



Locating the centre: Irish traditional music and re-traditionalisation at the Willie Clancy Summer School

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- 1 For a more detailed description of the school see Tony C. Kearns and Barry Taylor, *A Touchstone for the Tradition: The Willie Clancy Summer School* (Dingle, 2003).
- 2 In the early years of the school, classes were given in uilleann piping, fiddle, flute and tin whistle. This expanded in the 1980s to include concertina and button accordion. The banjo and harmonica were added in 2005 and the harp in 2007. Set-dancing and old style step-dancing classes are taught and a workshop series in traditional singing takes place.
- 3 Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender: The Construction of Irish National Identity, 1724-1874* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006)
- 4 Ciarán Mac Mathúna, *The Piping of Willie Clancy, Volume 1* (Dublin, 1980).
- 5 Jackie Small, interview, October 2009.
- 6 Muiris Ó Rócháin, interview, May 2009
- 7 See <http://comhaltas.ie/events/competitions/> accessed 31 October 2012
- 8 For further information on this see Rachel C. Fleming, 'Resisting Cultural Standardisation: Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and the Revitalisation of Traditional Music in Ireland', *Journal of Folklore Research*, 41, (2004), 227-57; and Méabh Ní Fhuartháin, 'Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition, 1951-1970' (PhD Thesis, NUI Galway, 2011), pp. 281-333.
- 9 Séamus Mac Mathúna, 'Today and Tomorrow: A Critical Appraisal of the State of Traditional Music', *Fonn*, 2, (1964), 61-63.
- 10 Eamon Ó Muiri, 'The Fleadh', *Fonn* 2 (1964), 67-69.
- 11 Ó Rócháin, 2009.
- 12 This is in no way disregards the role of Comhaltas in celebrating older tradition-bearers, but is a general comment on the challenges presented, particularly during the 1960s, to the identity of the Fleadh.
- 13 For further details about this see Kearns and Taylor, *A Touchstone for the Tradition: The Willie Clancy Summer School* (Dingle, 2003), pp. 64-65.
- 14 Mac Mathúna, 'Today and Tomorrow: A Critical Appraisal of the state of Traditional Music', 61-63.
- 15 A positive outcome for both organisations resulted, with the first WCSS providing the model for subsequent highly successful Scoil Éigse discussed in detail later in the essay.
- 16 See Barbara O' Connor, 'Come and daunce with me in Irlandé': Tourism, Dance and Globalisation', in Mícael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor (eds), *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture, and Identity* (Clevedon ; Buffalo, 2003); Martin McLoone, *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland: Cityscapes, Landscapes, Ssoundscapes* (Dublin, 2008); and Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone, 'Hybridity and National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music', *Popular Music*, 19, (2000), 181.
- 17 Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, 'The National and the Local: Practices of De- and retraditionalisation', *FF Network*, 28, (2005), 10-18.
- 18 Following Bourdieu, the term 'cultural capital' is used throughout this essay to express the social value of the skills and dispositions embedded in cultural competence and experience. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in J.G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986), pp. 241-258.
- 19 Vincent Griffin from east Clare has also taught at the school since its inception.
- 20 Contemporary teaching methods at the school would frequently involve breaking a tune

down into smaller phrases. After sustained repetition and acquisition of a phrase, the tutor would move onto the next one and eventually piece these phrases together into an entire tune. Máire Ó'Keeffe (in an interview in December 2009) described how the older musicians approached teaching in a manner closer to performance, 'playing away' a given tune in its entirety and continuously repeating it until students managed to pick it up and join in.

- 21 Denis Liddy, interview, July 2010.
- 22 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 21.
- 23 This took place during the Willie Clancy Summer School 2009.
- 24 James Kelly's class at the Willie Clancy Summer School 2009.
- 25 Both Vincent Griffin and Sean Keane attended the early summer schools. Griffin is a fiddle player from Feakle in east Clare. Sean Keane was a member of Ceoltóirí Chualann and still plays with the Chieftains.
- 26 Brendan Mulvihill, son of Martin Mulvihill, a fiddle player from Glin, Co. Limerick.
- 27 John McFadden, a fiddle player from Co. Mayo was recorded by music collector Captain Francis O'Neill in Chicago in 1907. Further information on the O'Neill cylinders is available here: <http://archives.irishfest.com/dunn-family-collection/History/O'Neill-Cylinders.htm>
- 28 Joe Cleary, 'Preface', in J. Cleary & C. Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), xiii.
- 29 Joe Cleary, 'Introduction: Ireland and modernity', in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 5.
- 30 Philip V. Bohlman, 'Irish Music at the Edge of History', in Thérèse Smith (ed.), *Ancestral Imprints: Histories of Irish Traditional Music and Dance* (Cork University Press, 2012), pp. 181-206.
- 31 Indeed, this would add to what Arjun Appadurai would describe as its de-territorialisation as well. Arjun Appadurai *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis and London, 1996), pp. 27-47.
- 32 Séamus Ennis collected in County Clare in 1945 for the Irish Folklore Commission and in 1949 for RÉ. Ciarán Mac Mathúna began his collecting in Clare in 1955 for RTÉ radio and television. Tom Munnely began collecting in County Clare from 1971 and relocated there in 1978. The subsequent broadcasting of collected materials contributed to the legacy of County Clare as a site for Irish traditional music.
- 33 Bohlman, 'Irish Music at the Edge of History', p. 189.
- 34 Examples include the South Sligo Summer School in Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo and the Joe Mooney Summer School in Drumbshanbo, Co. Leitrim.
- 35 John O'Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Aldershot, 2009), p. 11.