfaction with the state of music in Ireland. Through both precept and example he set out consciously to foster a national expression largely based on folksong. His admiration for the achievements of Smetana, Dvořák, and especially for the miniatures of Grieg which are founded on peasant musical idioms, provided him with a model. He was possessed of a sure technical command, as his training would suggest, and while he employed this in pursuit of his goals, he was always conscious to shelter the integrity of the traditional airs. To his students he advocated a simplicity of approach, and he urged them to avoid imposing anything on the melodies, just as his own arrangements demonstrate an uncluttered canvas free of sophisticated harmonies. Moreover, there is complete consistency between his creative works which so predominantly concern themselves with the indigenous note and with the setting of traditional airs, and his principal pedagogical labours. The correlation is clearly evident in his own late assessment of his work in the university; it is a telling summation revealing his characteristically moderate national perspective stated in a phrase that recalls the praise of Walter Starkie which had so touched him.

The aim has been to encourage students to adapt the native musical idiom to modern harmonic developments and thus to create a school of composers which would be truly evocative of the Irish spirit.⁵⁴

While Larchet contributed to the great modal debate which was to the fore in any consideration of Irish music during the first half of the century, his music and his writings, including the passage above, demonstrate that he steered a median course, determined to fashion a distinctive style without abandoning the structures and forms of the

Ex. 53

♩ = 144 **Allegro**

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first two staves begin with a dynamic marking of *mf* and end with *p*. The bottom two staves also begin with *mf* and end with *p*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together and others held as half notes.

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first two staves begin with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* and end with a fermata. The bottom two staves begin with *sfz* and *cresc.*, and end with *mf* and a triplet of eighth notes. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together and others held as half notes.

The third system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The first two staves begin with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and end with a fermata. The bottom two staves begin with *sfz* and feature a triplet of eighth notes. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together and others held as half notes.

dominant aesthetic. He epitomizes the liberal approach to a national idiom both through his teaching and in his creative endeavours.

Mention may be made here of some of the earliest minor disciples of this school. The Wexford-born Thomas Kelly (1917-1985), known as T.C.Kelly, was an occasional composer who wrote in an attractive and accessible style. For the second half of his life he was head of music at the reputable Jesuit boarding and day school, Clongowes Wood College, near Clane in County Kildare. He too was a miniaturist who, in both his arrangements and compositions, concentrated on constructing an Irish idiom and employed native themes in order to do so. His approach is consistent with that first explicated by Larchet. A contemporary, the Dublin-resident Walter Beckett (b.1914), was another who created in small forms. He was one of those who had come under Larchet's influence at the Royal Irish Academy of Music rather than at the university; he was a graduate of Trinity College from which he gained his Mus.D. The broader influence of such as Vaughan Williams, and particularly Delius, is manifest in the early compositions which appeared in the 1940s, as it is in some late works such as Goldenhair (1980), a short song cycle for mezzo-soprano or baritone and piano, or the four-movement Quartet for Strings completed in 1987. This work unites an older technical resource, such as the pizzicato fugue which constitutes the final movement, with a delight in dissonance allayed by frequent use of parallel thirds evident from the very opening (Ex.53).

Ex.54



More representative is his Irish Rhapsody No.1 for full orchestra, written and premiered in 1957. It is cast in one continuous movement although this subdivides into various sections all of which are built on traditional airs. Modal harmonies, triplet figures, and the intermittent use of the flattened third in the dominant chord, and indeed the use of the flattened seventh in general such as in the central oboe theme (Ex.54), all attest to the conscious desire to devise an unmistakably native idiom. The opening figure in cor anglais demonstrates rhythmic flexibility (Ex.55).

Ex.55

Andante sostenuto

Cor ang.

When traditional airs are quoted, such as the reel 'The Milliner's Daughter' taken from the O'Neill Collection, they are invariably set unobtrusively. Neither Kelly nor Beckett possessed a major creative voice, but their labours and the work of others who followed evinces both the enduring appeal of a national expression and the seminal influence exercised by Larchet.

The Army School of Music

Aside from this influence on individuals, Larchet's prodigious energy led him to an involvement with various institutions which encouraged music-making. He followed on from Esposito as a principal supporter of the annual calendar of chamber music recitals in the Royal Dublin Society, and he was invited to become first president of the Dublin Grand Opera Society which was founded in February 1941. The latter was quickly to establish its reputation and to make an important contribution to the cultural life of the city, being the first native operatic enterprise to thrive. In the years immediately following independence Ireland had to rely on the occasional performances of visiting companies for its experience of opera. Among the visitors

were the Carl Rosa and the O'Mara companies and the marvellously named Moody-Manners Opera Company. In 1928 Signor Adelio Viani, who was professor of singing in the Royal Irish Academy of Music, established the Dublin Operatic Society as a first resident enterprise designed to serve the opera-loving public of the metropolis. The society survived with some limited success until superseded by the Dublin Grand Opera Society. Of the first body, a contemporary account noted

the Society, for its productions, provides a chorus of about seventy voices and uses the best available talent among its members for the filling of subsidiary roles. In this way promising Irish artists are given graded experience and as they play their parts in the company of the best available English operatic singers, who are specially engaged for the various operas, such experience is of enormous practical and artistic value. Added to this the operas are produced by an experienced Covent Garden producer, and two out of every three presented are conducted by a Covent Garden conductor.... If a criticism must be made it is firstly, that working under such a scheme, at least a week's performances must be given before individual efforts begin to merge into team-work, and secondly, that, with limited financial resources the Society, undertaking the engagement of highly paid operatic stars, must confine its attention to operas that are sure 'box-office' propositions.⁵⁵

But the major difficulty facing the Dublin Operatic Society was that of engaging and paying for an adequate orchestra. As the same reviewer noted:

So on the one hand we have a chorus and subsidiary principals drilled and rehearsed for some months, and professional artists who are intimate in every sense with the work in hand, and, on the other, an orchestra gathered together at more or less the last minute, owing to financial considerations, such orchestra having one short rehearsal, or at most two, for each opera to be produced. Anything like adequate orchestral playing may not be expected under such circumstances, for the orchestra should have at least equal knowledge with the stage personnel of the work in hand. Adequate performance could be had only from an established orchestra...⁵⁶

This was yet another promising enterprise restricted by the want of a permanent professional orchestra. It was the desire to see such a body formed that led Larchet to one of his most interesting and exceptional appointments, that of musical adviser to the Irish army. Larchet had accepted this position in 1923 from the enterprising minister for defence, General Richard Mulcahy, who wished his army to be not solely a defence force but 'a works of public service'.⁵⁷ Mulcahy was an especially influential member of the government and indeed it was the opinion of George Bernard Shaw that 'there is nothing but General Mulcahy's conscience to prevent him from making himself President tomorrow by a coup d'état; and his successors may be less conscientious and more ambitious than he'.⁵⁸ He was, however, far too much the visionary to be a successful politician. His idiosyncratic view of the future shaping of Irish society was fashioned by the prevailing vocationalist ideas and by the writings of AE, George Russell. Ernest Boyd noted that AE's The National Being, published in Dublin in 1916, was

an original and singularly beautiful contribution to the otherwise hackneyed literature of contemporary Irish politics... it established the author's fame as one of the few clear and absolutely disinterested minds engaged upon the Irish problem as part of the general problem of humanity's evolution towards a new social order.⁵⁹

It was in The National Being that AE turned his attention to the army as a source of national regeneration.

Why should not every young man in Ireland give up two years of his life in a comradeship of labour with other young men, and be employed under skilled direction in great works of public utility, in the erection of public buildings, the beautifying of our cities, reclamation of waste lands, afforestation and other desirable objects?⁶⁰

Mulcahy was wholly in sympathy, and his espousal of AE's philosophy was further animated by the prevailing political necessity to reduce the size of an over-large force. The retraining of servicemen appeared to offer the ideal solution. Mulcahy required bands for his army, but

more than this, he envisaged that they could provide in time the nucleus of a permanent orchestra. Professor Larchet was requested to formulate the musical design, a task he undertook with diligence and commendable thoroughness. At the centre of the detailed scheme he proposed was the creation of a school of music within the army which would specialize in training woodwind, brass, and percussion players, and that these instrumentalists would, after a short period of service in an army band, be available to a national symphony orchestra, or, furnished with a recognized qualification, return to their own localities as teachers ready to play their part in raising the level of musical literacy. Larchet envisioned in the proposed Army School of Music, the title that he contrived for the project, not an isolated and determinate institution, but one which which would perfectly complement the existing musical academies. The Royal Irish Academy of Music had its excellent schools of piano and string teaching, but the Municipal School of Music had long since abandoned its original concentration on wind teaching. Accordingly, Mulcahy and Larchet were in agreement that the germinal army might gainfully be employed in rectifying the consequent dearth of competent wind players. Such a scheme demanded seasoned leadership. Thus on Larchet's advice, the government looked abroad to find a suitable director eventually engaging Wilhelm Fritz Brase, an experienced and energetic German musician who not only exceeded all expectations in developing the Army School of Music and its attendant bands but who in addition made a salient contribution to the general cause of music in Ireland. It was the intuition of Terence Brown, recorded in his comprehensive history of Ireland's social and cultural history from 1922-1985 that

Since independence musical life in Dublin had languished. In the 1920s only the energy of Colonel Fritz Brase, a German conductor who at the government's request established the Free State Army Bands, and with an enthusiasm beyond the call of duty, brought life to the Dublin Philharmonic Society, for a few years giving Dubliners the chance to hear orchestral music, saved the city from complete mediocrity in musical matters.⁶¹

Brase arrived in Ireland in 1923 possessed of a formidable education in music and having acquired an appreciable reputation in his native land as a composer, arranger, and conductor. Under the guidance

of Larchet and of Seamus Clandillon, a journalist and traditional singer of note who was to become first director of the national broadcasting service, Brase directed his talents towards the cultivation of a characteristic Irish style. He achieved this with commendable alacrity and produced an abundance of works of an high degree of craftsmanship, replete with his distinguishing late romantic resource, although they are in the main arrangements rather than compositions. In centring on what were essentially suites of Irish airs for various media, Brase was departing from his erstwhile practice in order to accord with the advice he was receiving. The marches for military band, based on traditional airs, are finer than anything that had previously existed in the repertoire, while the six fine Irish fantasias, written for band and later scored for orchestra, might put the listener in mind of Stanford's rhapsodies even though they are less symphonic in conception. That an immigrant musician should embrace the indigenous tradition so unreservedly and with such success speaks volumes not only for Brase's musicianship and for the quality of that tradition, but also for the modishness of a distinctive national expression.

Brase's arrival was not to everyone's liking. That the government of a newly independent state should deem it necessary to look abroad in order to engage a suitable musician incited a chorus of disapproval. The most xenophobic reaction came ironically from Robert O'Dwyer who was greatly nettled that his earlier successes with 'Ireland's Own' had not earned him the appointment.⁶² More telling criticisms were advanced in connection with Brase's treatment of traditional airs. Dr W.H.Grattan Flood, an enthusiastic if capricious historian and organist of St Aidan's Cathedral, Enniscorthy, stated after his first hearing of Brase's Irish Fantasia No.1 that he had not 'the least intention of minimizing the wonderful results achieved by Colonel Brase' but proffered the suggestion that 'a modal treatment should be adopted'.⁶³ Brase chose to ignore the advice and the subsequent application of his rich harmonic resource in the later fantasias was deprecated by the more defensive national school; Clandillon attributed what he considered this miscalculation to the want of good guidance.

The first Fantasia is far more distinctively Gaelic than the second or third. This, I

understand, is because at that time Col. Brase had the advantage of an Irish musical adviser, with whom he could consult as to what tunes were suitable for inclusion in his selections, and what were foreign. This was a wise policy, as Col. Brase great musician though he is, could not be expected to distinguish Gaelic music from Anglo-Irish and foreign music in imitation of the Gaelic. In fact, many musicians born in Ireland are unable to do so. It is, therefore, very regrettable that for economic or other reasons it was thought necessary to dispense with the services of a musical adviser, and it is to be hoped that the policy of having such an adviser to consult with Col. Brase may be reverted to. It is not fair to the latter to leave him absolutely alone to face the problems of Gaelic and Anglo-Irish music without competent assistance.... Col. Brase should try the experiment of writing suites of Gaelic airs with modal arrangements. We know he can do this just as easily as the other, as I have heard him improvise delightful modal accompaniments to some of my airs.⁶⁴

The Dublin Philharmonic Society

Brase's contribution to practical music in the country was in inverse proportion to his peculiarly national creative legacy; if the latter was strictly confined, then the former was generously abundant. The officers and men of the Army School of Music were to make a telling impact notably through their involvement with the Dublin Philharmonic Society and with the fledgling broadcasting service. The Philharmonic Society which Brown, above, singles out for special mention, was a fusion of two preexisting musical groups which for the decade it survived presented each year a challenging series of concerts including both choral and symphonic works with a number being performed in Ireland for the first time. While many laboured towards its success, it was Brase's determination to provide his adopted city with symphonic music which was crucial to its progress. Despite his lifetime of service in military bands, his training and inclination were towards the symphonic repertoire, and he was at heart, if only irregularly in practice, an orchestral conductor. One of the beneficial consequences of the publicity surrounding the Army No.1 Band was the burgeoning public awareness of the need for a permanent national symphony

orchestra. Brase was to the fore in the Irish Musical League, a body founded in 1926, which sought to encourage 1,200 subscribers to contribute one guinea per annum which was the estimated minimum required to establish an orchestra. But only 400 donors could be found and the project was doomed.⁶⁵ Undaunted, Brase gathered together a disparate group of musicians, including wind, brass, and percussion elements from the army, to form the Dublin Symphony Orchestra. This proved the most efficacious of what had been a series of attempts to stimulate musical activity in the wake of the collapse of Esposito's Dublin Orchestral Society. In July 1919 Hester Travers Smith had submitted an article to The Irish Statesman advocating the inauguration of a musical league. This was yet another attempt to generate some industry which was founded on an earlier English model; in Farewell, My Youth Bax describes with great good humour the establishment of the Musical League in 1909.⁶⁶ The proposed epigone issued from Smith's perception of the abysmal record of activity in the years following the Rising.

What we should, however, urge most strongly on our Dublin Musical League - if it should ever see the light - is the indisputable fact that the public here and elsewhere is far too ready to attend concerts in order to hear the artist and not the music performed. The Dublin Musical League should aim at interesting the public in music, perhaps more especially modern music, as undoubtedly it is an adventure, and not always an easy and agreeable adventure, for those who are not professional musicians to grasp new musical ideas....

The Dublin Musical League should attempt to provide us with musical lectures, illustrated, if possible, and even more desirable would be the formation of a musical lending library so that students who cannot afford the present high prices of music might have an opportunity of becoming familiar with it. The most important of the functions of the League, however, should be the holding of a series of concerts every winter, the performers to be drawn entirely from Ireland, the music to be both vocal and instrumental and of educational value, the artists to be adequately paid in order that the works performed should be fully rehearsed and encouragement given to young musicians to study new music.⁶⁷

Smith would differ from Brase in the inherently didactic nature of her design, but they would have coincided on her initial argument. The celebrity concert had been a mainstay of Dublin musical life during the first two decades of the century. While it had benefits in providing some music-making, it also inured audiences to novelty and freed the musical population from the responsibility to provide its own music; in this respect the celebrity concert can be said to have impaired the development of native executive skill and to have confirmed audiences in their expectations of a particular type of programme and performance. It was furthermore embarrassing for a nation on the threshold of achieving an independent polity, and one vaunting an opulent musical inheritance, to admit its inability to provide for its own musical needs. The advertisements announcing the appearance of the inimitable Enrico Caruso at the Theatre Royal on 20 August 1909 evidences the popularity of the celebrity concert and even more so the declining position of Dublin as a musical centre:

First appearance in the provinces of the world's greatest tenor.⁶⁸

Such dependence on visiting artistes was not in concord with a chauvinistic age. Almost a year after her article advocating the establishment of a musical league, Smith reported that such an organization was in the process of formation, and she expressed the hope

that Dublin will take the opportunity now offered and endeavour to hold her own as a centre of musical culture.⁶⁹

Her optimism was misplaced; the league did not materialize. Later in 1920 the regular critic of The Irish Statesman, H.F.Norman, added his voice to the call for such a body capable of providing the larger works of the vocal and orchestral repertoire in the capital city. He surveyed the paucity of domestic enterprise with concern, recording praise for the few associations which laboured on steadfastly, such as Feis Ceoil, the chamber series of the Royal Dublin Society, and the recitals in the Abbey Theatre organized by Larchet.

And on the whole it was from these - from the ensemble performances at the Abbey and a few solo recitals there - that one got most pleasure and most hope. Of course, the hearing of the Beecham Symphony Orchestra, of the Brodsky Quartet, of Madame Suggia, of Mr Rosing, were not only events, but festivals. But there is this to say for concerts I attended in which - to take names almost at haphazard - Signor Esposito or Mr Schofield or Mr Mundy played to us, or our Dublin singers sang, that they gave us better music than, taking them as a whole, the imported concerts of the entrepreneurs brought us. A star artist or two, a galaxy of nebulae, a programme deliberately provincialised to please some third-rate British city - that was too often the formula of the importers. And I fear that we ourselves played down to it sometimes and gave indiscriminating encores to the mediocre selections of indiscriminating programme makers.⁷⁰

In subsequent years there were the occasional commendable ventures such as the orchestra of some 34 instrumentalists assembled by Larchet which in February 1925 presented a symphonic concert in the Royal Dublin Society including in the long and varied programme Schumann's Piano Concerto in a minor with Rhona Clarke as soloist and Beethoven's First Symphony. It moved H.F. Norman to ask

Is one never to hear these artists again for a twelvemonth, or is Dublin going to begin from the germ of a full orchestra to demand its rights as the nation's capital?⁷¹

Such periodic concerts could be the occasion for a decidedly nationalistic expression. St Patrick's Day presented the ideal opportunity, and in 1927 Larchet gathered a small orchestra with the Cork-based Signor Ferruccio Grossi as leader to give in the Royal Dublin Society a miscellaneous programme of Irish music for which, it was proudly claimed, 'the Authors, Composers, and Artistes are all of Irish birth or parentage', a prerequisite evidently overlooked in the case of the Milanese Signor Grossi.⁷² The fare included Harty's overture 'To an Irish Comedy' [sic], the Irish Rhapsody No.1 by Stanford, along with songs by both these composers and by Charles Wood, and with further instrumental works by Larchet and Percy Grainger, and

a selection of traditional Irish airs on the violin rendered by Arthur Darley.

Rather like the desert oasis, these rare occasions served further to illuminate the habitual paucity of activity. Yet another attempt to establish a musical society was instigated in 1926. In proposing this latest venture, H.P.Boland drew attention to an aspect of the problem that was to exercise many who were interested during the middle years of the century.

The trouble in this matter is not (certainly not altogether) that Dublin is not interested in the higher music. There is plenty of evidence to the contrary in the existence and work of numerous small musical societies. But the very number of such separate bodies only serves to emphasise the fact that our higher musical interests are dissipated in sectional effort, none of the societies being capable by itself of producing the great works in an adequate way, and none having the resources required for really good orchestral work. A thorough and well-organised combination of all our existing resources in one society can alone make that possible.⁷³

Boland had here touched upon a major and persistent debilitating factor: the want of direction and leadership. Fritz Brase, as he was popularly known, was inherently a man of action, and his devotion to orchestral music along with the growing clamour for some permanent ensemble combined in the formation of the Dublin Symphony Orchestra in January 1927, which became the first such organization to prosper since the dissolution of Esposito's society. In March of that year the orchestra combined with Turner Huggard's Dublin Philharmonic Choral Society, another recent innovation, to present a concert commemorating the centenary of Beethoven's death. This initial cooperation proved so rewarding that Brase proposed a formal amalgamation and thus the Dublin Philharmonic Society was born in July 1927. It was a novel departure, musical societies being given more to division than confederation; it also presented a positive response to the critique of H.P.Boland. That Brase instigated the merger is corroborated by the first annual report:

The Council wish to place on record their high appreciation of the magnificent services

which Col. Brase has rendered this Society. First by the wonderful way in which he built up the Orchestra composed as it largely is of members who are Amateur Players, most of them unacquainted with orchestral work. Secondly by suggesting the amalgamation of the two original Societies, Col. Brase has never spared himself in any way, giving up a large proportion of private time not only to the many rehearsals of the Orchestra and Choir, but also by drawing up the Programmes and attending the numerous meetings of the various Committees, and there is no doubt that the major portion of the success attained by the Society has been due not only to his great gifts as a conductor and musician, but also to his inspiring leadership in all activities of the Society.⁷⁴

The urban Philharmonic Society had become a feature of the European scene in the nineteenth century and many, such as that in London which had been in existence for over 100 years and that in Berlin for 40 years, had made a decided contribution to musical advancement. The London society provided the inspiration for the establishment of a Philharmonic Society in Dublin in 1826 that had been responsible 30 years later for the first performance in Ireland of Beethoven's Choral Symphony.⁷⁵ Many years subsequent to the demise of this body, a successful revival was mounted. In October 1908 the first annual general meeting of the new Dublin Philharmonic was held in the hall of the Royal University buildings. The assembly took place on the very night that the young John Larchet was conducting his first performance at the Abbey Theatre. The membership of some 230 recorded its satisfaction with the achievements of the first short season since the foundation of the society the previous autumn. It had produced two concerts under the direction of Charles George Marchant with soloists drawn exclusively from the membership: the first on 23 January 1908 was a performance of Coleridge-Taylor's Hiawatha's Wedding Feast held in the Antient Concert Rooms, and the second production was Handel's Judas Maccabaeus given on 2 April in the hall of the university which was to become its regular home for the short period of its existence.⁷⁶

The organization that emerged in July 1927 was thus the third incarnation of a lofty ideal, and while it survived only a decade it

was arguably the the most splendid of the three. So successful was the initial Beethoven centenary concert on 27 March 1927, devoted to the compositions of the dedicatee, that it was deemed necessary to repeat it the following month. An orchestra of some 75 instrumentalists, with woodwind, brass, and percussion drawn exclusively from the Army No.1 Band, opened the concert with Leonora No.3 under Colonel Brase's direction, and then with a chorus of almost 200 voices presented the Kyrie and Gloria from Missa Solemnis and the complete Ninth Symphony, the former conducted by Turner Huggard, the latter by Brase. For the occasion the still independent societies produced a souvenir programme of an high quality, with detailed and illustrated analytical notes by Harold White along with a short essay on Beethoven by Dr Walter Starkie, who was also to play in the ranks of the first violins alongside another Fellow of Trinity College, Gilbert Smyly, and with section leaders including Joshua Watson, Petite O'Hara, Nancy Lord, and Joseph Schofield. This standard of presentation was to become the hallmark of the united society which inaugurated its first season of five concerts that autumn, which as in succeeding years comprised orchestral and large choral works. The Philharmonic was initially faithful to its policy of giving opportunity to Irish artistes or musicians based here. The violinist Petite O'Hara, cellist Ida Starkie-O'Reilly, and pianist Rhoda Coghill, all members of the society, each appeared as a soloist in that inaugural season, and in the years immediately following others who accepted the invitation included the pianists, Dina Copeman, Dorothy Stokes, Rhona Marshall, Edith Boxwell, Frederick Stone, Claude Biggs, and Victor Love; violinists, Nancy Lord, and Bay Jellett; and singers, Jean Nolan, Joan Burke, Norah Lough, John McCormack, John Nolan, W.F.Watt, Joseph O'Neill, Maestro Viani, Robert McCullagh, Frank Cowle, and Robert Irwin. Rhoda Coghill had the distinction of being the first soloist to appear when she performed Tchaikovsky's b flat minor Piano Concerto at the opening concert in the Theatre Royal, the society's regular home, on 29 October 1927. This she rendered in the first half of a characteristically long programme, then changed her gown at the interval to take her accustomed place as a double-bass player in the orchestra which proceeded to give the first complete performance in Ireland of the Symphonie fantastique by Berlioz. Her charming memory

of the occasion indicates something of the spirit of participation and enjoyment.

I can hardly call myself a 'Bass Player', as I was self taught with a three-stringed instrument. When I played in a small string orchestra formed by Petite O'Hara (who was an important figure beside Josuha Watson at the first desk of the violins in the DPS), I played about one note per beat! Some time after I joined the DPS I obtained the use of a four-stringed bass and a modern bow; and when Mr Stott of the Halle Orchestra joined us for our final performances at our concerts, I had a few lessons from him, so that I was able to scrape away more confidently at the recitatives in the Choral Symphony, covered up by our two other amateur lady bass players and Mr Stott. However, on one occasion I remember Colonel Brase hissing acidly: 'Ha! Ze basses zey are ahlvays hrong!' ⁷⁷

While the Philharmonic pursued a beneficent policy towards the promotion of Irish executants, it was not at all insular in its outlook. However, sentience of the prevailing strength of chauvinistic sensibility is apparent in its own early account of its success.

The Society has now provided Dublin with a first-class permanent Symphony Orchestra, and with its organisation consisting of Orchestra and Choir it fears no criticism, and is worthy of the support of all truly patriotic sons and daughters of Erin. ⁷⁸

The society was equally generous in sponsoring performances of works by native composers. In the first season it gave the premiere of the overture to Autolycus by Harold White (Dermot Macmurrough), the Stabat Mater by Stanford, and Harty's Mystic Trumpeter. It also adopted an enterprising policy in its general choice of programmes, judiciously mixing classical favourites with a laudably high percentage of modern works many of which it presented in Ireland for the first time. It was a formula that initially brought considerable success. The first annual report revealed a handsome profit and appreciable optimism; having supplied the capital with a choral and orchestral society capable of performing 'the great Oratorios and Cantatas, as well as the classic Symphonies and modern orchestral compositions' ⁷⁹,

the Philharmonic addressed a further deficiency that was to plague the city for many decades yet: the want of a purpose built concert hall. The manner in which the society records its belief that it was substantiating the requirement for such a facility evinces the confidence permeating the movement:

it is highly probable that the concert hall will become an accomplished fact when it is demonstrated that there is a practical reason, and not a mere sentimental demand for it.⁸⁰

The society's fortunes mirrored those of so many preceding musical enterprises. The novelty of a brave new venture captured the communal imagination but, as was the case with the Dublin Orchestral Society and a legion of other endeavours, public support proved ephemeral and the society was forced to engage an increasing number of foreign soloists in order to attract audiences. That it had to rely on the attraction of such as the violinists, Isolde Menges and Adila Fachiri, vocalists, Isobel Baillie and Oda Slobodskaya, and pianist, William Murdoch, was further evidence of the public's abiding predilection for the celebrity concert, and indeed for the musician rather than the music; it endorsed Larchet's plea that primary attention be directed to education. One who appeared as a soloist with the society, and who had for long observed the musical scene here from his vantage-point as a critic with The Irish Independent, Joseph O'Neill, had little credence in the discernment of his fellow citizens:

There can be no doubt about the fact that the love of music is not very deep-rooted in Irish people. By this I do not mean that music does not attract them. They have a superficial love of music and an emotional reaction to it, but the music must be both simple and familiar.⁸¹

The reliance on guest artistes proved expensive while it provided but short respite. Brase's indisposition for the whole of the fourth season increased the society's woes; the majority of his responsibilities were assumed by his able compatriot and assistant in the Army School of Music, Commandant Friedrich Christian Sauerzweig, while the opening concert of the season on 18 October 1930 was entrusted to Sir Hamilton Harty. In the following years the members of

the Royal Dublin Society hosted an annual performance by the Dublin Philharmonic as a prelude to the regular season and to assist with the latter's precarious financial position, but even this failed to prevent the impending collapse. The predicament was compounded when in March 1934 the Philharmonic gave the last ever performance in the Theatre Royal which was thereafter closed as a venue. Persistent ill health induced Brase's departure in 1936 when his place was taken by the ubiquitous Larchet. He first appeared with the society in December of that year presenting a varied programme including the overture to Rosamunde, the Piano Concerto in A flat major by Field with Mannheimer as soloist, Ravel's Bolero, and Haydn's Symphony in D no.101 'The Clock'. Larchet's tenure was to be short; a review of the concert praised his control but pointed to the fundamental reason for the society's imminent demise.

The Philharmonic are to be congratulated on their choice of pianist and it was a sad reflection on Dublin's musical taste that the hall should be half empty.⁸²

Music in the broadcasting service

While the Philharmonic was making its short but lambent contribution, a contemporary institution was emerging more tentatively, but its influence was to prove ultimately far more enduring. No organization has had a greater impact on the development of music in Ireland than has the national broadcasting service which was inaugurated on 1 January 1926 under the call-sign 2RN. It was eventually to supply the facilities that were so eagerly and frequently petitioned in the first decades of the century. Radio came relatively late to Ireland, not least because of the political turmoil experienced in the aftermath of the Rising of 1916. As a consequence of these events and because it was a state controlled instrument, politics and, even for a time, news were adjudged taboo subjects for such a potentially powerful medium. Entertainment was the primary function; service and educational responsibilities were only later added. The Irish Radio Journal encapsulated a general opinion when it stated on the eve of the first broadcasts that

Music will always be predominant in broadcast programmes.⁸³

Technical limitations allied to the fact that recording was as yet in its infancy necessitated that this initially be live music. The part-time position of music director was filled by Vincent O'Brien who had at his disposal a string trio consisting of Terry O'Connor, violin; Rosalind Dowse, viola; and Viola O'Connor, cello. This combination was converted to 'the Station Orchestra' by the addition of the pianist Kitty O'Doherty (better known by her married name, O'Callaghan). The national ethos of the station was ensured by the appointment of Seamus Clandillon as the first director of broadcasting where he worked on secondment from his regular post as a health insurance inspector. Originally from Co. Galway, he had an especial interest in traditional music being one of those who had advised Brase on the propriety of setting Irish airs, and was a celebrated vocal exponent of the heritage. The programme for the very first evening resembles that of a variety concert: there were contributions from the Army No.1 Band under Brase: traditional airs from Arthur Darley on violin, Annie Fagan on harp, and Seamus Ennis on uilleann pipes; separate renderings of native song were provided by Joan Burke, Joseph O'Mara, and J.C.Doyle. It had been hoped that Esposito too would be featured, but he was incapacitated and his place was taken by Miss Dina Copeman. Both Clandillon and his wife, Maighread Ní Annagáin, performed selections of airs in the old (sean-nós) style.⁸⁴ A Gaelic choir had been sought for the evening but none could be found, the deficiency was supplied by a Catholic choir: Vincent O'Brien brought his Palestrina Choir which performed a short sacred programme including movements from Missa Papae Marcelli.

Clandillon's preferences are clearly discernible in the early schedules which are dominated by shorter musical items. But the primary limitation on the early development of broadcasting and in particular on its principal musical component was the financial restriction placed on the station by the Department of Finance. The station director was empowered to spend not more than 20 pounds a night, and not more than 120 pounds in a seven-day period. One effect of this stringency can be observed in the slow expansion of the orchestra. By June of 1926 the ensemble had risen to a respectable

seven, but further augmentation was resisted by the minister for finance, Ernest Blythe. Even his colleague the minister for posts and telegraphs, who had responsibility for the new service, could not authorize expenditure in excess of 15 pounds on a new musical instrument or more than 30 shillings a month for the hire of same.⁸⁵ Despite these constraints, Vincent O'Brien embarked in November 1927 on the courageous design of presenting the first public symphony concert in the Metropolitan Hall, Dublin. The orchestra was of course augmented for the occasion but a poor attendance militated against any repeat of the enterprise.

Fritz Brase presents another link in the separate progressions of the Dublin Philharmonic and the broadcasting service. His role in the latter was less central but yet telling. He proved a formidable member of the government appointed Advisory Committee which applied itself with diligence to the task of superintending all aspects of the station's development to the extent that it became a thorn in the executive's side. The appointment allowed Brase a significant influence on the formulation of musical policy. That he exercised this responsibility with customary trenchancy appears to be confirmed by a report of a violent row with his erstwhile friend Clandillon that ensued from an attack by Brase on what he regarded as a narrow nationalistic output which resulted in a preponderance of 'bad music masquerading as traditional music'.⁸⁶ A more productive episode, and Brase's finest achievement as a member of the committee, was his role in securing, after protracted negotiation lasting some three years, the enlargement of the station orchestra to a total of 19 instrumentalists. This appreciable success, attained in 1933, proved a momentous but Pyrrhic victory.

It was a positive achievement for the Advisory Committee, and its last. The idea of having such a committee had been thrust upon the Government in the first place by Deputies who dreaded the dictatorial powers that might be exercised by a Director of Broadcasting, and its constant remonstrances on such topics as the use of Irish and the augmentation of the orchestra had caused it to be regarded by the Department and the Director as more of a nuisance than a help.⁸⁷

The increment in the orchestra marked 'the first rungs of the ladder leading to a full symphony orchestra'.⁸⁸ It was the first and only permanent and professional ensemble in the state and was thus regarded with pride as the national orchestra. Its foundation and further development marked one of the most significant contributions to the musical life of the country. Its presence made it possible to present competently the symphonic repertoire on a regular basis; it offered the prospect of home employment to executants; and it was a necessary vehicle for the ideas of young composers. Indeed Brase's cutting gibe was not wholly founded in Clandillon's predilections; regardless of the sparsity of resources or the preferences of any individual, the advent of broadcasting served to demonstrate the indigent state of the distinctive musical heritage in other than small and primitive forms. The fact that there was so little Irish music to perform pointedly proclaimed music's failure to partake in the cultural regeneration; it was an uncomfortable reprimand with which musicians had to contend for many years. The fact of a permanent orchestra, which was partly responsible for signalling this sorry condition, also constituted the principal instrument of redress, and the broadcasting authorities were sedulous in encouraging works from young composers.

This melioration was facilitated by the growing realization of the educative possibilities of broadcasting. Schools' concerts by either an army band or the orchestra, and illustrated talks by such as Dr Starkie, Comdt Sauerzweig, and Carl Hardebeck were but two of the methods which served to introduce a wider public to the hitherto mysterious world of music, while broadcast concerts were frequently preceded by analytical introductions by such as Harold White. In May 1936 it was decided to disband the orchestra and to audition for an enlarged Irish Radio Orchestra of 24 members. A board of assessors composed of Sir Hamilton Harty, Dr Larchet, and the director of music and conductor of the BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra, E. Godfrey Brown was established to conduct the auditions. As it transpired all the members of the disbanded orchestra were re-engaged with Terry O'Connor again appointed as leader. The reconstituted ensemble comprised a flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, along with the complement of strings and a piano. The various schools of music were furnishing a supply of accomplished graduates so

there was little difficulty in filling the vacancies; the same did not apply to the search for a conductor as Séumas Ó Braonáin, sometime director of broadcasting, later explained:

The question of a regular conductor for the Orchestra was always a difficulty. There was and is no other professional symphony orchestra in Ireland and there was consequently no local source on which to draw for trained and experienced orchestral conductors. In these circumstances, Radio Eireann had to rely on the services, on loan, of conductors of Army Bands trained in the Army School of Music under the late Colonel Fritz Brase.⁸⁹

Brase was unrivalled as the preeminent conductor of his generation resident in Ireland; his training and experience ensured that his technique and acquaintance with the repertoire were superior to that of his contemporaries who were of necessity only occasional conductors. He passed on his high standards to the younger officers of the Army School of Music, more by example than precept, and they formed the first generation of trained native conductors, and without exception they contributed to the furtherance of music in the broadcasting service, which at the end of 1937 had informally adopted the name Radio Eireann in place of the call-sign, 2RN. While the two institutions were compelled to this unlikely cooperation through the absence of other suitable candidates, it was fully consistent with the original aims of the school. Lieutenant James Doyle was the first to be transferred on secondment to the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in July 1936 to take charge of the new Irish Radio Orchestra. He was an able practitioner who was in time to become director of the Army School of Music with the rank of colonel and permanent musical director to the Dublin Grand Opera Society. After a year he was succeeded by a colleague, Lieutenant Dermot O'Hara, who remained a further year before Doyle resumed the responsibility for two more years during which the orchestra was increased to 28 players. When he was again recalled to the school in 1940 on the death of Brase, he was replaced by Lieutenant (later Captain) Michael Bowles who was to have an almost revolutionary impact on music in the broadcasting service.

If the Sligo-born Bowles was abrasive, it was through enthusiasm and industry. Within six months of his arrival, Vincent O'Brien retired from his part-time position on age grounds; he was the last of the small pioneering staff which had launched the station to do. As a consequence, from May 1941 Bowles had to combine the dual responsibilities of acting music director and principal conductor. With this authority he quickly enlisted the support of P.J. Little, the minister responsible and a keen supporter of the orchestra, and together they succeeded against considerable opposition from within both political circles and from station authorities - an opposition incidentally founded on bitter experience - in instigating a series of fortnightly public symphony concerts that commenced in the autumn of 1941. That even the promoters were dubious about the prospects of success is evident in the choice of the Round Room of the Mansion House as the initial venue; it had a capacity of only 800. Such caution was understandable but misfounded; the initial concerts attracted audiences sufficiently large to warrant a permanent change of venue to the Capitol Theatre which could cater for over twice the number. Each series held annually until and including 1947 consisted of ten Sunday afternoon concerts conducted by Bowles and a concluding spring concert for which the direction passed to a distinguished visitor. Sir Adrian Boult took the rostrum for the first of these in 1942 and was succeeded by Constant Lambert. Bowles, who had resigned from the army in 1942 in order to devote himself permanently to his exciting dual responsibilities, demonstrated patent perspicacity in deciding the orchestral curriculum. He had to keep a weather eye to popular expectations in order to retain an audience that was building its acquaintance with classical masterpieces. However this does not reveal the full story as the composer Frederick May relates:

But the programmes were by no means unenterprising, and one of the achievements in which Captain Bowles may take legitimate pride is the fact that the Radio Eireann concerts introduced to Irish audiences four of the seven symphonies of Sibelius, as well as several of the Finish composer's minor works. Among other interesting or unusual works may be mentioned De Falla's Nights in the Gardens of Spain, the first performance in Dublin of John Ireland's Piano Concerto, the first performances anywhere of

E.J. Moeran's Violin and Cello Concertos, together with Debussy's La Mer and Stravinsky's L'Oiseau de Feu, the former conducted by Jean Martinon and the latter by the Swiss conductor Robert Denzler.⁹⁰

May had good reason to remember these series: he had been engaged by Bowles to write the programme notes, and was one of many composers who benefited from the supportive policy adopted in relation to new Irish works. In 1943 Radio Eireann set aside annually a sum of money to promote new composition and arrangements of Irish folk music. While the sums involved were meagre, initially 500 pounds per annum eventually rising to 700 pounds, this enterprising innovation signalled the first practical measure of support for the development of a distinctive musical expression, particularly as broadcasting was a government-authorized monopoly. It was equally a tacit recognition of the critical role that had devolved upon the broadcasting service in this process. It may appear churlish to criticize such a generous idea, but in truth its aims were not defined with sufficient clarity. Encouragement was dispensed without adequate attention to quality. That original creative enterprise was in competition with light arrangements of native airs for a portion of the same exiguous total naturally resulted in there being much chaff amongst the wheat. Furthermore, while the system was entitled and regarded as a commissioning scheme, it was in practice managed on a purchasing basis; Radio Eireann being prepared to purchase the rights to any reasonable piece submitted. The fructuous prospered, quantity was more highly rewarded than quality. As a consequence, the libraries of the service are replete with mediocre arrangements, a number of which are unlikely again to be performed. The situation says much about the enduring confusion over what constituted a distinctive note; despite the acceptance that Irish music was required there was evidently no consensus on even fundamental questions regarding its character. As one who might have expected to benefit, Frederick May welcomed the theory but was jaundiced in his view of the practice.

When portion of the grant was used in the initial years, the sum allocated to the composer even for a large-scale work was less than that which had to be allocated to the copyist who wrote out the orchestral material, and even then the grant was based

on the actual playing-time of the composition, irrespective of its nature - whether, for instance, it happened to be an arrangement of dance tunes for a salon ensemble or a major work for full orchestra - so that a composer of light music, who entered repeat marks generously at the end of the various sections of his score, would outdo the composer of a serious work without any effort whatever.⁹¹

While the commitment to foster Irish composition may not have been sufficiently focused, it was at least genuine. Along with its public concerts, the orchestra presented a regular studio concert which was broadcast live on Friday nights, and an occasional series entitled Contemporary Irish Composers which provided a unique platform for the emerging generation. Such industry served further to emphasize the pivotal role of the broadcasting service in musical affairs. In order to expedite this increased responsibility, the orchestra was further augmented during Bowles's tenure to a total of 40 players. The existence of this permanent and capable combination along with the generous and cooperative approach of Bowles and his successors was crucial to the early success of the Dublin Grand Opera Society which came to rely on members of the orchestra to assist in its productions. Other welcome departures included the creation in May 1943 of Cór Radio Eireann (the choir of the broadcasting service), consisting initially of 24 trained singers operating on a part-time basis, and the formation five years later of a second orchestral body, the Light Orchestra, a small ensemble of 22 instrumentalists established to complement its older sister by concentrating on broadcasting the lighter orchestral repertoire with special emphasis on arrangements of native airs. The distinct personality which from the outset it was intended that this ensemble would embody was born of the nationalist ethos; the creation of the orchestra demonstrates that such sentiment was, if anything, more pronounced in the 1940s than in the decade following independence.

An infelicitous and complex dispute with the station authorities led to Bowles's departure in 1948.⁹² It was an unpropitious event which deprived the utility of one of its most energetic servants, and indeed Bowles has never received due recognition for his contribution. His achievements were all the more remarkable for being made in

inauspicious circumstances when Ireland, despite being a neutral state, was suffering the inevitable hardships of war. In his relatively short period with Radio Eireann, he had helped move it to the centre of Irish musical life. It was henceforward a principal source of patronage, employment, and performance, and was subsequently party to practically every significant musical enterprise in the country, which was a level of involvement that passed well beyond the more limited requirements of broadcasting.

Arthur Knox Duff

Bowles's assistant during this period was yet another former officer of the Army School of Music, Arthur Knox Duff. Duff had indeed longer connection with the station; he had been engaged in 1937 as the first studio control officer, an impressive title denoting that he was the broadcasting service's pioneering music producer, a post made necessary by the recent augmentation of the orchestra, and he was to remain with Radio Eireann in different capacities until his death in 1956. He was by all accounts as charming and gentle as he was indolent, and his legacy lies not in any notable contribution to the development of the service but in a small and sensitively crafted creative output, and in his singular response to the demands that nationalist expectations made of the composer.

Duff was born in Dublin in 1899, the son of an accountant. An early aptitude for music decided the subsequent course of his career. Like Larchet before him, he was of that early circle of musicians exclusively Irish-trained. He followed the same path through the Royal Irish Academy of Music and then to Trinity College where he completed primary degrees in arts and music. Many years later, in 1942, he successfully sued for his doctorate in music in the same institution. He was an accomplished keyboard player; one of his earliest appointments, which he held for two years from 1916, was that of organist and choirmaster in Christ Church, Bray, where Hamilton Harty was the most distinguished of his predecessors. As pianist, Duff also appeared frequently on the nascent 2RN; indeed he had been engaged as the accompanist for the inaugural night's broadcasting. In October 1923 he was commissioned into the Army School of Music as its first

native Irish bandmaster and after some three years of training he was posted to Cork to take charge of the military band there. It proved an unhappy occupation; Duff was not possessed of a temperament disposed to the discipline and stability demanded in such a structured organization, and he was especially unsettled at such remove from the capital. Professional disquiet was compounded by the trauma of a failing marriage, and he sought some release by tendering his resignation from the army in November 1931.

The opening chapter of Duff's life is consistent with the remainder of his history. While this piteous condition might be reflected in the smallness of his output, there is no hint of it in the diaphanous and bright character of the music. Again like Larchet, he was only an occasional composer, although in Duff's case this was the consequence of immanent torpidity rather than of any pressure from competing activities. His insouciance occasioned much concern amongst his musical friends who were frustrated by his lack of ambition as a composer; he was conscious of the situation, frequently denying that he had any desire to attempt a grand design, professing himself content 'to paddle around in a pleasant backwater'.⁹³ Furthermore, he turned late to composition, with the majority of his endeavour being focused in the last 15 years of his life. His work is notable for a clarity and simplicity which result in an attractive and accessible statement that evinces punctilious craftsmanship. It does not, however, reveal a strong individual personality, on the contrary his style is largely derivative. The influence of the early twentieth-century English miniaturists is discernible; Duff was readily able to affect a style somewhat like a mild form of Delius, and even more akin to the delicate lyrical approach of Butterworth. There are interesting parallels too with the work of his friend Moeran. Duff too was a miniaturist, and even the rare extended works are constructed of shorter sections. The correlation between practical conditions and creative effort is apparent in the fact that the preponderance of his production is for strings, and is largely concentrated on a short period in the early 1940s when Duff had a close relationship with the Dublin String Orchestra, a group founded and directed by Terry O'Connor who retained her post as leader of the Radio Eireann Orchestra. This ensemble had a telling impact on the musical life of the city in the early 1940s,

encouraging composers to exploit the medium and in consequence presenting many first performances of new works specially written. One such piece was Duff's single-movement early work The Meath Pastoral (1940), premiered by the orchestra in the Royal Dublin Society in November 1944. It is typical of Duff's style with strong echoes of earlier works such as Warlock's Capriol Suite, Elgar's String Serenade, and Ireland's Concertino. He bases this composition of some five minutes duration on a single melody which, although set around the tonal centre of f minor, is treated in modal fashion throughout with persistent use of the flattened seventh. The whole design is unpretentious and the approach is admirably economic. Its formal structure is Larchet-like, but Duff's version of the ternary construction is based not on contrast but on limited development which confers a surer concentration of focus. The theme is itself a cameo of four two-bar phrases in the traditional AABA form (Ex.56). This is repeated three times with variety being provided by alterations in instrumentation and range. The central period is built from a figure at the end of the A phrase and is presented with an almost Elizabethan delicacy which suggests that Duff was as influenced by the rediscovery of the secular music of the Renaissance as were the composers who provided the models for the Pastoral. It is interesting that Duff's contemporary, Frederick May, described Warlock as 'a true Elizabethan if there was one'.⁹⁴ This influence is evident too in Duff's polyphonic approach to part-writing; each of the lines presents its own melody in a fashion that is evidently vocally-inspired, and the resulting weave is a characteristic of this temperate style. The first section with its full four statements is repeated before a simple coda based on the opening phrase brings the piece to its close.

A work that betrays a similar style is the Irish Suite for Strings which was also written in 1940 and given its first performance by the same ensemble in that year. At 12 minutes duration, it is long by Duff's standards but comprises five independent movements with the sensitive 'Fishamble Street - Dublin 1742' at its heart. It is inscribed to his friend, Ernest Moeran, while The Meath Pastoral is dedicated to the novelist, Brinsley MacNamara. This literary connection introduces a second practical reason for the predominance of string suites: many of the individual movements had their origin in

Ex. 56

Moderato
Λ

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 5/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The first measure of each staff is marked with a dynamic of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The second and fourth measures of each staff are marked with an accent symbol (Λ). The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together.

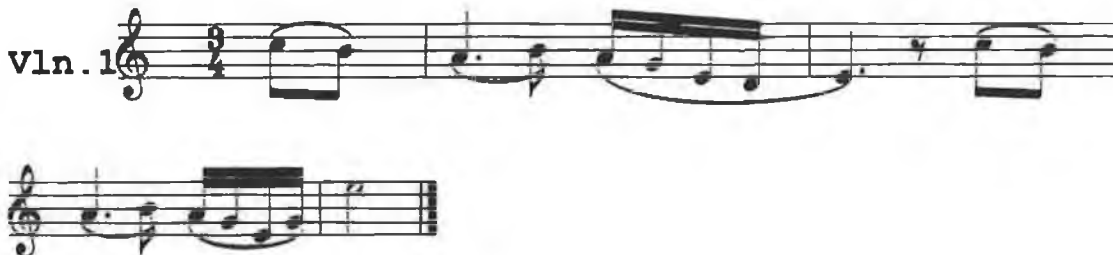
The second system of the musical score continues the four-staff arrangement. It maintains the same key signature and time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The dynamics and accents from the first system are not explicitly repeated in this system.

The third system of the musical score concludes the four-staff arrangement. It continues the rhythmic and melodic development from the previous systems. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The system ends with a double bar line.

music written for the Abbey Theatre. Duff surpassed Larchet in his enthusiasm for literature and the theatre. He frequently contributed incidental music for plays and ballets, for instance The Drinking Horn Suite of 1953 comprises music originally composed for a ballet, and the music for A Deuce O' Jacks was written to a play of the same name by F.R.Higgins. Duff's interest was such that he even wrote a play himself, Cadenza in Black, which was produced in the Gate Theatre.⁹⁵

Music for Strings (1955) is a late piece also consistent with this style, although it has less to recommend it than have its predecessors. Of a total ten minutes duration, it is made up of three independent movements: 'Twilight in Templeogue', 'Georgian Square', and 'Ceilidhe'. The initial movement is as gentle and reflective as the designation would imply. It is set almost entirely on an Aeolian mode with a warm concluding Tierce de Picardie. The lyrical 3/4 opening is built on a succession of two-bar phrases with the first violin taking the melody (Ex.57).

Ex.57



A contrasting middle section in 6/8 provides a startling change with a frisky jig theme and open fifths in accompaniment (Ex.58).

Ex.58

Allegro

Its refined partner is foreshortened in the recapitulation. This manner of ternary treatment is akin to that habitually employed by Larchet and is at marked variance with the integrated formal approach found in The Meath Pastoral. The contrast is also more emphatic in the later work because of the abrupt fashion in which it is handled. 'Georgian Square' is a title that suggests something of Duff's affinity with the elegance of a bygone age. It too is a gentle movement, its texture lightened by the omission of the double-basses. Again it evidences Duff's contentedness to work within the most unexact formal structures; it is one of the best examples of his sheer economy of effort (Ex.59).

Ex.59



The simple ABB form is constructed of two-bar periods to a total of 12 bars and is then repeated. It is set firmly in the key of G major with a smooth rising cello line pointing the basic progressions. This key is retained for the final movement, 'Ceilidhe', signifying an Irish dance, although throughout the movement Duff plays on an ambivalence between the tonalities of the major and its relative minor. The double-basses are restored and the two violin lines are divided providing a seven-part texture for the lively reel theme which dominates (Ex.60).

Ex.60



Here too the listener encounters the composer's penchant for smooth bass lines moving by step. The contrast on this occasion is provided by a short lyrical episode in cello (Ex.61), and the work concludes with a simple three-bar coda.

Ex.61



Duff's casual attitude to composition and publication has resulted in much of his music being omitted from the composers' catalogue. He was one who responded well to the commissioning scheme of Radio Eireann, and an appreciable quantity of his material resides in the libraries of the broadcasting service. One such is The Shepherd's Daughter, an arrangement for strings dated 1945 which survives in a manuscript of impressive penmanship. It is a short piece, just 71 bars long, which remains unflinchingly faithful to the Aeolian mode. The conscious cultivation of a modal treatment leads to frequent use of the chords of the supertonic and the submediant and deliberate exploitation of consecutive fifths. The modal approach can often be encountered in Duff's work; while he was somewhat exceptional in his reticence to resort to prose to expound his theories about music, it is apparent from his compositions and arrangements where he stood on the modal question, although he was never a slave to its use.

As a proficient pianist and accompanist, it is perhaps surprising that Duff has written so little for voice; the only piece which achieved any currency was his setting 'Who is Sylvia' (1945) which was published by Oxford University Press. But the works which won widest appeal, the late suites Echoes of Georgian Dublin (1955 and 1956), one for full orchestra and the other for wind octet, while well wrought are essentially elegant pastiche. They again reflect an interest in what was considered a golden age of achievement; an age in which Duff might

well have felt more at home as the tribute of his friend and admirer Lennox Robinson suggests:

Arthur Duff, although as a person could mix with and be a friend of any man or woman in any class of life, was, in his music, remote, fastidious. People generally look like what they create.... Arthur Duff's delicate physique exactly matched his sensitive music. I never felt he was quite at home playing a Steinway grand. His delicate long fingers - has one ever seen such long delicate fingers, and such competent ones - should be playing a spinet or a harpsichord, or conducting the music of Charles II's court at Whitehall. I think his musical loves rarely extended beyond the middle, or perhaps the beginning, of the eighteenth century. He loved The Beggar's Opera and other music of that genre; he loved our own anonymous folk tunes. He did not leave a heavy amount of baggage behind him, but he left some very precious parcels.⁹⁶

Earlier in this tribute, Robinson referred to his friend as an original composer. It is difficult to concur; Duff had a singular voice, but his music is not original. Nonetheless, the beautifully constructed assessment is perceptive. While Duff's achievements are limited, his importance in a consideration of nationalism's influence on music in Ireland is considerable. His was an idiosyncratic response among the contributions of that first generation desirous of establishing a peculiar musical voice for the newly independent state. The musical loves which Robinson correctly identifies are apparent in Duff's music and they make unlikely bedfellows. His lyrical gift, consciously given over to the creation of themes in a distinctive Irish style, in combination with a nostalgic construction and technique which ties the whole firmly to a modish English practice, results in a very individual form of nationalistic expression; one which valued the endemic, but could do so happily within a broader framework. The pastoral element, so strongly represented in the contemporary English school, is also evident in Duff; but neither in his work nor in Irish composition in general does it have commensurate prominence. This is undoubtedly because Ireland was economically less advanced; it was still largely a rural society without the benefits or defects of expansive industrialization. The division between rural and urban experience was

as yet not sufficiently pronounced to act as a catalyst for such wistful expression. Indeed, Irish society was too concerned to secure the future of its newfound independence to devote time to the contemplation of traditional practices in an unspoiled environment; in fact the artists who were most inspired by the natural beauty were those such as Bax and Moeran who sought in Ireland a haven. While Duff's occasional and gentle pastoralism is consistent with that of his friend Moeran, it is nonpareil among his native contemporaries. It is another example of how he stands aside from the main current of musical development. The adjectives that come to mind in considering Duff - gentle, sensitive, delicate - also suggest that he was out of temper with his age; his music is indeed charming but also anachronistic. One must doubt that those precious parcels will be anything other than a curiosity to musicians and scholars in the twenty-first century.

Frederick May: the early years

On the surface, there appears much in common between Duff and his younger contemporary Frederick May (1911-1985). Their early training was similar, and both experienced personal difficulties which affected their work; more important, both possessed real creative talent and yet they produced but little music. However, May's was the more imaginative voice, and his the more penetrating vision, and his early works in particular are highly original. Furthermore, the intense and concentrated focus of his writings results in an expression far more difficult of access than is that of Duff. Of the small group of composers active in Ireland in the first half of the century, his was the most auspicious talent; the real tragedy was that this early promise was not more fully realized.

May was born in Dublin in 1911 and he too pursued his studies along the tried and trusted path: first through the Royal Irish Academy of Music and then at Trinity College where he took his primary degree in music in 1931. It was in the former institution that he commenced lessons in composition with Dr Larchet, and indeed May is the prime example of a leading composer who benefited from Larchet's tutelage without attending University College Dublin. But unlike his teacher, May then moved abroad, first to London for three further years of study

at the Royal College of Music with Gordon Jacob and Vaughan Williams, 'a composer for whose music I have had a life long admiration',⁹⁷ and then to Vienna for an additional short period. While in London he completed his first major work, the short Scherzo for Orchestra, which was premiered there in 1933. It is an impressive and confident debut, and it demonstrates a remarkable grasp of orchestration from one so young. From the menacing opening with crashed chords over throbbing timpani and the subsequent driving rhythm of the side drum, there is evident May's dramatic conception of composition. Equally apparent is his partiality for brass sonorities, the trombones being particularly to the fore here. The second major theme presented by violin with a clarinet answer provides a lyrical contrast and is reminiscent of Mahler, for whose compositions May had an abiding passion. Fittingly it was this work that helped earn for him the travelling studentship to study in Vienna with Mahler's disciple Alban Berg (1885-1935). But Berg's death in December 1935 occurred shortly before May arrived, and he studied instead with Berg's colleague, the composer and noted musicologist, Dr Egon Wellesz (1885-1974), who was of the same school and was at that time teaching music history at Vienna University. The experience was to confirm May in his espousal of the European aesthetic, for he was already establishing a reputation as the least insular and most modern Irish composer of his generation, a stature endorsed by the composition on which he was engaged when awarded the travelling studentship, the String Quartet in c minor, which was to remain one of his towering achievements. In a revealing preface to the published score, May validates the early date of composition although the work was not performed until 1948.

The middle section of the impetuosamente was suggested to me by the death of Alban Berg, which occurred while I was at work on the music.⁹⁸

This sophisticated, introspective work which makes no concession to popular expectations was also written in the painful realization that he was suffering from oto-sclerosis, a new bone formation affecting the footplate of the stapes which can cause progressive deafness and is accompanied by constant noises in the head. According to May's own evidence, he had suffered this condition from around the age of 17, and it was to torment him the remainder of his days.⁹⁹ His concern at this

Ex.62

Allegro inquieto

condition was, by his own testimony, foremost in his mind when working on the quartet. There is an undeniable intensity in the work which is structured as a single movement with three distinct sections with one optional pause for retuning; although it will be noted from the composer's writings that he regarded the quartet as a composite of three self-contained units. The writing demonstrates a sure command of string technique and the contrapuntal style ensures that each member of the quartet is faced with taxing difficulties. It opens with an insistent unison that characterizes the energetic approach maintained throughout (Ex.62). Rhythmic patterns provide a unifying motif in a discursive exposition rich in ideas almost all of which reflect the essential concentration on the semitonal scale. The vigorous opening is examined in a degree of detail anathema to those sympathetic to Stanford's views on constructional propriety. The driving theme appears in divers guises such as in the metamorphic plaintive viola melody commencing the upbeat to bar 46, or in the rhythmic variation in all voices from bar 64. The first lyrical theme is introduced after 17 bars in the second violin. This, like so many of its companions, is a short statement comprising just two bars with a varied repeat (Ex.63).

Ex.63



It leads directly to a short homophonic section which returns the concentration to the smaller interval (Ex.64). While the integrity of the whole is guaranteed through repetition of themes or their elements, there is nonetheless on first hearing a sectional feel to the work. This points to a central difference between May and, say, Duff: the quartet makes demands of the listener and repays attention; a greater acquaintance with the work will uncover not only the almost obsessive

economy of material but also the skill with which this is managed without any suggestion of garrulousness.

Ex.64

The first system of music for Ex. 64 consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The music is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The melody is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in pairs or groups of four. The accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in the lower registers, also using eighth and sixteenth notes.

The second system of music for Ex. 64 consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The music features triplet markings (the number '3') above the notes in all four staves. The melody continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The accompaniment includes chords and moving lines, with some notes circled in the bass clef staves.

Ex. 65

The first system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top two staves are empty. The bottom staff contains a series of six groups of notes, each with a slur underneath. The first group starts with a dynamic marking of *p* and a *sfz* marking above the first note. The notes are in a descending sequence.

The second system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top two staves are empty. The bottom staff contains a single melodic line with a slur underneath, consisting of several notes in a descending sequence.

The third system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is empty. The middle staff contains a series of four groups of notes, each with a slur underneath. The first group starts with a dynamic marking of *p* and an accent (>) above the first note. The bottom staff contains a series of notes with slurs underneath, corresponding to the groups in the middle staff.

The fourth system of musical notation consists of three staves. The top staff is empty. The middle staff contains a series of four groups of notes, each with a slur underneath. The bottom staff contains a series of notes with slurs underneath, corresponding to the groups in the middle staff.



The centre of the initial period is given over to a busy fugal idea which has its genesis in the accompaniment to the first theme (Ex.65). The gradually widening intervals apparent here, starting with the inevitable semitone, constitute one of the quartet's major consolidative techniques. Another recurring feature, and one of the most attractive, is the predilection for pairing voices which provides a constantly varying texture. It is indicative of May's programmatic conception and of the autobiographical nature of this work that he should seek to explain the extensive use of trills in the first violin which draws the first period to a close.

In the extended coda of the first movement, there is a long soaring with trills, played by the first violin, which has been compared to the song of a lark, and at the end of which the music rushes forward in a downward curve.... Now, figuratively speaking, the 'lark' was myself and the 'downward curve' the futility of the lark's song that would

set itself up against the ultimate, enclosing
darkness of fate.¹⁰⁰

The goal of that rushing downward curve, the Impetuosamente which 'does duty for the traditional scherzo',¹⁰¹ opens in 6/8 with a related theme constructed of close intervals set over a tonic pedal in cello. It is equally concentrated in its focus, although the central section suggested by the death of Berg is characterized by a more solemn tempo and halting movement and by wide and expressive leaps through all voices. The final section of the work Lento espressivo was the first to be written. The semitone is again pointed to by a shift to c sharp minor. A lyrical theme is introduced imitatively and its initial diatonic flavour confers a serenity hitherto absent from the work. This is not maintained and the section is soon at one with its more atonal companions. The quartet moves to a serene close with a graceful and resigned, albeit short, melodic phrase which May suggests might subconsciously have been prompted by a line from Goethe, 'Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh', which he translates as 'Over all the mountain tops is peace' (Ex.66). The little diatonic oasis of C sharp major chords at which the work comes to rest certainly makes for a peaceful conclusion.

Ex.66



That he was open, even subconsciously, to the influence of such as Goethe indicates May's willingness to embrace the broader aesthetic. He was unique among his generation in the degree to which he espoused the European tradition, and he was, for most of his life, innocent of any conscious effort to fashion an Irish mode. Where there occurs a phrase which 'sounds Irish' such as the second theme of the final section one feels this is because May is Irish, that it is innate to him, rather than the result of any managed contrivance. Indeed, the dangers he perceived threatening artistic endeavour, 'post-war lassitude and an over-powerful tradition',¹⁰² were in his judgment dangers experienced by all artists regardless of nationality. The same

innocence cannot be said to apply to May's application of modernistic techniques. Here a difficult system is handled with skill although the listener is aware that this is an experimental work. At the outset it appears that May is embarking on a dodecaphonic composition, but this is not consistently pursued, giving way instead to a freer atonality. This remains his most avant-garde achievement. It is telling that it was being written before he studied with Wellesz; because May's later works suggest the influence of his teacher in that they forsake Schonbergian principals and revert to the style of Reger and Mahler just as Wellesz himself had done. After the spell in Vienna, May underwent an ascetic renunciation of the most extreme technical innovations and while his subsequent compositions are modernistic none is as determinedly so as is the String Quartet. It is thus an exceptional work not only in the canon of May's compositions but in the history of music in the country. It is truly a seminal work which although very different in style deserves to rank alongside Harty's With the Wild Geese as one of the great original expressions of Irish music.

Music and the Nation

The String Quartet in c minor is the passionate utterance of a passionate man, and the enthusiasm he brought to the subjects which fired him, particularly earlier in his life, points another contrast between his approach and that of Duff, whose lethargy appears even more pronounced in the comparison. May's musical commitment was matched by decided political convictions and by a willingness to advertise his views. It was while engaged on the quartet that he set out his opinion of the musical situation in Ireland in an article entitled 'Music and the Nation' with a certitude and clarity which he never again equalled. It was important because, first, it introduced themes that he was later to expound particularly through The Bell to which he was a frequent contributor and, second, it stimulated a wider debate amongst those concerned for the musical welfare of the country, a debate which while acrimonious at times was yet valuable in furthering the art's development. Finally, it was important in that it presaged a fundamental change in May's attitude to composition, a change occasioned by the pervading nationalist sentiment.

The essay's opening reveals the pessimism which was a consistent feature of his writings.

Anyone who reflects on the present state of music in Ireland is bound to be filled with the most profound depression. We might have hoped that the quickening of life which began in the eighties of the last century with the inception of the literary revival, and which later imparted fierce energy to our politics, would have aroused our musical consciousness to some slight activity; that the wave which bore forward a great literary and political movement would not have left music quite untouched. But the wave was broken and receded, leaving us as we were before, in a state of almost complete stagnation.¹⁰³

May's concern is with the place of art in society and he bewails 'this cleavage between art and life',¹⁰⁴ a cleavage which helps explain the long interval between the creation and performance of the quartet; the audience of the mid-1930s, still engaged in discovering the accepted masterpieces of the literature, was unlikely to comprehend May's abstract conception. Indeed, almost two decades later Aloys Fleischmann, by now a senior member of the musical establishment, was emphasizing this very point.

Here in Ireland there is every reason to welcome a young composer writing in the twelve note technique. As far as the public is concerned, however, he would be working in a vacuum. There are scarcely half-a-dozen people in the country who have any inkling as to the principles underlying Schönberg's system. The Radio Eireann Orchestra has not so far played a twelve note work, and it would be a brave conductor who would make the attempt.¹⁰⁵

A younger commentator and composer, Brian Boydell, who was eventually to hold the chair of music at Trinity College, supported this reading and in so doing pointed again to the critical role of education, both general and specialized, in developing the musical life of the country.

There is no country in which the position of the composer is all that could be desired, though in Ireland he has rather less scope than in some countries of comparable size. The encouragement of composition is

intimately connected with the development of education and professional music-making... for the composition of original music requires a higher degree of specialised training and as great a breadth of aesthetic experience as any creative art, and the composer (unlike other creative artists) depends not only on an educated public but on other musicians who are qualified to interpret his work.¹⁰⁶

Such a patent observation was symptomatic of the enduring profound dissatisfaction with the music infrastructure. It was not so much a record of the obvious, but a cry for support, a continuing plea for music. Furthermore, the weighty titles of the essays contributing to this ongoing debate, such as Boydell's 'The Future of Music in Ireland', indicate the perceived gravitas of the issue. Boydell's comments echoed precisely the pronouncement by his friend, May, which focused on the requirements of the composer.

Without a good conductor, singer, string quartet or whatever it may be, the composer is utterly helpless. If he cannot get encouragement and stimulation from his own people in his own day, his inspiration will tend to dry up at its source. It is a mistake to suppose that he fills pages and pages of music paper in order that he may receive a problematical recognition on some undetermined date in the far distant future.¹⁰⁷

But the maturing May was equally conscious of the responsibilities resting with the creative artist. In a passage from 'Music and the Nation' that echoes Stanford, he affirmed the primacy of communication with a firmness that appears at odds with the approach adopted in the quartet.

Instead of writing from richness of life, there is an unhealthy preoccupation with technical problems, a sure sign of decadence, and such a confusion of means with ends can only take place when no noble end is in sight.¹⁰⁸

This is a statement that heralds the more restrained approach evident in the later compositions. Change is equally apparent in relation to the central question of tradition which also exercised May in this

essay. There is in the article, as its title might suggest, that which is crucially absent from the quartet: a consciousness of nationality. The decision to confront the question was characteristically courageous, but the very acknowledgement signified a loss of innocence; never again could May be free of the consideration as to how national his music was. Naturally, he espoused a liberal perspective, abjuring the wholly cosmopolitan stance adopted by some who had 'been ranging the globe and producing international fruit-salads of surpassing futility';¹⁰⁹ equally, he rejected too constricting a nationalism, noting, with clear reference to the domestic situation, 'that such a tradition cannot be created self-consciously or by state decree'.¹¹⁰ Such a comment also suggests interesting comparisons between the progress of music in Ireland and in the Soviet Union. May was aware of broader developments and he frequently pointed to Finland as evidence of what could be achieved. He generously acknowledged the debt he owed to Sibelius, another formative influence on his style. Sibelius was, for him, the exemplary national musician, one who built on the diligent preparation of others, for 'a great period of creative activity is always the final consummation of a long tradition'.¹¹¹ The primary practical measure he proposes for the amelioration of the current depressing position, and one to which he was repeatedly to return, was the creation of a National Academy of Music. While Larchet had approached this solution by a separate path, ultimately teacher and pupil are at one.

It is necessary to lay great stress on the importance of creating a focus for all our efforts before anything else is attempted, and our first aim must be primarily or at any rate largely, educational.¹¹²

The major debate provoked by this article was joined by leading musicians and it continued for almost twenty years. It was primarily engaged in by composers who were essentially concerned to discover a role for the creative artist in a young society desirous of establishing a conspicuous selfhood. With hindsight it is possible to claim that the very existence of such a polemic attested to the burgeoning maturity of the musical lobby and that it contributed to the development of the art. It achieved the latter by attending to the nature of Irish music; what precisely was to constitute this desired

characteristic expression? Although not stated as such at the time, this debate essentially concerned itself with the influence of nationalist philosophy on creative endeavour; it was absolutely as May had divined, an investigation into 'Music and the Nation'. Music was not esteemed of sufficient moment to warrant an independent publication; it was afforded limited space for the attention it did command in periodicals with a more general artistic brief. Ireland To-Day, a monthly journal published in Dublin, provided an early forum for the discussion. In the very first issue in June 1936, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair addressed the obvious contrast between literary and musical reactions to the cultural revival.

It is to be regretted that the modern Gaelic revival has been, mainly, in literary hands; that, at its inception and during its life, it had within it no Ruskin, no da Vinci, no Diaghliev or Nijinsky, no Grieg, each to deal with his own particular sphere, to give it direction and critical standards. All the arts, except that of literature, have been accounted of secondary importance and very little understanding of the peculiar problems of these arts has been shown by the pioneers of revival or their followers.... No one will quarrel with the pioneers who laid down the axiom that to-day should be a living connection with yesterday, that all that was best in Ireland should be preserved for and by the people.¹¹³

But this is where Ó Gallchobhair, an habitual and strident contributor, was wrong. Certainly, all were prepared to honour a noble heritage, but many were unwilling to become captive to it. The contrasting emphasis afforded the weight of tradition signalled the crucial disparity between the conservative and liberal approaches; put at its most basic, the difference lay in the degree to which creative endeavour was to be indentured to the heritage, or perceived heritage. One who took the liberal view was Aloys Fleischmann, then a young academic and aspiring composer. He contributed an essay to the second issue of the same journal, and opened just as Ó Gallchobhair had done by noting the paucity of activity. But straightaway an altered accent is discernible.

Irish folk-song and the bardic music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to

have fixed itself on the popular imagination, lending to this country a reputation for musical culture which it does not yet possess. Nicely-turned phrases, such as 'our music-loving people', and 'our heritage of music', have made this legend a household word. Nobody likes to hear that this is the land without music, a land that is literally music-starved.¹¹⁴

The certainty of youth and enthusiasm is apparent in statements such as:

People fail to realise that it is not the function of music to entertain an indiscriminate public. If good music gives pleasure, such pleasure is incidental, not its purpose.¹¹⁵

This leads him to a consideration of the musical experiences available in Ireland, and he proceeds to record his conviction that a new and even eclectic music must arise which would not be separate from the broader expression but would contribute its own distinctive flavour to it.

A new wave of interest and enthusiasm is indeed perceptible, but the majority of the enthusiasts, when they speak of music, mean traditional music, bidding us measure progress by the amount of folk music played and sung. Composition is conceived as the adding of three parts to a folk-tune. Centuries of development in craft and idiom are ignored. Surely it is a poor story if the Ireland of the present day - and a Gaelic thinking even Gaelic speaking Ireland at that - could not begin to express herself as truly and as individually in the language of contemporary music as the Ireland of two or three centuries ago expressed herself, not in the art-language of that time, but naturally and spontaneously in a simpler, melodic language. And such new expression, though breeding the spirit of the traditional music, need not have the remotest connection with its externalia in form or manner. Elgar, nothing if not English, Sibelius, the very embodiment of Finnish tradition, have never used an English nor a Finnish folk-tune, nor any fragment that was not their own. Continuity or fidelity of tradition is not

best achieved by atavism, by a slavish use of the material of the past.¹¹⁶

The realization was dawning that nationalism was not resulting in some passing and voguish attachment to local colour, but was acting as a major barrier to a free and logical musical development. Stung by this perception, Fleischmann renewed his attack by addressing the burden of tradition, which he considered the greatest obstacle to the emergence of a distinctive school of composition. He cogently set out the progressive case, arguing that concentration on folksong was merely repetitive and would result in pastiche. It was easy, he claimed

to develop into an Irish composer by taking a few Irish airs and dressing them up in the conventional way, just as it is easy to pass off on the stage as an Irishman by donning the kilt or the bawneen and speaking with a strong Kerry accent. How much more difficult it is to be Irish, intrinsically and organically, without any parade of the exterior trappings.¹¹⁷

On this occasion he proceeded to consider the dilemma facing a young composer who embraced the broader view.

A would-be composer here has a thorny path to tread, in seeking out his medium, in linking hands with tradition and all it has to give, while at the same time keeping pace with contemporary technical evolution. A young man who has passed through his years of schooling and now masters his craft, cannot evade a momentous and somewhat bewildering issue. Either he has to choose the vocabulary of a pre-war generation, or else he has to plunge into the principles of Schönberg or Milhaud and let loose a series of atonal or polytonal profundities on the astonished ears of a public acclimatised to Moore. Considering the anomaly of our present position, one feels inclined to favour the first and more cautious policy, for in seeking a new tradition, uncertain of our very footing, we must make good the breach with the past before we strike out apace.¹¹⁸

Fleischmann and the minority for whom he spoke were determined to release creative endeavour from thralldom to predetermined nationalist

expectations. In pursuance of this aim, he continually preconized the distinction between the differing types of music and castigated the simplistic views of those he described as 'the upholders of traditionalism'.¹¹⁹ He argued

that folk music and art music are two parallel streams, that they may interact up to a point but that the propagation of one does not lead to the development of the other.... Novelty in art, we are told, is mere vulgarity. Not only is novelty not vulgarity, it is one of the foremost essentials of art, for without novelty, that is, the reaching out after what is yet unexpressed, the utilization of ever wider resources, art becomes a stagnant bye-pool, out of contact with the onrush of life, stale and formalised. Without novelty we have atavism, in the sense of ancestor-worship which precludes all development.... One suspects a philosophy which preaches pleasant doctrines. The advocates of the traditional outlook quoted from relieve their devotees of all hard labour, of prolonged dealings with contrapuntal and fugal intricacies, of the study of the musical literature of the past, not to mention that of contemporary movements. A few folk tunes, as much knowledge of composition as may be gained in an elementary harmony class, and for their purposes the equipment of the youthful prodigy is complete. He can be sent out to missionarise, as an authority and a composer, while, but for his outlook, the technique of Europe awaits his beck and call, for him to acquire if he had the brains and the will. There is no barrier to the sudden development here of the technical and spiritual activity of a great music-producing country, as far as intellectual potentialities are concerned. Why this has not happened, and will improbably happen, is due to the general apathy, the general unconsciousness of such a possibility, and the general ignorance of the means by which it might be brought about.¹²⁰

Such blunt criticism was guaranteed to elicit a counter. What most provoked 'the upholders of traditionalism' was the charge of atavism first made by Fleischmann in the earlier article and repeated here. The initial charge had been quickly refuted by Ó Gallchobhair who argued that there was in Irish affairs an undeniable continuity of experience, and moreover, he proposed that Irish experience was unique

and that accordingly it could not adequately be served by an alien expression. He also retaliated by levelling against the progressive school the accusation that they were indulging in mere novelty, an imputation which had so incensed Fleischmann.

The sensitive mind in Ireland to-day is still influenced by the same things and in the same way as was the sensitive mind in Ireland long ago.... I am trying to say that for the Irishman, the Irish idiom expresses deep things that have not been expressed by Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Elgar or Sibelius - by any of the great composers; and that where the vehicle used for the presentation of the Irish idiom is the vehicle of any of these men or their schools - then the Irishman is conscious of a clash of values, a struggle for mastery and he rejects the presentation as 'wrong'.

And so I say that in no Irish art as much as in music does the Irish mind hold fast to the set of values fundamentally its own; and in no other art is the mind so conscious of the continued integrity of those values.

And this is why I have said that the stigma implied by writers using the word 'atavism' is not quite fair. Novelty in art is mere vulgarity, and a new thing is strong only when it has deep roots in the past. If a new music arise to express Ireland it can have as its root only the fundamental sense of values that belongs to the Irish mind, and it is conceivable that a great strength will lie in its atavism.¹²¹

Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair

The gulf revealed in this debate was equally apparent in the music. Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair (1906-1982) was himself a chief representative of the traditionalist approach, being an active composer of smaller forms. He was an uneasy individual who had not the stability of character to take advantage of the many opportunities which came his way. At different times he held positions as journalist, as music director in various Dublin theatres including the Abbey, and he was a member of staff in the music department of Radio Eireann where he was the first conductor of the Light Orchestra, a post he managed to hold for just one year, and assistant director of music at the station. Born in 1906 in Dundalk, he studied at the Leinster

School of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He did not progress beyond these institutions and the fact that he never attended a university faculty of music along with his disdain for the European aesthetic and perhaps even the memory of disparaging comments made by Fleischmann concerning musicians of limited technique, may have contributed to his deep distrust of learned musicians which translated into a prolonged series of embittered attacks on the prevailing academic tradition. Even here one is conscious of the underlying chasm between the two traditions. One of the mildest and earliest of these censures appeared in Ireland To-Day in 1937 when Ó Gallchobhair took to himself the role as vox populi.

That mythical creature the 'man in the street' lays many charges against our academies, but among the thinking and the unthinking the charges are mainly two - first, that the academies are anti-Irish, or perhaps I should say 'West-British', and second, that 'they have never turned out anybody' - meaning of course that the students they equip are never of any musical importance.... one expects our academies to mirror sub-consciously in their work the national mind. That is not to say that the great European tradition should be excluded - that would be folly - but that approach to it would be governed by a set of values specifically Irish. The thought and work of our academies should sub-consciously reflect the mental activity and its modes of the race. Judged by such expectation our academies have failed us lamentably. Instead of having their being an integral part of national culture and art structure, they appear to excrescences - perhaps the better word would be parasites [sic]; they are in most senses foreign bodies grafted superficially upon race structure. What I have stated above is, I think, often the cause of the indifference of our academies to traditional music, rather than snobbish hostility - although that too does exist. Many professors seem to imagine that the playing of traditional music - I mean of course adequate performance - does not call for the possession of technique. Such an idea is wrong and is the result of living within the academic circle.¹²²

Ó Gallchobhair's views hardened over the years. In a radio broadcast transmitted in 1958 he criticized 'the general professional and academic music world in Ireland' for its failure to realize that 'the Gael belongs to the Mediterranean and not to the North-German civilization', it was wholly logical then that the nation should renounce 'the bash and bang methods of many modern European composers'.¹²³ He accepted that there were problems peculiar to Ireland

where musical education has not a vestige of connection with the national tradition.... any intimate contact with Irish music and its aesthetic principles must force the student to question and examine the very basis of his acquired academic knowledge. He finds that Irish music contradicts quite flatly much of the fundamental dicta of the textbooks. And from this it is but a short step to the questioning of the aesthetic validity of academic judgments.... The traditionalist, therefore, leaving his student days behind, finds himself equipped with an excellent academic technique that is of no help to solve the problems of his musical utterance. He is alone; there are no textbooks for him. He must slowly and painfully build his own technique in trial and error testing each foot of the way. Could the academies help him if they tried? It is doubtful; maybe like Eugene O'Neill's hairy ape 'he doesn't belong'.¹²⁴

It is not unjust to state that Ó Gallchobhair's impact as a critic and commentator was not matched by his achievement as a composer. Not only are his works small in stature, they are equally limited in ambition. His claim to be included here rests not on the intrinsic worth of his creations but on his position as leading representative of the insular school which worked at variance with all that May and his colleagues were trying to achieve. But even in this role Ó Gallchobhair's standing was called into question by those in his own camp.

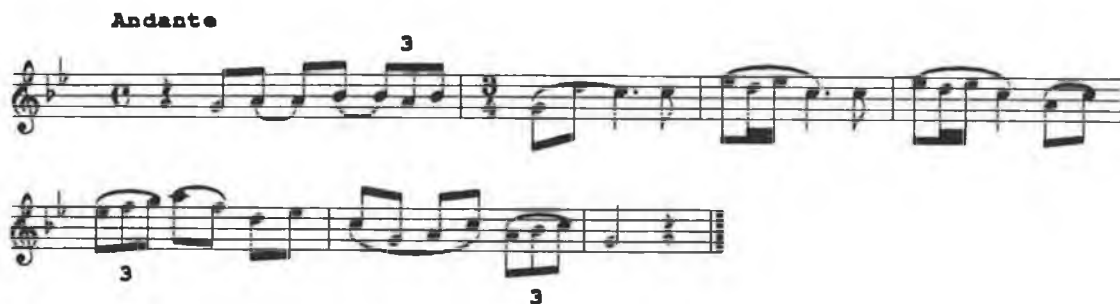
When about ten years ago, in the Gaiety Theatre, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, who has good Irish, gave us his long (and rather dreary) ballet Cathair Linn, I had high hopes that, pruned of mediocrity and dolefulness, he

might yet emerge as a genuine Gaelic composer. But it was a disappointment.¹²⁵

His occasional work as adjudicator and examiner of music in schools were doubtless factors in the large number of arrangements and compositions for smaller forces which he has left us. An early example of this style is the partsong An Sean Duine. Written in 1930, this strophic arrangement of a traditional air for an a cappella four-part chorus is both simple and attractive. The lively melody is always dominant and is mainly reserved for the soprano voice while the remaining lines provide a rhythmic accompaniment employing mere sections of the text. According to Ó Gallchobhair, this treatment had been inspired by his interest in Hebridean mouth music, an interest generated through his friendship with Philip O'Laoghaire, conductor of the Killumney Choir and later director of Cór Chois Laoi in Cork.¹²⁶ The same inspiration underlies his Mouth Music for the same forces completed in the same year. A number of arrangements and compositions for children's choir, all in the native tongue, earned Ó Gallchobhair some transient fame as did some of his music for ballet, an art to which he was particularly drawn. His commitments in various theatres led him also to write much incidental music for plays. It was in the Abbey that he met his future wife, Molly Flynn, who was the flautist in the orchestra there. Fittingly this instrument is featured in his only concerto, a short work of some 16 minutes duration in which the flute is joined by a string orchestra. Her interest in painting, and in particular an individual watercolour, inspired her husband to one of his rare independent orchestral compositions, the set of three Aquarelles written in 1952. The first is arguably the finest of this set scored for full orchestra. It is not especially Irish in flavour and indeed owes much to the spirit, if not the technique, of Debussy. It is a gentle descriptive piece which opens with a running accompaniment as mellifluous as the title would suggest, a character later confirmed by intelligent use of the harp. The main lyrical theme is introduced in cellos and is subsequently dispersed among the upper woodwind with flutes playing a prominent role. Each of the individual movements is short with the set as a whole lasting just 11 minutes. Nationalistic sentiment was more obviously apparent in Ó Gallchobhair's earliest independent orchestral work Homage to Mangan, a tribute to the nineteenth-century poet James Clarence Mangan. The catalogues show

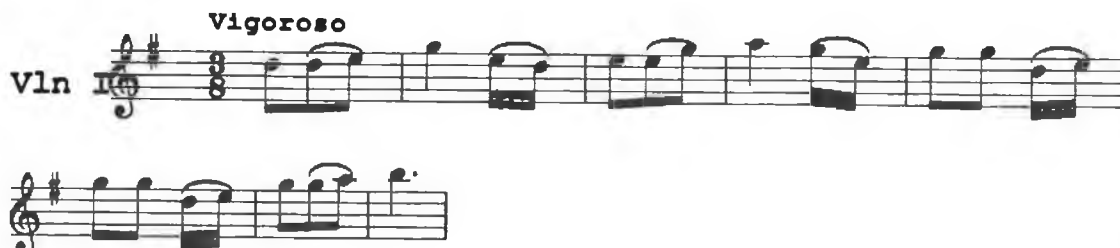
this composition as being written in 1950, whereas the manuscript, which resides in the library of the Radio Telefis Eireann Symphony Orchestra, bears the date July 1949. It opens meditatively with a muted solo violin which is soon joined by a solitary companion. Sparse scoring is a feature of the work as are the atypically frequent metrical modulations. It is consciously avant-garde in style with consistent use of mild dissonance. The piece is lyrical in conception although the major themes are restricted in range. The triplets evident in the first principal violin theme are characteristic (Ex.67), while the subsidiary melody which appears initially in flutes and later in second violins is more constrained. The latter is harmonized by stark block chords which serve to emphasize its modal quality, although the work as a whole, which is just some 200 bars long, concludes with a triumphant C major chord.

Ex.67



Homage to Mangan was commissioned by Radio Eireann, and Ó Gallchobhair's appointment there meant he was ideally placed to take advantage of the policy designed to encourage new compositions and arrangements. One typical fruit of this opportunity, and a work which is not recorded in the catalogue of his compositions and arrangements, is the set of Three Intermezzi on Harp Themes. Each of the three separate movements is based on a traditional air, and each is of an accordant style. The first employs the popular air 'Ruairi Dall Ó Catháin' (Ex.68) which is simply set for full orchestra with the melody predominant throughout. A direct transition of a third to the key of E flat major in the centre provides the sole tonal contrast, while the harp is used sparingly for accompanying chords. The succeeding movements are similar and the complete set gives good example of the determinate range of Ó Gallchobhair's vision.

Ex.68



Frederick May: the later years

In later life Ó Gallchobhair was constrained to write music for films and for advertising features. The practical problem of earning a living from composition was one facing all composers regardless of their viewpoint. Frederick May, an artist with an infinitely greater range but inconsistent application, also faced this difficulty.

The main problem facing the composer in Ireland, is, as I see it, how to get the time and freedom from outside worries and preoccupations to do his creative work properly without jettisoning the various other odd jobs which he must see after if he is to earn what is regarded as a reasonable living.¹²⁷

Practical concerns increasingly dictated May's progress in his later years. His record of employment is uneven, although he did follow on from Larchet as director of the orchestra in the Abbey Theatre where he was in turn succeeded by Ó Gallchobhair. He lamented society's indifference to the plight of the artist and he strikes a pitiful pose in the numerous articles in which he alludes to this question. He often pointed to the fortunate treatment afforded his musical favourite, Sibelius, by the Finnish authorities, and while he never boldly claimed such for himself, there is no denying that he grew increasingly despondent in the face of what he perceived as national imperviousness to his talent.

Certain enlightened countries, like Sweden and Finland, which set a proper value on culture have occasionally granted stipends to

composers of exceptional merit, so that they might devote themselves to composition, free from financial cares. A composer, however, who tried to make a living by composition in Ireland would be inviting death by slow, or perhaps not so slow, starvation. The rich patrons of past centuries are now only a fading memory, and since the state has become everywhere more powerful in recent years, and has assumed control over an ever-widening field of activity, it cannot afford to leave its creative artists to the mercy of chance.¹²⁸

May's personal plight compelled him to the consideration of a crucial question. Patronage, which had been on the wane since the Act of Union, was no longer available in the wake of independence. Nor had it been replaced by any significant central funding; it was ever the case that governments of all political hues were quicker to proclaim their heritage than to fund it, although it needs be recorded that the state did support musical activity in an indirect but significant manner through its agency, the broadcasting service. May was constrained by circumstances to avail of Radio Eireann's commissioning scheme and he contributed a number of arrangements which adhere to the prevailing nationalist idiom but which are quite foreign to his accustomed voice. The best known of these pieces are to be found in the Suite of Irish Airs completed in 1953 and dedicated to Aloys Fleischmann and the Cork University Orchestra. The suite is scored for full orchestra and comprises five independent movements each of which reveals a distinct character, but all are united by the conservative style that is consistently employed. The light and simple arrangement is evident throughout and the traditional melodies although allotted to various instruments dominate the texture absolutely. Stock accompanying phrases are used, such as the drone fifths progressing from horns through the string family which are a feature of 'Peggy was mistress of my heart'. The succeeding movement, 'Along with my love I'll go', is a cantabile melody which is introduced in a solo cello and is later taken by viola and clarinet. The modal accompaniment to this air engages in a mild dissonance which bears no relation to the May of the String Quartet. The very first movement of the suite, 'Gá Gréine' (The Sunbeam), opens with an attractive melody in common time set in F major. It is sensitively worked and fashioned into a modest and even

obvious ternary structure, but here as in its companions the listener is conscious that this is an expression without marked personality or commitment.

That such works exist in the canon of a leading cosmopolitan artist is testimony to the perseverance of nationalist sentiment; that May was impelled to write them for practical reasons evidences the true ascendancy of that sentiment. But his reputation as a creative artist relies on other less populist works. The early success of Scherzo for Orchestra led him to a series of independent orchestral compositions. The first to appear was the Symphonic Ballad, written in 1937, which is not among his finest achievements and serves to point his erratic orchestral technique. A finer work is Spring Nocturne which followed the next year. Like its predecessor, it espouses a modernist technique with uneven success, but there is a sincerity about May's conviction that even such blemishes cannot obscure. It too is scored for full orchestra which on this occasion includes cor anglais and celesta. Described by May in a subtitle as 'an idyll for orchestra', it is, like the quartet, a single movement with distinct sections, and is of some 14 minutes duration. It was inspired, as was Duff's Pastoral, by the Meath countryside.¹²⁹ This descriptive piece opens in solemn, restrained fashion, describing a winter setting and proceeds in characteristically short paragraphs to announce the coming of spring. The bird calls set in woodwind anticipate the device employed so effectively in Songs from Prison. While May cannot be described as a pastoral composer, he did have a genuine love for the country and particularly for spring as a period of rebirth and renewal, themes which are also to the fore in later compositions. Spring Nocturne was given its premiere in what was a rare public concert by the augmented Radio Orchestra under Aloys Fleischmann on 24 April 1938 in the Gaiety Theatre. A contemporary reviewer proved parsimonious of praise.

Fred May's Spring Nocturne is polished and finished music, and, if the sustained dissonance of the first movement seemed, to me, to convey little of the suavity of County Meath, the second section and the really beautiful finish showed the hand of a composer who knew his job.¹³⁰

The Lyric Movement for String Orchestra (1939) was inspired by Terry O'Connor's Dublin String Orchestra and indeed the score, housed in the Contemporary Music Centre, bears May's dedication to this ensemble which presented the first performance in the Royal Dublin Society in 1943. It too is dramatic in conception, revealing the idiosyncratic tendency to short melodic snatches, while a simple insistent bass figure unites the whole. It was over a decade before May essayed another independent orchestral poem, and it proved to be one of his finest. Sunlight and Shadow (1955) is also his last composition and it gives some indication of how accrescent deafness and tribulation had made him increasingly introspective. But surpassing this in quality is May's largest creation Songs from Prison which is of a stature to rank alongside the quartet. Like Sunlight and Shadow, it explores the theme of rebirth first examined in Spring Nocturne. But it goes beyond this and reflects its composer's sensitivity for human dignity and indeed his strongly held political convictions. It is an ambitious creation largely based on the text of a revolutionary German poet and dramatist, Ernst Toller. May first set the original German text which was subsequently translated by Nigel Heseltine, the son of the composer Peter Warlock (the pen-name adopted by Philip Heseltine). A syllabic treatment is employed in a conscious effort to focus attention on the text which tells of a prisoner of conscience watching swallows, harbingers of spring and new life, build their nests outside his cell. When the guards seek to deprive him of even this pleasure by destroying the nests they are thwarted by the swallows' flight to freedom. The symbolism appealed to May's anti-Fascist conviction and to his concern for personal liberty, doubtless honed by his immediate experience of the rise of National Socialism during his term in Vienna, and to his belief that destructive forces are powerless in the face of the natural order. It is in this respect almost a sociological composition, a creation of conscience, in motivation not unlike another extensive work also completed in 1941, Tippett's A Child of Our Time. Songs from Prison requires the largest forces ever employed by May, an enlarged orchestra and a baritone solo. It is a combination which poses difficulties, which may partly account for the fact that the work receives only occasional performances. The soloist needs to be a first-class vocalist as the part is technically very demanding. The work is equally challenging for the conductor who is taxed with

maintaining a balance not easily achieved in the midst of such vigorous writing. It is sometimes overbalanced by its own enthusiasm and can appear rather sectional in construction on first acquaintance. But May's is essentially a dramatic conception and his approach is dictated by his desire to serve the text which, incidentally, results in febrile metrical changes. The orchestra consistently echoes the mood of the words; the solemn phrase 'Euch trauen die Dinge meiner zelle' ('along with you, the things in my cell mourn') ends with a lonely pizzicato cello. The attempts of the guards to eliminate the swallows are set with copious use of percussion accompanying rising and insistent string lines of a stridency at variance with the sensitive writing which May habitually affords this family. Such literal evocation of the text applies equally to the overall design which mirrors the structure of the poem. The theme of the opening, for instance, set sparsely in cor anglais and percussion (see Ex.69), returns after some 215 bars to herald the final period.

Ex.69



The cor anglais is one of a number of instruments employed to telling effect; the bass clarinet can also be mentioned in this context as must the favoured celesta which in the central portion is used to represent the sound of the swallows in a memorable pentatonic passage. The flutes too are associated with the birds from their first entry (Ex.70).

Ex.70

Indeed, the flutes introduce both the swallows' return, and they feature prominently in the postlude that recalls the original tonality and which, like the opening, is given fully to the orchestra. Their dancing theme illuminates this effulgent hymn to freedom which is first announced by the soloist in his optimistic last entrance, 'But spring will come, the earth waits for spring'. The glorious major sixth with which he makes this assertion is then taken up and expressed in a full brass choir and later in strings and is accompanied by repeated close quaver and triplet figures reminiscent of none more than Sibelius; the trumpet figure through part of this section provides good example (Ex.71). Such writing draws attention to the many themes which open with small intervals before opening out; it is a characteristic to find themes built from semitones or tones or even repeated thirds, and it is a feature which also recalls the String Quartet. May regards the orchestra as an integral part of the composition. The baritone does not enter for some 60 bars and a similarly long section is provided for orchestral reflection before the work concludes, just as did the quartet, with affirmative major chords which on this occasion are set firmly in the key of C.

Ex.71

The progressive school

The baritone concludes his contribution to Songs from Prison with a phrase which opens with the hopeful observation, 'but spring will come, the earth waits for spring'. It is a phrase that might well be said to have resonances also for Irish music. May was not himself to experience that spring; his efforts to forge a national idiom which could yet be cognizant of broader technical and musical developments were essentially concentrated in the first half of his life; friends who were conscious of his talent lying fallow pricked him into composing Sunlight and Shadow, his last major work, but it remained an exception. May's final decades were occupied with personal and financial difficulties, and increasing disenchantment with the musical structures understandably bred a measure of self-pity. While his innovative perspective ensured that his was never to be a populist voice and, indeed, that his rewards for such a singular and courageous contribution would be meagre, yet at this distance it can be better appreciated that he acted as an inspiration to a small group of musicians dedicated to the cosmopolitan ideals he espoused, and while he evidently ploughed a lonely furrow, he was not totally alone in doing so. The members of this school shared his faith in the creation of a distinctive voice which need not be insular or indentured to the past.

Brian Boydell was prominent in that circle which looked on May as its musical leader, and was one of those who had urged May to resume composition in his later years. Boydell was somewhat younger, being born in 1917, although he too studied with Larchet in the Royal Irish Academy of Music. His comprehensive education brought him also to the Municipal College of Music, the Evangelical Church Music Institute of Heidelberg University, and to the Royal College of Music in London where he studied composition with Herbert Howells and Patrick Hadley. His eclectic outlook is affirmed by the fact that he also attended Clare College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a first class degree in natural sciences. He enjoyed an equally varied career as teacher, journalist, composer, and executant, before successfully suing for his doctorate in music from the University of Dublin in 1959 where, three years later, he was appointed professor of music, a post he was to

retain for over 20 years. As a trained vocalist, he had the distinction of being engaged as soloist for an early performance of Songs from Prison, while he acted as conductor in yet another. Some of his earliest works dating from the 1930s were songs for baritone and they were given their first performance by the composer. Boydell was, if anything, more pertinaciously cosmopolitan than his friend. He scathingly referred to those of the nationalist persuasion as adherents of 'the plastic shamrock brigade'.¹³¹ While it must be conceded that the majority of his compositions lie outside the scope of this study, and indeed were written at a time when national influence was on the wane, they are wholly consistent in that none makes any concession to parochialism.

The String Quartet No.1 was written in 1949, the very year that May's quartet, which Boydell regarded as one of the finest Irish works of the century,¹³² received its first performance in this country. There can be no question that Boydell was influenced by the work of his elder. This may be subconsciously apparent in the tight and plangent opening which sees the cello rise alone from C through a semitone and then a tone. There ensues an earnest conversational passage that preserves the solemn mood until a metrical change from simple binary to 6/8 and 9/8 brings forth a new idea which dominates the early part of the movement (Ex.72).

Ex.72

Ancora piu mosso

The musical notation for Ex. 72 consists of two staves. The first staff is in 2/4 time and begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature. It starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. A bracket under the last three notes indicates a triplet. The second staff is in 6/8 time and continues the melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, maintaining the one-flat key signature. The piece concludes with a quarter rest.

A gentle conclusion leads directly to the scherzo. This is linked rhythmically to its predecessor; Boydell is especially concerned to integrate the work's three movements. The heart of the scherzo is given to a cello melody (Ex.73).

Ex.73

Piu Allegro ♩ = 132

Vcl. *pizz.* *arco* *mf*

This is accompanied by an insistent rhythmic figure central to the movement (Ex.74).

Ex.74

The certain conclusion in C major leads to the unison C which opens the final movement with a clear reference to the work's initial theme. Alternating allegro and adagio sections follow, with falling scales accompanying the expanded theme in first violin (Ex.75).

Ex.75

Poco piu allegro

Vln 1 *mf*

Frequent metrical transpositions eventually bring a chorale-like rendering of the main theme and the carefully marked climax occurs in a 3/2 passage. The affirmative close in C major again, perhaps subconsciously, echoes May, although Boydell's inimitable humour is

apparent in the original parts, held in the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra Library, which contain numerous asides including the entreaty 'forgive my cat'.

Humour forms no part of an earlier composition In memoriam Mahatma Gandhi which took Boydell six months to complete having commenced it on 31 January 1948, the day following Gandhi's assassination. It is a short and solemn work of some 11 minutes, opening with a cry in the cor anglais set against a bare fourth. This fragment is later extended (Ex.76).

Ex.76



The characteristic penchant for small intervals is evident in the succession of plaintive individual lines contributed by different instruments which explore falling semitones and thirds; the early oboe entry after 21 bars is typical (Ex.77).

Ex.77



Boydell adopts a free approach to the many repetitions and inversions of this idea, especially in terms of rhythm; the entry of the first violins after 19 bars provides good example. A thickening texture heralds a central funeral march, initiated by bare fifths in low strings with accompanying timpani. The stark theme with its dotted rhythm that ensues gives further and extreme example of the composer's predilection for chromatic movement in a restricted range. Set in counterpoint to this in the first violin is one of the work's most protracted and lyrical themes. This idea is treated imitatively and attended by dotted rhythms in woodwind and brass. There is a return to the dolorous opening at the end of the march. On the repeat the

section is foreshortened, and the conclusion of the work with a full but gentle D flat major chord attests to Boydell's allegiance to tonality.

Although a prolific composer, Boydell has not achieved any significant degree of popularity. This, of course, is primarily a factor of the music itself; but it is also the result of consistent adherence to an inclusive view of creativity. Another who shared this minority view was Aloys Fleischmann. He was some seven years senior to Boydell and a year older than May, but his principal compositions come after May's major achievements. He was thus, if not a disciple, a supporter of the path traced by May, but he is particularly interesting for the manner in which he compromised with the insistent demands for a national expression. This is not to say that Fleischmann was not consistently an advocate of a nationalist expression. But the degree to which the quality of that sentiment altered over the years is evident from the fact that as late as the 1990s he is to the fore as one of the cultural sponsors of the counter-revolution which seeks to 'Reclaim the Spirit of 1916', and which regards the revisionist perspective as apostasy.¹³³

He was born in 1910 to German parents who had settled in Cork and had become pillars of the small musical establishment there. The fact that he was born in Munich is fittingly symbolic of his cosmopolitan approach which he frequently elucidated in prose. This inevitably resulted from his family background and was confirmed by his schooling which was divided between Ireland and Germany. Throughout his early life and, as articles cited above demonstrate, into the 1930s he was as trenchantly anti-parochial as was Boydell. But this youthful certainty mellowed in the following decades. Thus while the early works betray a determinedly catholic technique, yet some of his most popular achievements result directly from nationalist inspiration. One such work is The Humours of Carolan written in 1941 for string orchestra. Of the four movements, one achieved sufficient response to warrant publication by the government agency, An Gúm, a body established in 1930 to make available Irish music and particularly arrangements of folksong. An Gúm published Elizabeth MacDermott Roe, the slow movement, in 1952. Issued under the Irish title Eilís nic Dhiarmada

Ex. 78

Larghetto $\text{♩} = 63$

Vln 1

div. con sord

Vln I

div. con sord

Vla

pp

Molto espressivo

Solo Vcl.

p

Vcl.

pp

C.B.

pp

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet, consisting of six staves. The top staff is the first violin, starting with a *mp* dynamic and the instruction *Molto espressivo*. The second staff is the second violin, with a *dim.* dynamic. The third staff is the viola, with a *ten.* (tension) marking and a *dim.* dynamic. The fourth staff is the first cello, with a *pp* dynamic. The fifth staff is the second cello, with a *dim.* dynamic. The sixth staff is the double bass, with a *pp* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ruaidh, this was based on the air by Carolan dedicated to Elizabeth, daughter of Henry and Anne MacDermott Roe of Alderford in County Roscommon, an influential family and principal patrons to the blind harper. Fleischmann employs this air as the basis of a threnody for strings that provides an interesting comparison with Larchet's Lament for Youth. This is an equally short piece, but the concentration here is solely on the one traditional air. The rueful mood is established by the sighing accompaniment to the solo cello which first states the melody (Ex.78). The setting also quickly affirms the modal feeling and it is more dissonant and decidedly more obscure than anything encountered in Larchet. The air is presented once through with violin taking over from cello before Fleischmann engages in a free extension of the melody which approximates to a minor development. A restatement

of the air is presented one tone higher but reverts to the home tonality for the final phrases.

Another such work is Clare's Dragoons which was commissioned by Radio Eireann for the Thomas Davis and Young Ireland Centenary Concert given in the Capitol Theatre Dublin on 9 September 1945. This was quickly followed by further performances under Fleischmann's direction in the City Hall, Cork, and at the university there. In June 1957 it was presented on the BBC Third Programme by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Singers under Maurice Miles. It was Fleischmann's largest undertaking to that date and it won the admiration of Bowles who, as sole conductor of the one permanent orchestra, was well placed to comment on the merits or otherwise of recent works.

The cold truth is that our composers have very little to show for the past twenty years. At some time or other, I have heard nearly every work of any competency at all that has been written during that time, and I find it difficult to think of more than two works which could be considered worthy to stand in any programme absolutely on their own merits; one is May's Songs from Prison and the other is Fleischmann's setting for Baritone, Chorus and orchestra of Clare's Dragoons.¹³⁴

The setting was based on a poem by the nineteenth-century nationalist Thomas Davis and was dedicated to Fleischmann's contemporary, Donal O'Sullivan, who was devoting so much of his life to the preservation of folksong. O'Sullivan had, in 1920, succeeded the pioneering Mrs Milligan Fox as editor of the Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society and was yet to write his two-volume Carolan - Life and Times of an Irish Harper (1958) which stands as his major publication. His findings as a researcher and work as a collector informed a number of Fleischmann's later works and his influence was important in furthering his friend's interest in the nationalist idiom. There can be no doubt that Fleischmann was primarily conscious of the occasion for which this was written, but the stylistic discrepancy with his earlier works is notable.

Clare's Dragoons opens with a quiet expectancy, a rolling bass drum and cymbal, marked *pianissimo* and with the explicit direction to employ soft sticks, are joined by a sustained second bassoon and double basses which occupy themselves with a succession of open fifths, all of which combined give a drone-like effect in the orchestra. To this is added the first bassoon with a theme (Ex.79) which is eventually taken through the orchestra developing into a vigorous march leading in turn to a battle section in which the choir presents the first two of the poem's five verses.

Ex.79



The choir enters in B flat major, a third lower than the home tonality of D major, with basses and tenors singing the traditional air of 'Clare's Dragoons' in unison before being joined by the higher voices in a lively refrain. The harmonic treatment betrays a mild dissonance but the choral writing is basically diatonic. An accelerating pace is maintained through the second choral verse in C major, opening *animato* and ending *presto*. An intrusion on this excitement is then made by the most novel feature of the work, the war pipes. A sustained A drone heralds a decorated 12/8 tune in D major which draws nearer and then recedes before passing the air to the clarinet where it is employed as a countersubject to the baritone soloist who renders the main theme in extended form (Ex.80). The penultimate verse sees the return of the choir and B flat major tonality. The top three choral lines engage in a canonic treatment of the air and are unaccompanied for such polyphonic sections. The last verse opens with a solemn quasi recitative section, the soloist singing a lament over stark string tremolos. The setting ends with all forces, including pipes, contributing to an extended *ritenuto* and emphatic close in the home tonic.

Ex.80

♩ = 126

When on Ram- il- lies Bloo- dy field the
 baf- fled French were forced to yield,

Clare's Dragoons cannot be said to be typical of Fleischmann's style. Its success is in treating a simple folksong in extended fashion by employing Davis' protracted text. The musical interest is maintained through Fleischmann's technical command with its conscious attempt at variety and by means of the unconventional resources engaged. It was the finest of the compositions commissioned for that occasion; the others were provided by O Gallchobhair and by another contemporary who was sympathetic to the nationalist expression, the northern composer, James Redmond Friel. In the previous year the same three composers had been invited to contribute works for another occasion, the Tercentenary Commemoration Concert of the Four Masters, an invitation that led Fleischmann to write the overture The Four Masters. But the public success of such periodic commissions, which tended to favour popular national expression, had the effect of further moving Fleischmann from outspoken criticism of what he hitherto considered the ascendancy of insular musical ideas and 'the upholders of traditionalism'¹³⁵ to a more median view which, while still remaining open to European innovations, was more sympathetic to the indigenous spirit and more prepared to utilize its resources and even quote its folksongs. It was a signal conversion. While it was again testimony to the pervasion of the nationalist ethic, it also pointed, more positively perhaps, to the gradual rapprochement between the separate schools.

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5. D.P.Moran, 'The Future of the Irish Nation', The New Ireland Review, X (Feb. 1899), 348.
6. D.P.Moran, 'The Battle of Two Civilizations', The New Ireland Review, XIII (Aug. 1900), 326.
7. D.P.Moran, The New Ireland Review, as n.5, 349.
8. The New Ireland Review, as n.5, 348.
9. G.Russell, 'The Gaelic and the Anglo-Irish Cultures', The Irish Statesman, III (17 Jan. 1925), 587.
10. W.B.Yeats, Explorations (London, 1962), 158.
11. C.Lambert, Music Ho!: a study of music in decline (London, 1934).
12. A.Fleischmann, 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', Ireland To-Day, I (Nov. 1936), 41.
13. E.Ó Gallchobhair, 'The Dublin Operatic Society', Ireland To-Day, II (June 1937), 68.
14. There is disagreement concerning O'Brien Butler's date of birth: Grattan Flood gives it as 1862 in his Introductory Sketch of Irish Musical History (London, n.d. [1919]), 97; while Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, ed. Slonimsky (New York, 1958), suggests 1870. The latter corroborates accounts of the composer's extensive peregrinations; Muirgheis was written while O'Brien Butler was living in Kashmir in Northern India [see also Freeman's Journal (11 May 1915), 5].
15. Cited in Denis Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival (London, 1930), 265. It is not clear from Martyn's comments concerning the score whether he was (a) unaware that Muirgheis was published, (b) had information that O'Brien Butler was revising the work, or (c) is referring to a second opera. Martyn's claim that O'Brien went down with the Lusitania was later challenged. In an article in the periodical Ceol (p.21; see n.31 below), Colm Ó Lochlainn records that O'Brien was lost on the Leinster which was sunk in November 1918. But on this occasion it was Martyn who was correct. The Freeman's Journal of 11 May 1915 reports the composer's fate as one of the many who

perished when the liner was torpedoed off the Old Head of Kinsale on 7 May (p.5). O'Brien was returning from a visit to the United States where he had gone to promote the idea of staging Muirgheis. The same journal carried a leader two days later on 'The Irish Dead' (p.4) which concentrated on the detrimental effect on Irish cultural life as a consequence of the loss of the art collector, Sir Hugh Lane, and O'Brien Butler.

The artistic and intellectual life of Ireland has paid a heavy toll to the German outrage-mongers.... Less known than Sir Hugh Lane, but with an attraction towards art as great and an even more original inspiration was Mr O'Brien-Butler. He was a musical composer of distinct gifts.... He showed undoubtedly that characteristic Gaelic opera was feasible, and had he longer life and larger opportunity might have impressed himself more widely on the world of musical art than he had done.

O'Brien Butler perished in the very week that his song Cinncoradh was being performed as a set piece in the annual Feis Ceoil competitions.

16. See composer's preface, Muirgheis (New York, 1910).
17. F.S.L.Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (London, rev. edn 1973), 208.
18. 'Argument' to Muirgheis, as n.16.
19. Muirgheis, as n.16, 170.
20. Cited in Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival, as n.15.
21. Freeman's Journal (7 Dec. 1903), 4.
22. Freeman's Journal, as n. 21, 6.
23. Freeman's Journal (8 Dec. 1903), 5.
24. The Irish Times (8 Dec. 1903), 5.
25. There is confusion also about O'Dwyer's date of birth; Grattan Flood suggests 1860 in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, III (London, 3rd edn, 1929), 680; whereas Baker's Dictionary (as n.14) is quite precise about 27 Jan. 1862.
26. See W.H.Grattan Flood, 'Robert O'Dwyer', Grove, as n.25. There is, however, no record of Dwyer, as he then was, conducting the Carl Rosa company in E.W.White's, A History of English Opera (London, 1983); White does mention Eugene Goosens as assistant conductor at this period, see p.368.
27. Freeman's Journal (30 Nov. 1903), 6. O'Dwyer was later responsible for the creation of the National Orchestral Society

which he also conducted. This short-lived body gave its first performance in the Abbey Theatre on Sunday evening 16 November 1913, and the populist approach to Irish music is evident in a programme consisting of the overtures to Maritana, Bohemian Girl, and Shamus O'Brien [see Freeman's Journal (17 Nov. 1913), 5].

28. For details see 'Notes on Music', Journal of the Ivernian Society, II (Sept. 1909), 56-63. This regular column, although unsigned, is consistent with the prose style of Dr Annie Patterson. The fact of the second series of performances in May 1910 explains why this date is erroneously ascribed to Eithne; see for instance S.Bodley, 'Ireland, Art Music', The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians ed. S.Sadie, IX (London, 1980), 315-16. For further details of the première see Freeman's Journal (3 Aug. 1909), 2.
29. See the score heading, Eithne, (Dublin, n.d. [1910]).
30. Freeman's Journal (3 Aug. 1909), 2.
31. Colm Ó Lochlainn, 'Authority in Irish Music', Ceol, I (Dublin, Autumn 1963), 21.
32. Journal of the Ivernian Society, as n.28, 59-60.
33. Journal of the Ivernian Society, as n.28, 59-60.
34. See L.McCormack, I Hear You Calling Me (Milwaukee, 1949), 3-8; and G.T.Ledbetter, The Great Irish Tenor (London, 1977), 40.
35. See J.Ryan, 'The Army School of Music: 1922-1940' (MA dissertation, National University of Ireland, 1987), i, 30.
36. Personal interview with Professor Larchet's daughter, Mrs Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, Dublin (30 June 1990). It is said that Larchet's most memorable early experience was hearing the overture to Tannhäuser played by the visiting Hallé Band under Richter. Anthony Hughes records that Dr Larchet mentioned on more than one occasion the impact on him of hearing Wagner's music given by the Hallé under Richter 'in the Exhibition Hall in Earlsfort Terrace about 1903'; see A.Hughes, 'Dr John F.Larchet', programme of the Dublin Grand Opera Society, Spring 1968, 5.
37. J.Larchet, 'A Plea for Music', in W.Fitz-gerald ed., The Voice of Ireland (Dublin and London, n.d. [?1923]), 508.
38. 'A Plea for Music', as n.37, 509.
39. A.Hughes, 'Dr John F.Larchet', as n.36, 5.
40. 'Dr J.F.Larchet', The Irish Times (19 May 1923), 9.
41. Colm O Lochlainn, 'Authority in Irish Music', as n.31, 21.
42. L.Robinson, Ireland's Abbey Theatre (London, 1951), 187.
43. Personal interview with Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, as n.36.

44. For an account of the formation of the Abbey Theatre see A.E.Malone, 'The Early History of the Abbey Theatre' in L.Robinson ed., The Irish Theatre (1939, repub. New York, 1971), 3-28.
45. L.Robinson, Ireland's Abbey Theatre, as n.42, 51-2.
46. Freeman's Journal (2 Oct. 1908), 5. For details of Larchet's debut with the theatre orchestra see H.Hunt, The Abbey: Ireland's National Theatre 1904-1978 (Dublin, 1979), 86.
47. The Irish Statesman, IV (22 Aug. 1925), 756.
48. Interview with Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, as n.36. It is interesting to compare this early work with the March, Quasi Scherzo (1955). The later piece is scored for an identical orchestra and employs a similar ternary structure with the processional march first announced in bassoons finding a complement in a gentle trio. When considered as examples of Larchet's Irish mode, there is a clear consistency between the works.
49. For details of first performance and a review see The Irish Times (25 July 1923), 4; and (26 July 1923), 8.
50. Interview with Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, as n.36.
51. 'John F.Larchet', in H.Allen, G.Bantock, E.J.Dent, H.Wood, A.Eaglefield-Hull, eds., A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians (London, 1924), 288.
52. Interview with Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert, as n.36; corroborated in a further personal interview with Mr Michael Bowles, Dublin (24 Jan. 1991). An Claisceadal is the Irish term for a choir or choral singing. O Lochlainn's preface to the collection emphasizes the instructive nature of the project, and he further claims that:
- This series aims at giving to the public a workable version of some of the most popular songs still sung as part of the everyday life of the Gaeltacht.
53. Colm Ó Lochlainn, 'Authority in Irish Music', as n.31, 19.
54. J.F.Larchet, 'Music in the Universities', in A.Fleischmann ed., Music in Ireland (Cork, 1952), 18.
55. É.Ó Gallchobhair, 'The Dublin Operatic Society', as n.13, 68.
56. É.Ó Gallchobhair, 'The Dublin Operatic Society', as n.13, 69.
57. Mulcahy papers, P7/B/322, University College Dublin Archives.
58. G.B.Shaw, originally published in The New York American (5-7 March 1923); reprinted in D.H.Greene and D.H.Laurence eds., The Matter with Ireland (London, 1962), 264.

59. E.Boyd, Ireland's Literary Renaissance (Dublin, 1916; London, rev. edn 1923), 237.
60. G.Russell, The National Being (Dublin, 1916), 143.
61. T.Brown, Ireland: Social and Cultural History 1922-1985 (London, rev. edn 1985), 208.
62. See O'Dwyer's correspondence to the Freeman's Journal (22 Sept. 1923), 6; and Leader (6 Oct. 1923), 201. For a fuller account of objections to Brase, see J.Ryan, 'The Army School of Music: 1922-1940', i, as n.35, 146 et seq.
63. The Irish Statesman, I (2 Feb. 1924), 658.
64. 'The Army Band and Gaelic Music', Leader (22 Nov. 1924), 373-5.
65. An interesting account of this venture is contained in General Mulcahy's papers, P7b/35, deposited in University College Dublin Archives. Mulcahy had a particular interest in this project. See also The Irish Radio Journal (23 Oct. 1926), 2100.
66. A.Bax, Farewell, My Youth (London, 1943), 91-4.
67. H.Travers Smith, 'A Musical League for Dublin', The Irish Statesman, I [old series] (26 July 1919), 119.
68. The Irish Times (18 Aug. 1909), 6.
69. H.Travers Smith, 'A Musical League for Dublin', The Irish Statesman, II [old series] (27 March 1920), 300.
70. H.F.Norman, 'A Retrospect and a Hope', The Irish Statesman, II [old series] (19 June 1920), 598.
71. The Irish Statesman, III [new series] (7 Feb. 1925), 697.
72. See recital programme, 2. A copy may be consulted in the archives of the Royal Dublin Society.
73. H.P.Boland, 'A Dublin Musical Society', The Irish Statesman, IV (24 April 1926), 185.
74. Report of the Council on the Season 1927-28, as presented to the First Annual General Meeting of the Dublin Philharmonic Society (20 April 1928), 3-4.
75. See chap.V.
76. See report in Freeman's Journal (2 Oct. 1908), 4.
77. Rhoda Coghill, in a written submission to the author, 27 Apr. 1986.
78. Report of the Council on the Season 1927-28, as n.74, 2.

79. Foreword to the programme for the fourth concert of the inaugural season, 3 Mar. 1928, 5.
80. As n.79, 5. The want of a concert hall was a persistent obstacle to musical development. This point was made repeatedly throughout the century and it occasioned a major debate through the pages of The Bell in the early Fifties. Naturally, most musicians warmly supported the idea, but one composer, Walter Beckett, came out against the proposition because 'a concert hall would attract only a small minority of music lovers', [The Bell], XVII (Feb. 1952), 11.
81. J.O'Neill, 'Music in Dublin', in Music in Ireland, as n.54, 260.
82. J.J.Delamere, Ireland To-Day, I (Dec. 1936), 63.
83. The Irish Radio Journal (15 Dec. 1925), 1177.
84. The majority of information on this section comes from Radio Telefis Eireann Archives and from Maurice Gorham's readable Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting (Dublin, 1967). It is Gorham who recalls that Clandillon's wife appeared so frequently in early broadcasts that her detractors took to calling her 'Mairead Ní On-Again' (p.21).
85. Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 27.
86. Cited in Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 98.
87. Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 83.
88. Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 83.
89. S.Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the Broadcasting Service', Music in Ireland, as n.54, 198.
90. F.May, 'Radio Eireann Symphony Concerts', Music in Ireland, as n.54, 282.
91. F.May, 'The Composer in Ireland', Music in Ireland, as n.54, 168. This article is an extended version of an essay under the same title published in The Bell, XIII (Jan. 1947), 30-6.
92. For a fuller account of this unfortunate episode see M.Gorham, Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 168-71.
93. The comment is that of Professor Brian Boydell made during an interview with the author on 14 July 1990, and subsequently broadcast on RTE FM 3 Radio on 28 Aug. 1990.
94. F.May, 'The Composer and Society', The Bell, XIX (July 1954), 26.
95. See M.Gorham, Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting, as n.84, 105.
96. Radio Telefis Eireann Archives, tape 43 MD. This is taken from a tribute made and broadcast in 1956 shortly after Duff's passing.

97. See F.May, preface to String Quartet in c minor (Dublin, 1986).
98. F.May, as n.97.
99. As n.97.
100. As n.97.
101. As n.97.
102. F.May, 'Music and the Nation', The Dublin Magazine, XI (July-Sept. 1936), 50.
103. F.May, 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 50.
104. 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 51.
105. A.Fleischmann, correspondence with The Bell, XVII (July 1951), 54.
106. B.Boydell, 'The Future of Music in Ireland', The Bell, XVI (Jan. 1951), 27.
107. F.May, 'The Composer in Ireland', The Bell, XIII (Jan. 1947), 34.
108. F.May, 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 51.
109. 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 52.
110. 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 52.
111. 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 52.
112. 'Music and the Nation', as n.102, 54.
113. É.Ó Gallchobhair, 'Fundamentals', Ireland To-Day, I (June 1936), 62.
114. A.Fleischmann, 'Ars Nova', Ireland To-Day, I (July 1936), 41.
115. 'Ars Nova', as n.114, 42.
116. 'Ars Nova', as n.114, 44-5.
117. A.Fleischmann, 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', as n.12, 39.
118. 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', as n.12, 40.
119. 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', as n.12, 41.
120. 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', as n.12, 42-4.
121. É.Ó Gallchobhair, 'Atavism', Ireland To-Day, I (Sept 1936), 57-8.
122. É.Ó Gallchobhair, 'Academies and Professors', Ireland To-Day, II (Mar. 1937), 63-5. This is the first of a pair of articles by Ó

- Gallchobhair on this subject which appeared in the journal on successive months.
123. Radio Telefis Eireann Archives, tape 109 MD. This is taken from a broadcast by Ó Gallchobhair made and first transmitted in 1958. It was again transmitted on RTE FM 3 Radio on 4 Sept. 1990 as part of the series After Long Silence presented by this author.
 124. É.Ó Gallchobhair, as n.123.
 125. C.Ó Lochlainn, 'Authority in Irish Music', as n.31, 21.
 126. Radio Telefis Eireann Archives, tape 109 MD, as n.123.
 127. F.May, 'The Composer and Society', as n.94, 29.
 128. F.May, 'The Composer in Ireland', Music in Ireland, as n.54, 168. It is interesting that May had referred to this subject as early as his 'Music and the Nation' article (see n.102; the passage below is taken from pp.51-2). On that occasion he wrote:

It is significant that the greatest living composer should be a native of a country which affords the closest modern parallel [with Ireland]. In Finland the state is not a soulless and brutalising abstraction but a friendly power, helping its citizens to raise themselves to the pinnacle of their individual achievement. When Jean Sibelius was still a young man, it gave him a life annuity in return for which he was to devote himself to creative work, and once in a while provide music for special occasions. So he grew into, and not out of, his native land.
 129. Professor Brian Boydell in conversation with the author, see n.93. For further corroboration, see The Irish Times review of work in text below.
 130. The Irish Times (25 April 1938), 8.
 131. Reference was made during interview with the author, see n.93.
 132. Interview with the author, see n.93.
 133. See article by J.Carroll, '1916 commemoration opens up a Pandora's box', The Irish Times (9 Mar. 1991), 5.
 134. M.Bowles, 'Music in Ireland', The Bell, XIV (April 1947), 24. It is notable that Bowles makes no mention of May's String Quartet. This is doubtless due to the fact that he was not acquainted with the work; it was not first performed in London by the New London String Quartet until the year after the publication of this article. The earliest opportunity for an Irish audience to assess the work came in 1949 when it was given in Dublin by David Martin's String Quartet.

135. The phrase is Fleischmann's and is cited above in text. See n.12.

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CHAPTER VIII

Assessment

The study of Irish history is thriving. The news that Oxford University is, in 1991, to found a chair of Irish History provides further evidence of the burgeoning interest in this area.¹ The peculiar political development of the country with its complex social constitution, along with the remarkable symmetry between polity and culture, make it an attractive and rewarding field for investigation. Moreover, the orderly progress of the independent Irish state presents a valuable case-study for emerging nations. Yet in the midst of this richness of research one will inquire in vain for a proportionate exploration of music in Ireland, a fact that is all the more surprising in the light of the frequent claims concerning the quality of the heritage. Frederick May encapsulated the perception of his generation when he wrote:

It is doubtful negligible contribution a
wonderful storehouse of traditional music has
made such a negligible contribution to
art-music as we have...²

Underlying this study is the attempt to account for the glaring discrepancy between reputation and recent achievement. Is the estimation of 'the land of song' exaggerated, or are there good reasons to account for the paucity of enterprise over the past two centuries, not only in the creative sphere but in relation to musical activity in general? Recent years have witnessed a welcome increase in creativity and in scholarship concentrating on various aspects of music in Ireland, thereby proffering additional testimony to the ripening of attitudes. But one must ask why it has taken so long, some 70 years after the creation of the state, for such appreciable interest to surface. This thesis seeks to make its own contribution to the investigation not by focusing on a particular topic or period, but through a multi-disciplinary approach which considers a relationship crucial to the progress of the art in Ireland, and one that helps explain why it has had to undergo a necessary and, at times, painful period of maturation.

Nationalism is the first of the two great pillars supporting this study. It has proved a remarkably enduring phenomenon with an exceptional ability to adapt to local and changing circumstances. This very polymorphic quality which made it at first a forbidding area for academic investigation is the feature that is now attracting interest across a wide range of disciplines. It is a subject that also invites interdisciplinary consideration, for only a comprehensive approach can uncover the full impact of nationalism's influence in the past two centuries. A study of the universal phenomenon suggests that there are categories of nationalism, and that the course of an individual movement will tend to conform to a particular type. Such a reading would propose that Ireland was typical of that category of separatist nationalisms which saw many small nations successfully sue for political autonomy. In many respects Ireland does so correspond, but the fact that in certain salient aspects it presents an anomalous case with an idiosyncratic and particularly potent form of nationalism is a factor both of history and geography, and makes this country a particularly interesting case for study. In Ireland's case the claim to be regarded a sovereign people rested on a dual foundation: the nationalism that emerged had both a territorial and an ethnic aspect. The former was self-evident; being an island on the periphery of the continent, there was a geographical logic to the case for independence. The ethnic claim was far harder to substantiate. Mazzini's uncomfortable observation that Ireland lacked the characteristics of a nation and that it had failed to demonstrate that it had 'a unique historic mission... in the noble service of humanity' may not have described the full truth but it did point the consequences of the complex ethnic constitution of Irish society.³ The practice in other successful nationalisms was for a culture to be identified and embraced, and subsequently exploited to endorse the call for political autonomy. That this culture was either real or apocryphal was not important; the salient consideration was that it should win broad acceptance. In this did Irish nationalism encounter its major difficulty. The attempts that were made to fashion an agreed culture came to nothing. This scission was confounded by Ireland's strategic situation. That the country now looks increasingly to the west with a sentimental and practical attachment cannot disguise the reality of historical links, and the continuing primacy of relationships to the

east. It is Ireland's fate to lie in the shadow of one of the world's great powers. The majority of trade and communication is necessarily with Britain, and even intercourse with the continental mainland is pursued primarily through the neighbouring island. It is only just to overstate the case to submit that for the majority of this millennium until the advent of improved transport and communications, Ireland's knowledge of the broader world was received through the medium of Britain. The preeminence of this association affected cultural affairs just as it did matters practical as was well understood by AE when he committed to print his opinion of the cultural well-being of the young state.

National culture in the past has been stunted. We stood for long in the shadow of a great tree which prohibited all but the most meagre growth of other life beneath its branches.... We have lived so long under that shadow that we have grown accustomed to spiritual and intellectual penury; and now that the shadow is almost removed there are many who would continue starving our minds in a Gaelic way just as they were starved before under English domination.⁴

It is understandable that this domination is readily impugned for so many shortcomings in Irish society, but the achievements of other small European states suggest that caution be exercised lest this circumstance be employed to explain every subsequent failing. What can be asserted with confidence is that these historical and geographical conditions which led to such long dependence on, and domination by, a powerful neighbour resulted in an aggressive nationalism which supported its position through assertive claims about its nationhood and culture. In common with the general character of such expressions, this was fundamentally political in motivation, although it emerged in a recurring cycle of political and cultural emanations, and the various cultural activities were exploited for pragmatic ends regardless of their motivation. What distinguishes the Irish case, apart from its intensity, was its convoluted configuration occasioned by the peculiar social synthesis. Post eighteenth-century Ireland saw the birth of not one, but two, nationalisms which, despite a short period of shared understanding, were mutually exclusive, as each sought a different goal. So pervasive are the consequences that Ciaran Benson felt

constrained to preface his major commissioned study of 1979 on the arts in Irish education with a reference to this duality.

Although Ireland has a very significant artistic heritage, the tradition is unbalanced. Some of the reasons for this lie in the troubled history of modern Ireland. One factor relates to the division between the artistic traditions of the wealthier Anglo-Irish and the poorer native Irish population. 'Classical' music, opera, ballet and some aspects of the visual arts still tend to be perceived as more exclusive than, for example, traditional forms of music and dance.⁵

The division has informed all aspects of national life, including music, and was exacerbated by the failure of either view to achieve dominion. Due reference and respect have been paid in this study to the junior but historically potent perspective sponsored by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy. This small but educated and powerful elite has been regarded here as an integral element in the Irish milieu, and was responsible for the cultivation of what artistic life there was in the centuries immediately preceding the dawn of nationalism. It is a contribution well chronicled and even celebrated by J.C.Beckett in his seminal study The Anglo-Irish Tradition. But Beckett is one of those principally accountable for bequeathing to posterity a rather too rosy version of this cultural strain. Two points need to be made in order to redress the balance, without in any way seeking to deny the real achievements of this expression. First, if creativity is any measure of the strength of a culture, then this emanation was not as splendid as is oft-times claimed. In the musical sphere, there are no compositions of enduring quality, even from the acclaimed eighteenth century, to suggest that this assessment is unfair. On the contrary, the frequent citing of the first performance of Messiah as the highlight of the age serves to emphasize the paucity of native endeavour. Second, the artistic expression that was nurtured by the Anglo-Irish was necessarily so close in complexion to its parent British tradition that the offspring encountered much trouble in forging a distinct identity. Despite the genuine and frequently stated desire to nurture a characteristic culture, the Anglo-Irish in reality succeeded only in producing a colonial variation on a theme. And the

temporary dominance of the ascendancy resulted in this variation becoming synonymous with Irish culture. Thus could an unbiased observer such as Mazzini reasonably conclude that Ireland had no cultural grounds to support its assertion of distinction. The criticism of the Anglo-Irish culture must therefore relate not to any want of sincerity but to the failure to live up to the stated aspiration to cultivate an individual expression.

Mention of the Anglo-Irish introduces the consideration of the remaining pillar of this thesis, Irish music. This concept has been shown to be as complex as is that of nationalism. The very course of music in the country has been dominated by the question of what constitutes Irish music. Despite their inability to evolve a distinctive note, the Anglo-Irish were sincere in their belief that an appreciable musical tradition did link those such as Sir John Stevenson, Joseph Robinson, and Sir Robert Stewart with earlier worthies including Thomas Roseingrave (1691-1766), the Earl of Mornington, and Philip Cogan (1748-1833). While the term 'Irish music' is employed to cover the creative endeavour of these individuals it allows of no distinction with the praxis of the second cultural strain concentrated upon in this study, that of the indigenous Irish. This venerable tradition was essentially a living oral practice which encountered immense difficulty in surviving the effects of urbanization and modernization. Its musical embodiment was typical of the expression as a whole in that it was localized and largely unconscious of learned scrutiny. Indeed, prominence has been accorded within this investigation to the linear character and small structure of the music which left it unsuited as the basis for extended composition. The Irish idiom, both in its music and in its broader aspects, constituted an independent expression and accordingly there was no danger of confusion with British culture. It is understandable that this distinction was increasingly emphasized, but this had the unfortunate consequence of making the tradition insular. Such a protectionist outlook was also inimical to natural development and was unlikely to make a broader contribution to the 'noble service of humanity'. The 'Irish Note', as Thomas MacDonagh termed it, was also influenced by the German romantic tradition which expounded the view that if culture was the hallmark of the nation then language was its primary component.

Throughout this study attention has been devoted to the emphasis placed by nationalists on language as a badge of distinction. The conclusion can only be that in the Irish case this has not been beneficial, and that it has actually proved detrimental to other cultural pursuits. The splendid literary efflorescence of the Celtic Twilight is all the more remarkable in the face of this concentration. Again the language issue serves to distinguish the course of nationalism in Ireland from that of other small European nations which sought political separation. At first glance it would seem logical for Ireland to espouse its native tongue to corroborate the assertion of nationhood. But the adoption of the English language by both the Catholic Church and by O'Connell at the very outset of the nineteenth century gives the lie to this assumption. Their example was readily followed by the middle-class and eventually by the mass of the population. While the educational policy formulated by the British establishment encouraged this development, it was not wholly responsible for it. A principal reason for the hasty abandonment of Gaelic lay in the fact that English was associated with progress and opportunity and these considerations outweighed any attachment to what quickly became a moribund entity. Moreover, if language was valued primarily as a badge of distinction rather than for its intrinsic beauty and worth, then it was largely irrelevant in the Irish context. The acute sectarian division of the society meant that religion could supply this distinction without the necessity to sacrifice opportunities for progress. The presence of clear religious demarkation along with domestic and foreign scholarship which was uncovering a venerable heritage satisfied the requisites of ethnic nationalism and obviated the necessity for any current artistic emanation; circumstances combined to exonerate the nineteenth-century Irish from the need to engage the imaginative faculties; their duty, as they saw it, was not to create but to celebrate. It is for this reason that the rather glib asseverations regarding the quality of a distant heritage are stressed here. Culture became an historic concept. The nation was too ready to find sustenance in proclaiming the glories of the past and consequently set little store by the responsibility to engender a contemporary manifestation. A burgeoning reputation begot widespread indolence. Such an environment was inimical to the endeavours of the committed few. That so many artists, writers, and a few composers chose to work abroad as cultural refugees evinces not

only the scarcity of opportunity in Ireland but also this lack of appreciation. The situation was further confounded by the attitude of central authority which was increasingly powerful in both the funding and direction of cultural life. Under the auspices of successive governments, both before and following independence, the native language was stressed to the point where Gaelic became synonymous with culture. They were persuaded to this position by a committed minority that persisted in its support for the language and was singularly successful in having it recognized as an essential educational requirement and in having it placed at the centre of the cultural agenda. Thus, following the establishment of the independent state, the principal cultural policy, enjoying the full support of central authority, was the abutment of a language to which the majority paid little or no attention. Inevitably this had severe ramifications for other pursuits including music in that it engaged scarce attention and resources. This serves to recall the limited utilitarian value of music. Moreover, a folksong tradition closely allied to the Gaelic tongue naturally felt the effects of its decline. Later commentators were wont to point to the language policy as the exemplar of the cultural penury in the Free State. But in practice even official succour was circumscribed by the absence of popular support. This offers comparison with developments in both Finland and Israel where it has been demonstrated that it is possible to cultivate a language if there is will to do so. While many reasons can be suggested as to why Ireland has experienced failure in this regard, ultimately one must question whether this resolution ever passed beyond the committed minority.

This matter of will stretches beyond the question of language to the broader culture, and indeed is there even more pertinent as the component areas were all subordinated to the concern for the Gaelic tongue. When one contrasts the emphasis placed on culture by the intelligentsia which prepared the path of independence with its low priority in the state that emerged, the conclusion must be that the triumph of sentiment over utility in the ideal did not translate into practice. The calibre of the native musical tradition is frequently averred. But this should not disguise the fact that there is not, nor has there been in the past two centuries, any substantial popular

interest in the area. That there was even limited recognition is due to the dedication of the collectors and also to the proselytizing work of Thomas Moore. Moore's role is accentuated here because it concentrates the issue of popular interest in matters cultural. It is all too easy to attack Moore from a distance; he merely answered the demand of his age for a refined version of a wild and rude tradition. He was supplying a society which desired to be comfortable with its culture. While he is regularly criticized by purists, he did institute a much greater awareness of the heritage, and he has found many successors in the twentieth century, individuals and groups who have won popular acclaim by presenting modernized versions of indigenous airs. So prevalent is this trend that it has confounded the perception of what constitutes the tradition. These practitioners might well argue that they are continuing a living practice, one that must necessarily conform to changing circumstances. But the suspicion must be that this is an imposed expression rather than the natural emanation of a folk tradition. The sad fact is that had Moore not altered his models to conform to public expectations they would have enjoyed a considerably more restricted currency, which is an indictment of the wider interest in the native culture. The nation has demonstrated a greater propensity to proclaim the culture than engage in or support it. Similarly in the area of art music, reference has been made to the succession of enterprises which suffered asphyxiation from the want of public support, in many cases after a prosperous initial period. Again practical reasons can be proffered for such failures but fundamentally one can but conclude that there was not the long-term will or interest to support such endeavour.

'After Long Silence'⁶

A central function of this thesis has been to appraise the evolution of music in the light of broader historical developments and to assess how these modified music's progress. It is, therefore a deliberate attempt to counter the tendency to consider music in isolation. The contention is that music was as affected by the pervasive influence of nationalism as was any other area one may care to mention. The arts in Ireland were brazenly employed to endorse the assertion of nationhood. For a time they were valued in accordance

with their ability to provide such affirmation. That the contribution of music to the cultural revival throughout this era and especially in the exhilarating decades following the death of Parnell was minimal is accepted. It has been argued that this is in part a consequence of the character of the art. The record of every art must inevitably face comparison with the splendid literary achievements of this period, and just as inevitably they will be found wanting. It is telling that Bruce Arnold opens his guide to the history of Irish art with the observation:

There is a widely held fallacy that Ireland's contribution to the art of the world has been almost exclusively in the realm of the written word.⁷

Commentators quoted in this study have pointed to music's culpability in this regard, and have gone further to argue that music made no response. But this is both to overstate the case and to deny the dedication of the few who laboured to ensure that music played its part in the awakening of the nation's artistic consciousness. That this commitment is not widely appreciated is in part related to the paucity of scholarship and to the fact that a pragmatic age which valued the definite statement paid little attention to an abstract art. Music did play its part, albeit a minor one, but it was severely impeded by the division of tradition and consequently where it was found lacking was in its want of coordination and direction.

What, in the light of the foregoing, can one affirm about the relationship between nationalism and music? If one looks first to the impact of music upon polity, it is apparent that whereas in other countries music has been employed as a critical component of cultural nationalism, in Ireland this role has been ascribed to more referential arts. The existence of two nationalisms and the language issue have been cited as reasons for this. The inverse influence has proved far more potent. Indeed an examination of the critical influence of nationalism on music leads to the conclusion that the effect is primarily negative. The irony of this interaction is that the movement which invoked a musical response generated the very conditions that muffled the resultant expression. In consequence the account of music in the wake of the Act of Union discloses that it is neither glorious,

nor can it boast of any continuity, and it is inconsistent with the vaunted notion of a land of song. Nationalism is proposed as the primal reason for this stasis. This makes Ireland an especially interesting study because racial consciousness has sponsored dramatic musical eclosions in other lands. The task here has been to record activity in Ireland and to ask why it should present such a singularly disappointing response, which is where one must necessarily consider broader social and political issues. It must first be admitted that practical circumstances have played a major role in determining the development of music. One cannot gainsay the consequences of historical and political circumstances that left the country with no formalized system of music education, a low level of musical literacy, negligible patronage, and little opportunity for performance due to the dearth of professional ensembles. However, the gradual improvement in the situation throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century suggests that practical conditions do not explain the whole of the story. The argument that the poor record of music is principally a factor of British misrule loses some of its force when one examines the support afforded the art in the early decades of independent rule. It is ironic that a state that had so strongly founded its claim to political autonomy on its distinctive cultural heritage should prove so reticent in fostering the arts when it came within its power to do so. Veneration of the past and the obsessive concentration on the language, born of concern for its preservation, are offered as reasons to account for this situation. But it needs also be admitted that if a civilization is, even in small measure, to be esteemed according to its sensibility to the arts, then the educational system in Ireland for the whole course of this survey, covering a period governed by British and Irish administrations in turn, must be adjudged wanting in its responsibility to furnish refined and discerning citizens. What is in question here is the artistic cognizance of the nation as a whole, a consideration which calls to mind Fleischmann's despairing comment regarding 'the general apathy'.⁸

However, it is the contention of this thesis that it is the complex question of tradition rather than practical circumstances that provides the essential explanation for the dilatory progress of music. An aspiring executant with the good fortune to be a member of a

European nation secure in its musical heritage will, at an early stage of his education, become conscious of the tradition which he is to inherit. If providence is equally kind in supplying discerning guidance, this endowment will become an inherent part of the student's armoury because the greatest teachers have constantly imparted not only the requisite technical proficiency but, more important, that abiding tradition of how the most glorious masterpieces are to be performed. Even those who set out consciously to depart from accepted practice are conversely paying it tribute. Similarly, the young creative talent will have the support of an illustrious tradition of composition although some have found the very splendour of this legacy to be overpowering. But for the majority its presence affords a sense of belonging and one of sequence. It is precisely the absence of continuity that one notices in the Irish situation. This eventuates primarily from the central schism, but even in the narrower focus there exists no appreciation of contact between the compositions of the eighteenth century and the succeeding era. The original works of Stanford or Harty, or of Glover on a smaller scale, do not imply any distinctive cohesion with compositions produced during the meridian of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy a century before. Nor do works inspired by the growth of ethnic awareness exhibit the unity of purpose or style that might be expected. Standish O'Grady was absolutely correct when he noted that 'so much of our natural skill and art capacity is wasted for want of organisation'.⁹ It is interesting to note one consequence of the absence of an agreed objective: music passed from a situation where there was comparatively little activity to one where there was a great deal of uncoordinated effort, with many individuals and societies replicating each other's work. The parallel oratorio societies led by Robinson and Glover which emerged in the mid-eighteenth century representing separate Protestant and Catholic perspectives provides example. This was yet another consequence of the lack of a set direction which has persistently plagued the course of music in Ireland. These very societies signal the fact that even before a nationalist character had discovered a musical disclosure there emerged evidence of the more fundamental religious distinction. The delay in the formulation of such a musical expression also evidences the considerable impact of foreign musicians who were active in keeping the broader tradition to the fore. Many sought to reconcile the division

of tradition which so affected native composers, who can fairly be seen as the barometer of the nation's musical health. But those who endeavoured to give imagination a musical expression were working in something of a vacuum. The contention here is that a critical legacy of nationalism was the accentuation of the ruptured tradition; composers working in its wake were constrained to make a fundamental choice: they could look to a past only partly understood, or they could look abroad to the wider world of music; more succinctly, they could either invent or adopt a tradition. This helps explain why the history of the emergence of a distinctive Irish note in music is essentially a chronicle of the endeavours of various individuals. The whole account of the art in Ireland is peopled by enthusiasts who succeeded in spite of their background. The career of Hamilton Harty, from a small town which could offer only limited opportunity and with few facilities nearby, can never be termed typical; but it is indicative of the unconventional development necessarily faced by the talented and aspiring musician. These individuals deserve credit for application in infelicitous times, but the endeavours of almost two centuries have inevitably suffered from the absence of any single direction or essential context.

Sir John Stevenson is proposed here as the precursor to the generations of musicians who laboured in the wake of nationalism. As a composer, he was not possessed of a profoundly original voice; his principal contribution was made through his influence as a teacher, while his collaboration with Moore reflects the integrative predilection of cultural nationalism. His music, however, mirrors the dominant English aesthetic. A contrast is provided by the person of John William Glover who evidences the lack of continuity with his senior. He was exceptional in that he was a Catholic, and his compositions reflect his religion. It cannot be claimed that they are of an high quality, but they essay an early example at a characteristic Irish expression even if this is founded more on subject matter than on musical considerations. It is the later and considerably more substantial figure of Stanford who stands as father to the creative movement in Irish music. The individual line he espoused is affirmed by the criticism he quickly attracted. Despite this disparagement, he was diligent in his application; his Irish note was genuine but not

innate. The prevalence of personal attacks throughout this account is notable; they evidence the unguided course of music and proclaim the fractured tradition. One thinks of Stewart's criticism of Petrie, and of that whole sequence of censure in which Moore criticized Bunting, Stanford criticized Moore, and Fleischmann criticized Stanford. Nothing can better illustrate the lack of continuity. There is also in the Irish psyche a proclivity to division which aggravates this situation. A prime example was the cleavage between Feis Ceoil and the Oireachtas, both founded in 1897 with similar objectives and yet unable to fashion an agreed course, while mention has already been made of the separate oratorio societies divided on religious lines.

Persistent discord is inimical to creative endeavour. Even Stanford's industry does not alter the sorry fact that the nineteenth century cannot supply a single Irish work of enduring quality. In presenting yet another approach, John Larchet came closest to imposing some order on this erratic development. His creative faculty was not his principal musical facet, but by example and particularly by precept he engendered a school of writing consonant with the expectations of the age. His broad influence as a teacher ensured that this school dominated composition through the middle of the twentieth century. It fostered a conservative technique which owed much to the greater appreciation and understanding of the structures of traditional music, and to the Irish works of earlier figures such as Esposito and Harty. The latter's tone-poem With the Wild Geese is cited here as the first great original musical work of cultural nationalism. One has only to consider this work alongside other leading emanations such as Bax's The Garden of Fand and May's String Quartet to appreciate the disparate nature of creative endeavour.

Under the burgeoning influence of national sentiment, Irish musicians explored many avenues and not a few culs-de-sac. This unguided progress resulted directly from the lack of tradition. Those who elected to invent such a foundation were ineluctably drawn to the body of folksong. Attention has been given in this study to the dangers of a conceited estimation of this inheritance. This is decidedly not to deny its splendour, but to point that too high an opinion of past achievement led to complacency about current endeavour.

The quality of the heritage is attested by the songs themselves and is corroborated by the objective enthusiasm of musicians such as Bax and Moeran. However, reliance on indigenous music proved as unfortunate as it was understandable. The frequent claims made on its behalf were both a factor of nationalism and an indication of diffidence. Nationalism, particularly in its dominant German romantic form, required a people to demonstrate cultural distinction in order to corroborate a claim to a separate nationhood. Folksong became one tool in this claim. The modal debate which raged at the turn of the present century provides evidence of this assertion of distinction in that it sought to establish that native Irish music was possessed of a singular structure. But this was a case of ends justifying means; and the weight of tradition could prove a heavy burden. As argued above, a linear style, constructed in short forms, was technically unsuited to support a broader musical emanation. Folksong is simply not the stuff of extended composition; it fails the essential criterion in that it is not capable of development. The irony is that the obsession with folksong, which had at its birth a good and reasonable motivation, actually inhibited the emergence of a broader Irish musical idiom. It engendered a succession of miniatures, many finely crafted, but it produced few large-scale compositions. It required a period of maturation before Irish composers were able to appreciate their indigenous heritage without feeling constricted by it.

The minority who chose the alternative option rejected the insular outlook believing the whole European aesthetic to be their birthright. This was not a stance likely to win popular approbation for two reasons: first, it was out of sympathy with the general isolationist tenor; second, there was not yet a sufficient level of musical literacy to appreciate fully the significance of this perspective. Frederick May's unavailing pleas for central support for the artist testify to the isolation felt by those who elected for this course. His music suffered particularly because he espoused modernist techniques and expected a nation content in its acceptance of the past to appreciate such a departure. While May looked to the present and the future, he and those in sympathy with his approach had that which the alternative camp lacked: they had a wealth of tradition to support them. Their difficulty lay in imbuing a universal technique with an original Irish

flavour. Furthermore, the division between the two approaches militated against the development of a national school of composition. The debate over the future course of music in Ireland which emerged in the early decades of this century was welcome in that it demonstrated a growing interest in an art which had been eclipsed by literature and the concern for language in the period following the death of Parnell. But this lengthy and occasionally acrimonious polemic diverted energy from the more crucial work of creation. This division is the child of nationalism; it is also the one consistent feature in Irish musical life in the period between 1800 and 1950. It is telling to look to the end of this period and recall the observations of Denis Donoghue, an Irishman who was to become one of the most eminent literary critics of his generation and who for a time seriously considered a career in music:

It is quite possible that Irish music may have no future existence.... There is in Ireland to-day no composer whose works an intelligent European musician must know, in the sense in which that musician must be familiar with the work of Walton, Hindemith, Vaughan Williams, Sibelius and other composers. It is unlikely that Ernest Newman, for instance, has heard a single bar of modern Irish music, but nobody would consider Newman's musical education defective on that account: a different moral is to be drawn. Life being short, an international musician such as Professor Newman must concentrate on the best: and that excludes Irish music. There are many reasons for the poverty of contemporary Irish music.... The first reason is the lamentable fact that many Irish composers have fallen into the trap of folk music.... The musical reputation of a country depends on her composers. Irish music will become internationally known and respected only if our composers can be trained to enter fully into contemporary musical activity; at present they have no part in it.¹⁰

Donoghue's critique is not novel; it echoes many assessments quoted earlier. What is disturbing is that he made this comment in 1955 which clearly indicates the debilitating effects of the central division and of the as yet unresolved debate. While reasoned discussion has failed to discover an agreed position, changing world circumstances which have

drawn the world closer have largely deprived this polemic of its relevance. A provincial perspective, in politics or art, is becoming less tenable. It is both ironic and perhaps inevitable that the peculiar difficulties encountered by music in Ireland which were occasioned by practical conditions should find the seeds of resolution in like manner.

The convoluted social configuration and the consequent ruptured tradition empirically admitted of no dénouement; the division simply became outmoded. The history of music in Ireland will show that increasingly composers have chosen to move away from an insular position and are adopting a more cosmopolitan perspective. The younger generation whose works come after the period of this investigation have taken to heart the criticisms voiced by Donoghue and demonstrate a greater willingness to embrace European trends. As a result, Irish music has become less protective in the past generation and is more pluralist in character, a disposition at one with the ever closer political and economic ties currently being forged within Europe. Individuals have shown a willingness to foster technical innovations, a departure enhanced by the greater opportunities to study abroad. As a consequence, examples of serialism, electronic composition, and aleatoric approaches can all be met with.¹¹ The second generation of composers, of which the senior members are A.J.Potter (1918-1980), Gerard Victory (b.1921), James Wilson (b.1922), John Kinsella (b.1932), and Seoirse Bodley (b.1933), has demonstrated a wide range of creative interests, including a celebration of the ethnic spirit which, in its increased assurance, is closer to Kodály's 'national classicism' than the result of any parochial obligation to employ folksong. It is through the greater activity and confidence initiated by this generation and its successors that the country looks to make its distinctive contribution to what is now the universal aesthetic.

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1. See report by F.Millar, 'Oxford Irish history chair for Foster', The Irish Times (21 Jan. 1991), 12. Professor Roy Foster was appointed to the newly-created chair in Hertford College, endowed by the Carroll Foundation in London, which was the first such appointment at a British University. See also profile of the recipient in the same newspaper (26 Jan. 1991), 12.
2. F.May, 'The Composer in Ireland', The Bell, XIII (Jan. 1947), 35-6.
3. See P.Alter, Nationalism (London, 1989), 30.
4. G.Russell, 'The Gaelic and the Anglo-Irish Cultures', The Irish Statesman, III (17 Jan. 1925), 586-7.
5. C.Benson, The Place of the Arts in Irish Education (Dublin, 1979), 18.
6. The title is borrowed from Yeats's late, short poem; see Collected Poems (London, 1961), 301. The phrase was also employed by the author for a series of radio programmes on music in Ireland broadcast on RTE FM3 during the summer of 1990.
7. B.Arnold, A Concise History of Irish Art (London, rev. edn 1977), 6.
8. A.Fleischmann, 'Composition and the Folk Idiom', Ireland To-Day, I (Nov. 1936), 42-4. For fuller context, see chap.VII.
9. S.O'Grady, All Ireland Review, I (20 Jan. 1900), 4. The fuller quotation is employed in chap.V.
10. D.Donoghue, 'The Future of Irish Music', Studies, XLIV (Spring, 1955), 109-114.
11. A comprehensive overview of this younger generation and the various technical approaches which are adopted can be met with in K.Fadlu-Deen, 'Contemporary Music in Ireland' (MA dissertation, National University of Ireland, 1968).

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