The Role of Mandolin in Irish Traditional Music

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I dedicate this dissertation to my late father Oliver (Ollie) Casley

who instilled in me at a young age his love for Irish traditional music

I miss you dearly.

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Abstract

This dissertation critically examines the emergence and use of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. This research is informed by an investigation of a variety of socio-cultural and musical factors that shape the potential for the integration of the mandolin into the tradition. Information is drawn from Irish and international sources that focus on the use of the mandolin in other cultures and musical traditions. The development of the mandolin as an instrument and the music associated with it in Europe from the seventeenth century, through a period of popularity in the nineteenth century, and its eventual adoption into Bluegrass music in the twentieth century are examined. Musical developments in Ireland in the twentieth century are also investigated in order to contextualize the emergence of the mandolin as an instrument in the Irish music traditions.

A number of existing subcultures in Irish traditional music which engaged with innovation and experimentation fostered the integration of the mandolin into the canon of Irish traditional music. The influence of Irish mandolin players is documented in this study and explored through a detailed investigation of recordings, which combined with interviews, video recordings and other published sources, are employed to illustrate the stylistic approaches on the mandolin in Irish traditional music. It contends that these musicians, including those more readily identified as banjo players, through their musical activities, facilitated the introduction of new instruments and new approaches to Irish traditional music. Thus, the integrity of the mandolin as an instrument in Irish traditional music was encouraged, leading to its acceptance as a recognised and familiar instrument in the soundscape of Irish traditional music.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation contends that the mandolin is a viable and versatile instrument on which Irish traditional music can be played in a manner complimenting the existing soundscape of the tradition. It will demonstrate the instrument's original contribution to the Irish music soundscape of the twentieth century with regard to style and aesthetics in the hands of revivalist performers. Eydmann (1995) has noted that 'any attempt to map and understand the processes involved in the adoption and use of musical instruments requires an approach which recognises the breadth of the musical field and accommodates its complexities, interpenetrations and contradictions' (p. 2). This dissertation acknowledges the complexities presented by the overlapping musical worlds of 'folk' and 'traditional' and the varying interpretations of these terms in the context of the musicians under examination. Therefore, of particular interest in this context is the period termed the 'folk' revival of the 1960s in Ireland, a period from which a number of case studies are drawn. Nettl states that 'the study of instruments can - and should – be integrated with descriptions of musical culture and musical style at large' (Nettl, 1964, p. 215). Therefore, in following the various paths taken by the mandolin before its arrival into Irish traditional music, the important part played by historical and social contexts and in particular, musical contexts will be examined.

Irish traditional music consists of instrumental dance repertoire and song passed on from one singer or musician to another through oral transmission, over generations and usually within families or communities. Until recent times the Irish dance tune tradition was essentially an unaccompanied art form performed by individual musicians who were highly valued members of the community who would perform at family gatherings such as weddings and other such celebrations. The introduction of new instruments into Irish traditional music has been on-going for the past two centuries. The major instruments dating back to the eighteenth century include the fiddle, uilleann pipes, harp, tin whistle and flute. Of these instruments, the uilleann pipes and the harp can be considered distinctly Irish. The adoption of the free-reed instruments such as accordions, melodeons, and concertinas in the late nineteenth century have since become central to the tradition and show the versatility of the traditional music repertoire and its musicians.

While the focus of this dissertation is on the mandolin, a historical understanding of Irish traditional music is imperative in order to contextualise the fieldwork and research results. Breathnach (1971, 1977, 1996), Cowdery (1990), Ó Canainn (1978, 1993, 1996) and Ó Riada

(1982) contribute detailed accounts of important aspects of traditional music such as tune types, instrumentation, and stylistic features. These sources, along with others by Hast and Scott (2004), Kaul (2009) Ó hAllmhuráin (1998), O Shea (2005, 2008), Vallely (2008), and Williams (2010), also provide historical and socio-cultural information about musical behaviours and practices within Irish traditional music. Finally, Vallely et al (1999; 2011) also provide valuable perspectives on related questions of innovation, change, and authorship in Irish traditional music.

Although the mandolin has been widely played in the tradition for over fifty years, little has been published on its history within Irish traditional music. References to the mandolin within the context of Irish traditional music in contemporary literature to date, has been quite vague, and does not go far enough to explaining its role. In almost all cases the mandolin is confined to one or two short paragraphs (Vallely, 1999, 2011; White and Boydell, 2013). Biographies of musicians who include the mandolin amongst their instruments might often omit the fact that they played the mandolin, focussing on other instruments such as the fiddle, banjo and guitar as appropriate. For example in Vallely's *Companion to Irish Traditional music* (2011) the biographies of seminal players such as Mick Moloney and Andy Irvine fail to mention that they played the mandolin.

While the mandolin, as an instrument, is largely unexplored, it is closely connected to the banjo in the context of Irish traditional music. The banjo has become a very significant instrument in Irish traditional music in recent years, particularly through the playing of Barney McKenna, Kieran Hanrahan, Gerry O'Connor, Enda Scahill and Martin Howley. By examining the banjo we can get a better understanding insight into the mandolin as each of these musicians also play the mandolin. I will explore the reasons for the perception of the mandolin as a 'second' instrument and how these musicians have influenced the playing of the mandolin in the wider Irish traditional music world. In the final section, a study of tutor books not only on the mandolin, but also on the banjo were very informative in regards to information on style and technique on the mandolin. Gerry O Connor's (1997) and Enda Scahill's (2008, 2012) banjo tutor books are also useful as well as Kieran Hanrahan's (2012) MA on the development of the banjo in Irish traditional music.

My initial interest in undertaking a study on the mandolin in Irish traditional music was inspired by my own life experiences. As a child in the 1980s my father, who ran Irish traditional music gigs in Slattery's of Capel Street in Dublin, would often bring my siblings

and I into the Sunday afternoon sessions. It was here I first became acquainted with Irish traditional music and song. Although I was quite young I recall many musicians playing a number of different instruments such as the fiddle, flute, banjo, pipes, guitar, mandolin and the bouzouki. Following on from this experience, in my late teens I began buying Irish traditional music on cassette tape and CD. I began listening to albums by Planxty, The Dubliners, Sweeney's Men, The Johnstons, Dervish and Lia Luachra. It was through this experience I became fascinated with a number of musicians who played the mandolin such as Andy Irvine, Mick Moloney, Paul Brady, Brian McDonagh, Declan Corry and Barney McKenna. I became interested in many questions surrounding the mandolin such as the related history of the instrument, its introduction into Irish traditional music and approaches to playing the mandolin.

Before discussing the mandolin in Irish traditional music it is necessary to look at the instrument's evolution and development and its subsequent inclusion in the mainstream of Irish traditional music. A brief outline of the history of the mandolin in both in European Art Music traditions and American Bluegrass music traditions will inform this study, thus placing its role in Irish traditional music in a wider musical and historical context. The focus of the dissertation, however, is to document the instruments progression into Irish traditional music. Advertisements from various publications demonstrate that the instrument was available for sale in Ireland as early as 1889 but its use in Irish folk and traditional music has been largely unreferenced until the 1960s. It will demonstrate that the mandolin was being played amongst the Irish diaspora in America in the early twentieth century and also amongst a small number of musicians in Ireland prior to the 1960s. It will highlight the specificities and the potential for integration and assimilation of new instruments, such as the mandolin into the soundscape of the tradition with a particular focus from 1960 to 1998.

In this dissertation the historical and social contexts existing in Ireland in the latter half of the twentieth century are examined. As discussed in Chapter 3 these demonstrate that it was a time of great change when many outside influences were having a huge impact on the Irish music soundscape. The emergence of the mandolin in Irish traditional music is inextricably linked to this surge of new interest, experimentation and development in the Irish music tradition. It will demonstrate that the impetus for change and innovation, which led to the introduction of the mandolin came from outside the tradition rather than from within, through a new stream of musicians who integrated material from the existing tradition while incorporating ideas from other musical traditions. Other significant developments include the

changing musical contexts and the arrival of new technology such as the advent of sound recording and radio which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

A number of important trends and influences must be considered in contextualising a study of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. The influence of musical developments in the USA from the beginning of the twentieth century has formed, and is today still shaping, aspects of music and musical tastes around the world (Vignoles 1984; O' Connor, 1991; Harper and Hodgett, 2005; Smyth, 2005). The emergence of the mandolin relates to a largely urban context where the mandolin was used for the development of new sounds in the tradition, in contrast with a largely rural narrative of the tradition (Curran, 1999; Sommers Smith, 2001; Kearney, 2007; Nicholsen, 2007). The integration of the mandolin into an Irish music soundscape through ballad groups such as The Dubliners, Sweeney's Men and The Johnstons in the 1960s sees the mandolin mainly associated with song accompaniment and the playing of slow airs. Since then, the role and popularity of the mandolin in the performance of Irish traditional tunes has continued to grow and has been used more widely in the context of the dance music tradition from the 1970s. In its capacity as a melodic instrument, the mandolin is limited by its dynamic limitations in an acoustic context; however, the development of new amplified contexts for the performance of Irish traditional music has facilitated its use.

The revival period, including the foundation of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in 1951, is significant. Organisations such as Comhaltas promoted Irish traditional music and engaged with new audiences for the tradition. Early revivalists laid down a foundation of what was acceptable and authentic in keeping with the historical narrative of the tradition, particularly when it came to instrumentation. For many years the mandolin was included under the banner of miscellaneous instruments in Comhaltas competitions but its growing use by members of the organisation is mirrored by the development of competitions for the instrument in the 1990s.

As the revival gathered momentum many young musicians in Dublin began to embrace Ireland's indigenous music and began travelling to the *Fleadhanna Cheoil* organised by Comhaltas. It is in this arena the direction and development of Irish traditional music can be divided into two distinct camps, those who followed and applauded contemporary folk songs, and those who wished everything to remain 'traditional'. This dissertation therefore focuses particularly on the urban folk revival where the mandolin finds a role within the indigenous music of Ireland and will demonstrate an overlap of both 'folk' and 'traditional' worlds.

Central to the development of my own mandolin playing and the rationale for this dissertation examining the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music, are a number of influential performers who are presented in this study. The process of how the mandolin becomes assimilated will be examined through the analysis of recordings and biographical details of seminal mandolin players. These include Barney McKenna (1939–2012), Andy Irvine (b. 1942), Mick Moloney (b. 1944), Dave Richardson (b.1948), Paul Kelly (b. 1957) and Brian McDonagh (b. 1959). It will argue that the mandolin was not only an intentional choice but also a strategic choice by 'revivalist' musicians that allowed them to penetrate the world of Irish traditional music, while still being able to occupy other musical spheres. It will demonstrate through an analysis of their playing styles, how each of the musicians successfully indigenised the mandolin into Irish traditional music and in doing so created a new harmonic approach to its performance. Through an analysis of biographical narratives and individual performance styles, insight is provided into the evolution of the mandolin over nearly four decades, covering key periods of change and development in the Irish music soundscape. Reference is also made to other musicians and groups for whom the mandolin was part of the soundscape of a commercial music product drawing upon Irish music traditions. These include Clannad, Horslips, Stockton's Wing, The Fureys, The Buskers and Lia Luachra.

Many of the mandolin players under consideration can be seen to be multi-instrumentalists with many of them also playing the banjo, guitar, fiddle and bouzouki. The mandolin, described as a secondary instrument in the context of Irish traditional music (Kearney, 2013), was sometimes looked upon pejoratively as an instrument for beginners or for those not competent on other instruments. Anecdotal evidence points to the tendency amongst some of the older generation of Irish traditional musicians in Dublin to call instruments such as the mandolin a 'Joe Walsh' instrument, in reference to their popularity amongst young Irish tourists who were travelling to other European cities and bringing home new instruments and incorporating them into the performance of Irish folk music.[1]Another important influence on the development of Irish traditional music over this period is Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ), an organisation founded in 1951 for the promotion and preservation of Irish traditional music with quite a conservative view of the traditions. However, many of the

[1] Joe Walsh Tours was a bus tour company that provided continental package holidays for Irish tourists in the 1960s. Many of whom brought instruments such as the mandolin and bouzouki home with them. Furlong (2009)

mandolin players in this study developed their music without significant influence from the organisation.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research is to create an understanding of the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. It has not been as prominent as other stringed instruments such as the banjo, guitar and bouzouki, which also developed more prominent roles during the era of the folk revival. This research highlights the mandolin as an instrument worthy of consideration in the discourse of twenty first century Irish traditional music.

The main objectives of this research have been to show the progression of the mandolin in Ireland from an instrument used for song accompaniment and the playing of slow airs to an instrument used in the performance of Irish traditional music. An examination of the development of the instrument in other musical cultures such as Classical and Bluegrass music can further explain its evolution in a broader musical world from an instrument used for song accompaniment to the playing of Irish traditional dance music, with the advancements in recording technologies and amplification.

An examination of selected recordings of mandolin players and their performance styles and techniques in Irish traditional music further exemplifies the important role of the mandolin not only as a melodic instrument but also as an instrument used in the composition of new tunes and its influence on the evolution of instrumentation in Irish traditional music.

1.2 Research Methodology

As there is little research undertaken on the mandolin in Irish traditional music, a number of different methods were used in compiling research material for this study. Firstly, historical sources such as newspapers and contemporary literature as well as internet sources were drawn upon to establish when the mandolin first arrived in Ireland and at what point was it incorporated into Irish traditional music. Studies undertaken on other instruments such as Hanrahan's Masters Dissertation *The Emergence and Teaching of the Tenor Banjo in Irish Traditional Music* (2012) provided both information and models for study. Other literature sources include Such's *The Bodhrán: The Black Sheep in the Family of Traditional Irish Musical Instruments* (1985), Ni Fhionghaile's *The adoption and transformation of the Greek bouzouki in the Irish music tradition* (1990), Smith's *Modern-Style Irish Accordion Playing:*

History, Biography and Class (1997), Ní Chaoimh's *Journey into tradition: A social history of the Irish button accordion* (2010) and Lawlor's *Irish Harping 1900-2010* (2012). All point to a variety of processes that impact on the assimilation and subsequent evolution of instruments in the Irish music tradition, highlighting various attitudes to instruments from members of the community.

Commercial recordings provide invaluable source material for this study. Although few solo mandolin albums exist in the context of Irish traditional music, a number of groups and ensembles include the instrument. Analysis of these recordings and critical listening to LPs, cassette tapes and CDs provide insights into the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. Through this detailed analysis of recordings, the development of different roles for, and approaches to playing the mandolin in Irish traditional music can be fully understood and will further inform future research.

A number of interviews and personal correspondence with mandolin players who were at the forefront of the folk 'revival' in the 1960s and 1970s were conducted. Interviewees included Andy Irvine, who was one of the first musicians to use the mandolin in Irish traditional music, and a primary influence on many mandolin players and Dave Richardson of Boys of the Lough who was one of the first mandolin players to record the mandolin in a traditional ensemble with fiddle, flute and the uilleann pipes, and who composed a number of tunes that have entered the traditional repertoire. Other mandolin players interviewed included Brian McDonagh who recorded with the band Oisín, and Paul Kelly who in 1998 recorded the first album for solo mandolin in the context of Irish traditional music. Many of the interviews were related to the case studies presented in Chapter Four. Fieldwork based on participant-observation was carried out in a variety of learning contexts, including traditional music sessions, festivals and workshops. Additionally, interviews with professional and amateur musicians provide diverse narratives and first-hand insights into musical developments with regard to instrument usage throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

1.3 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of the mandolin from its origins in Italy in the seventeenth century to the development of Bluegrass music in America in the twentieth century. There is a brief explanation of the organological development of the instrument and the main changes to its construction over the centuries. This chapter engages with the seminal

works of Paul Sparks (1995) in collaboration with James Tyler (1992, 1996). Sparks and Tyler provide both the historical context and the role of the mandolin in various musical traditions in Europe, the Far East and the USA. Despite the richness of scholarship on the mandolin in these works, the mandolin in Ireland and in Irish traditional music is not considered. The role of Bluegrass in popularising the instrument is critically evaluated, highlighting the adaptation of the instrument through the development of new techniques that contributed to changing the perception of the instrument. The development of amplification and recording is also influential on the changing role of the mandolin.

Chapter Three focuses on the instrumentation used in Irish traditional music before the introduction of newer instruments in the twentieth century. Amongst the instruments considered as 'traditional' are the uilleann pipes, harp, fiddle and flute. These instruments are contrasted with the plucked stringed instruments such as the mandolin, banjo, bouzouki and guitar. Other studies demonstrate how instruments can be integrated into traditions, such as the button accordion (Smith, 1997) or adapted to meet the needs of changes in the tradition, as with the harp (Lanier, 1999). The Chapter provides a critical overview of the urban based folk revival and the interrelationship between urban and rural musical worlds, which establishes a context into which the mandolin is integrated. In particular the emergence of ensemble contexts for Irish traditional music performance in the latter half of the twentieth century, in which the mandolin achieves a particular role, is critically examined.

Chapter Four develops six case studies that focus on seminal performers on the instrument from the 1960s to the present, with a particular emphasis on the years 1962 to 1998. The period is bookended by the albums *The Dubliners – Live in Concert* featuring Barney McKenna on mandolin and *A Mandolin Album*, a solo album by Paul Kelly – the first solo mandolin album of Irish traditional music, which also includes tracks from other traditions and genres. The case studies focus in particular on commercial recordings that assist in highlighting the developing role of the instrument over the decades, in particular emphasizing changing techniques and stylistic approaches by the musicians concerned.

The concluding chapter highlights the challenges that exist for the developing role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. It argues that information presented in this dissertation can inform further research and performance practice, not only in Irish traditional music but in a wider musical soundscape that seeks to include the instrument.

Appendix One includes an analysis of style and technique on the mandolin in Irish traditional music and provides a glossary of terms informing an analysis of recordings and performances by musicians on the instrument.

1.4 Defining terminology: 'traditional' and 'folk'

A critical discourse that is central to this dissertation relates to terminology of genre. When discussing music in the middle of the twentieth century, a dilemma presents itself in relation to the use of the term 'traditional' and 'folk' to describe the indigenous music of Ireland. Historically the terms were associated with the rural communities of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the term 'traditional' began to be associated with 'folk' music and 'folk' dances. As times changed, folk music has also changed to reflect the times and more recently the meaning has been blurred. Scahill (2013) notes 'It is impossible nearly to define what the term 'traditional music' encompasses because of a number of interrelated factors: these include the complexity of the history of this music in Ireland, its diverse provenances, its dynamic and sometimes tense relationship with art and popular music, the evaluative and ideological nature of the term, and the history of the term itself' (p. 996). Nicholas Carolan, director of the Irish Traditional Archive, defines Irish traditional music as 'a very broad term that includes many different types of singing and instrumental music, music of many periods, as performed by Irish people in Ireland or outside it, and occasionally nowadays by people of other nationalities' (Carolan, 1996). Thus, Carolan provides an inclusive definition that can encompass many aspects of musical culture related to the mandolin in Irish traditional music.

The use of terminology in music can often be subjective, which has been highlighted in an Irish context by O'Flynn (2009), but exists in almost all discourse on music. In this dissertation, the terms 'traditional' and 'folk' can be used interchangeably in different contexts to refer to the types of music being studied that inform this dissertation, with due consideration for the different musical sub-cultures that developed throughout the twentieth century. While the mandolin during the latter half of the twentieth century more appropriately can be considered a folk music instrument, its development into an instrument on which Irish dance music could be played will be analysed and will highlight the integration of both of these terms.

1.5 Emerging themes

In this dissertation, three interrelated themes emerge that contextualise the introduction and role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music and inform an understanding of the historical narratives of the tradition as it developed in the twentieth century. These are as follows:

1. Instrumentation in Irish traditional music
2. The urban location of Irish traditional music
3. Revival Characteristics in Irish traditional music

1.5.1 Instrumentation in Irish traditional music

Throughout the world instruments have evolved through centuries of assimilation into local cultures, as well as cross-cultural fertilisation. Even within a single community instruments have multiple socio-cultural functions that vary not only by genre of music but also according to different subcultures within the overall society. For example, a fiddle in Irish traditional music is the same physical instrument as a violin in classical music, but the approach to playing is quite different. One of the most interesting developments in recent times is the way in which new instruments and musical styles have interacted and fused with Irish traditional music. Historically, the main instruments used in Irish traditional music dating back to the eighteenth century include the uilleann pipes, harp, fiddle, whistle and flute. Of these instruments, the uilleann pipes and the harp are often considered the most distinctively Irish. While the harp and uilleann pipes have close socio-cultural associations with Irish history, by the eighteenth century instruments such as the fiddle and flute became the preferred instrument for traditional music in many parts of Ireland.

The status of instruments in Irish traditional music such as the harp, uilleann pipes and fiddle are sometimes used as a sign of Irishness and cultural identity (Lawlor, 2012; Carolan, 2012; O'Donnell, 2014). Scholars and musicians who have written on many different aspects of Irish traditional music have included a focus on particular instruments that reinforces the perceptions of instrumentation in the tradition **(**Breathnach 1971, 1977; Carson 1986; Ó Canainn 1978; 1993; McCarthy 1999; O Shea 2008; Ó Riada 1982; Williams 2010). Much of this literature focuses on the instruments that have been part of the tradition for the past two hundred years or more, and provides an insight into many different aspects of instrument usage in Ireland. Some have approached the subject with particular focus on the historical and social contexts while others have taken a more pedagogical approach, publishing tutor

books on the more common instruments in the tradition such as the uilleann pipes, fiddle and flute.

For the purpose of this study it is important to note that in the past twenty five years the marketing of the mandolin and related tutor books and DVD tutorials make reference to the Irish mandolin. This is evident through Padraig Carroll's tutor book *The Irish Mandolin* (1991, 1999), Phillip John Berthoud's *Irish Mandolin Playing* (2004), Anthony Warde's *Learn to Play the Irish Mandolin* (DVD) (2005), Marla Fibish's *Irish Mandolin Basics: Tunes and Techniques* (DVD) (2012) and Doc Rossi's *ASAP Irish Mandolin: Learn How to Play the Irish Way* (2014). All of these tutor books have reinforced the mandolin's role within the Irish music traditions.

The introduction and use of new instruments in Irish traditional music can alter the soundscape and attract various critiques. Ó Canainn writes:

> In an instrumental tradition where the tunes are not written down but are actually composed on the instrument itself and transmitted orally, it is clear that to a large extent they will carry something of the character of the instrument on which they were composed. The composer will automatically favour certain movement and passages which are either easy on the particular instrument or are in some way typical of its use in the tradition, or may perhaps be considered uniquely a property of the particular instrument and not available on others (Ó Canainn, 1978, p. 1).

This challenge, posed by different instruments to which Ó Canainn refers, is evident in relation to a number of instruments introduced during the nineteenth century, particularly with the appearance of the free reed instruments once considered to have limitations. For example, in Smith's (1997) Modern-Style Irish Accordion Playing: History, Biography and Class, his account of the development of the accordion in the twentieth century demonstrates how an instrument, once considered as having certain limitations and restrictions, such as the limited set of pitches and considerable difficulties when learning finger patterns, can not only become a part of the tradition but also create a new distinctive playing and accompaniment style in Irish traditional music. New developments in the construction of the accordion with regard to the tuning, keys, bellows, and push and draw techniques added a new dynamic to Irish traditional music.

The development of ensemble performance in Irish traditional music can be seen to have begun in London at the end of the nineteenth century (Hall, 1995). Instruments typically used include the fiddle, flute, button accordion, concertina, banjo, piano, bass and snare drum with

woodblock. Through much of the early twentieth century, this form of ensemble playing developed and dominated in Ireland and abroad. Such an ensemble provided little space or opportunity for the mandolin. A notable reaction to this form of performance was that of Seán Ó Riada who, likening the sound of a céilí band to 'the buzzing of a bluebottle in an upturned jam jar' (Ó Riada, 1982, p. 73-74), incorporated techniques and styles associated with Art Music and Jazz ensemble performance into Irish traditional music, beginning with Ceoltóirí Chualann and further popularised by The Chieftains. The development of arrangements that allowed the solo performer to come to the fore influenced many subsequent bands and arguably paved the way for instruments such as the mandolin to find a space within this soundscape. Ó Riada's experimentation is significantly influenced by his experiences in Dublin in the 1950s and 1960s (Ó Canainn, 2003). Dublin provided an urban context for the experience and performance of not only Irish traditional music but a range of other musics, the totality of which helped shaped the soundscape of Irish traditional music. In this dissertation I contend that many musicians in the Dublin traditional music scene were enthusiastic assimilationists, forging a new ethnic identity for the music through the use of plucked string instruments such as the mandolin.

1.5.2 Urban locations for Irish traditional music

The relocation of Irish traditional music from a rural to an urban context has been identified as a significant change in the tradition through the twentieth century (Kearney, 2007) and provides a particular context for the introduction of the mandolin, and other new instruments to that soundscape. The process through which traditional music assumes new forms is complex incorporating such forces as urbanization, migration and new technologies. In the first two decades of the century with new mass media, radio and records, Irish music flourished in urban centres such as London, Chicago and New York (Moloney, 1992; Hall, 1995; Gedutis, 2004) and created a new twentieth century music community that ultimately transcended the imagined boundaries of Irish traditional music. The development of an urban-based Irish traditional community both at home and abroad through migration to the big cities of America and England played a huge role in the development of the indigenous music of Ireland.

It was in New York that the recording industry of the 1920s focussed on ethnic musicians. Irish musicians including Michael Coleman, James Morrison and John McKenna became stars of this new industry and they were among the most influential musicians of the

twentieth century (Kearney, 2007). Exposure through new technologies in the U.S promoted Irish traditional music and dance beyond ethnic boundaries securing a place in the commercial music industry particularly in urban performance settings.

According to Sally K. Sommers Smith, Irish traditional music was not an exclusively rural creation, but the product of an interaction between urban and rural societies (Smith, 2003, p. 105). Kearney (2007) has noted: 'possibly the biggest change in Ireland through the twentieth century has been the growth of urbanisation' (p. 2). Urbanisation produced new urban lifestyles and social networks, which were in many respects different from those in indigenous rural societies. Bohlmann (1988) argues that 'folk music in the modern world undergoes many processes of change, but two large processes – modernisation and urbanisation – dominate and influence many of the other processes' (p. 125). Urbanisation sped rapidly during the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly in Ireland and led to the displacement of the social aspect of folk music, namely the isolated rural communities with which the music had previously been associated. The movement of Irish traditional music, particularly from rural to urban settings, is part of the development of folk music. As Bohlmann argues:

> [t]he geographic basis of folk music has not disappeared, but it has effectively migrated from rural to urban models, from simple to complex settings. Here, new boundaries arise; the influences on musical genres are greater, but no urban musical grayout is in sight (Bohlmann, 1988, p. 67).

In this context, it is important to consider the role of a Dublin based community in the emergence and use of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. With the first signs of economic prosperity in 1970s, emigrants returned home in droves (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998, p. 150). The development of an outward-looking economy brought a proliferation of social and musical changes to Ireland and a degree of prosperity that allowed the generation that came of age in the 1970s the opportunity to stay in Ireland rather than emigrate (O' Shea, 2005, p. 103). The transformation of Irish traditional music from a rural activity in the 1950s to a popular musical genre from the 1970s through the plethora of ensemble and ballad groups is considered to be a pivotal moment in the development, longevity, and dissemination of Irish traditional music.

Many musicians, now disconnected from their local communities, sought out music sessions or joined clubs and societies in the cities leading to the establishment of many institutions and performance groups including Na Píobairí Uilleann, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Ceoltóirí Chualann, the Chieftains and the Dubliners. From the 1970s, as the Irish folk movement

began to identify itself as a social network, in which pub sessions became the loci of cultural activity, new forms of creative expression emerged among young urban musicians. The rapid urbanisation process brought together people of diverse backgrounds, which inevitably resulted in a certain degree of cross-pollination of musical forms and instrumentation. Such groups presented their music as emerging from the multicultural nature of Irish society, creating something new and distinctive out of Ireland's musical and cultural heritage.

1.5.3 Revival Characteristics in Irish Traditional Music

Music revivals are an integral part of music communities, which function as a set of social practices to suit a multiplicity of needs at a particular point in time. Throughout the twentieth century, revivals of folk musics coexisted with and influenced contemporary music making across the world. The invention of new formats in performance, compositions and the subject matter of songs was at the forefront of all music revivals and gave rise to new and emerging approaches through instrumentation. In most cases, these added to the appeal of the music, which in return has added to the appeal of particular instruments. Musical instruments associated with the folk tradition vary according to country and/or region. However, in the North American context, and, particularly in the context of the folk revival of the 1960s, those instruments which were most frequently used included acoustic instruments such as the guitar, harmonica, banjo, mandolin, autoharp, violin and accordion (Mitchell, 2007, p. 8).

While folk revivals have occurred in almost all music cultures the majority of the literature on the subject to date has been related to revivalist movements in America. Mark Slobin (1983) together with Neil Rosenberg (1993), were among the first ethnomusicologists to theorise the phenomenon of folk music revivals. In his essay *Rethinking Revival of American Ethnic Music* (1983) Slobin suggests that folklorists misapply the term 'revival' in most cases. In Slobin's opinion, traditions do not usually totally die out; what actually happens is the reinterpretation or reinvention of traditions rather than their literal rebirth (pp, 38-39). In his introduction to *Transforming Tradition; Folk Music Revivals Examined,* Rosenberg (1993) presents the following characterisation of revivals and revivalists: 'they constitute an urban middle-class intellectual community that, in seeking alternates to mass culture music, develops an interest in, appropriates, and consumes the music produced by the people for whom informed scholars act as advocates' (p. 19). Slobin and Rosenberg have also noted the importance of revivals in presenting a new repertoire of sounds for younger musicians who may not have ever heard or have been aware of the revivalist tradition before it was

revitalised. In his introduction to *Transforming Tradition*, Neil Rosenberg suggests that folk revivals can be considered from two contrasting perspectives. 'We can either treat revival as 'social elite', examining the ways in which revivalists (usually from the dominant social group) intervene in and transform some less powerful group's musical 'tradition' for their own material and ideological reasons; or we can treat revival as 'social consensus' a music world, an 'ethnographic reality' worth studying for its own sake' (Rosenberg, 1993, p. 19).

A number of scholars have written on the revival process in England and Scotland (Munro, 1984; Boyes, 1993; Brocken, 2013). In her study of the English folk revival Georgina Boyes traces the English folk music and dance revival from its beginnings at the turn of the century, through to the 1980s. Boyes suggests that the English Folk Revival was a construction of an idyllic past that never existed:

> On the one hand, urban popular culture, its context and consumers, could be demonstrated to be inferior, because folk culture had such high aesthetic, academic, and historical connotations. Conversely on the other hand, as a form of working-class expressive culture, folksong could be presented as evidence of the artistic creativity of the proletariat.... From its earliest inception, what differentiates (the Folk Revival) from earlier publication of songs and dances collected from the people is its directly interventionist nature. Folk song and dance are not to be transcribed for archival purposes or popular entertainment but used as an instrument to effect a cultural change (Boyes, 1993, pp. 3-4).

Drawing on substantial work that has sought to place and explain the folk revival historically, Boyes gives a detailed account of the context from which the movement emerged and developed. Boyes locates the ideological and artistic impulses of the Folk movement in seeking the regeneration of a traditional English culture at a time of cultural crisis in the years prior to the First World War. She also suggests that that the notion of 'England' and 'Englishness' which these movements promoted was itself a mythical or, as the title of the book suggests, an 'imagined' construct, one that offered an image of a 'fantasized rural community' of maypoles, harvest homes and social harmony, alongside an idealized landscape of cob cottages and hedgerows' (Boyes, 1993, p. vii). The author argues that the existence of a folk revival was a direct and urgent response to a cultural crisis caused by the pressures of industrialisation and urbanisation. Among her central themes is the legacy of Cecil Sharp whose presence shaped the modern English Folk Dance and Song Society. Boyes gives a comprehensive account of the context from which the movement emerged and developed and provides a comprehensive account of the clash between Cecil Sharp and Mary Neal in the folk dance revival before the First World War.

In her study on music revivals Livingston (1999) defines the phenomenon of revival as:

> Any social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past. The purpose of the [revival] movement is twofold: (1) to serve as cultural opposition and as an alternative to mainstream culture, and (2) to improve existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by revivalists (Livingston, 1999, p. 68).

She supported this with a list of characteristics that formed the basis of her model:

1. an individual or small group of 'core revivalists'
2. revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings)
3. a revivalist ideology and discourse
4. a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community
5. revivalist activities (organisations, festivals, competitions)
6. non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market

All of the aforementioned characteristics can be applied to the development of Irish traditional music in the latter half of the twentieth century and provide a valuable analytical framework for this research which will further inform an understanding of the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. However, in the case of the mandolin, some of the characteristics mentioned by Livingston are as yet underdeveloped. Concepts of revival and their impact on Irish traditional music are more fully explored in Chapter 3. Important considerations based on the literature considered therein include the re-invention of tradition to include the mandolin, the challenge of perceptions of authenticity in the development of instrumentation, and the potential for commercial expansion and associated new audiences in Irish traditional music and related musics.

Chapter 2: A Historical Overview

The mandolin has a long history both in Europe and America. A brief outline of the instruments history both in European Art Music traditions and American Bluegrass can inform a study on the mandolin in Irish traditional music and place its role in Irish traditional music in a wider musical and historical context. The history of the mandolin is not of a straightforward, lineal development, but one which intertwines with the stories of guitars, lutes and other stringed instruments over the past thousand years. This chapter engages with the seminal works of Paul Sparks (1995) in collaboration with James Tyler (1992, 1996) which provides both the historical context and the role of the mandolin in various musical traditions in Europe, the Far East and the USA. Despite the richness of scholarship on the mandolin in these works, the mandolin in Ireland and in Irish traditional music is not considered. The role of Bluegrass in popularising the instrument is critically evaluated, highlighting the adaptation of the instrument in the development of new techniques that contributed to changing the perception of the instrument. The development of amplification and recording is also influential on the changing role of the mandolin.

2.1The History of the Mandolin and popularity in Europe

The mandolin evolved as part of the Lute family during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the deep bowled back mandolin produced particularly in Naples became the most commonly used in the nineteenth century. The name probably derived from ‘mandorla’ which is the word for almond in Italian. Throughout its long history, particularly in Europe the instrument we know today has been called by many different names and used in a number of different musical contexts and settings. Terms such as mandola, mandolina, pandora and mandore are all associated with a lute shaped instrument with a round back that used double course and single strings.

Throughout its long history the mandolin has witnessed various changes in shape, size and timbre, many of which have been effected in response to the demands of a changing social environment. In its classic seventeenth and eighteenth century form, the mandolino or mandola resembled a small lute. It had a rounded back (made of between seven and twenty three ribs), a flat soundboard (usually of fir) with a decorative rosette (either carved into the same piece of wood or constructed separately and inserted into the sound hole), and a lute

style bridge (glued onto the soundboard) to which the strings are attached. The sound was produced by either plucking or strumming a set of four or six courses of strings, which are tuned in fifths while the strings are tuned in unison. As far as the physical characteristics of the instrument during this period are concerned, sixteenth century pictures and descriptions begin to indicate more and more frequently a lute-like construction of the round back; that is a construction of separate curved staves to form the back, onto which is joined a separate neck and peg box (Tyler, Sparks, 1989, p. 6). Although mandolins, like lutes, usually had round backs built up of many ribs, some flat backs were used in France and Portugal in the 1800s (Lundberg, 1986, p. 466).

Figure 1: Baroque mandolin [Source: www.ensemble-gabriele-leone.org]

Figure 2: Neapolitan Mandolin [Source: www.ensemble-gabriele-leone.org]

During Baroque times the mandolin was a relatively common instrument and many composers wrote for it. It was widely known in Italy, France and Germany with composers such as Antonio Vivaldi, Francesco Mancini, Antonio Lotti and George Frideric Handel using the mandolin in some of their major works. In sharp contrast to the attention received from leading composers of the eighteenth century, by the beginning of the nineteenth century composition for the mandolin declined in popularity but continued to be used in folk music contexts.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the mandolin begins to appear for sale in Ireland. The arrival of the mandolin in Ireland, evident through contemporaneous advertisements in the *Irish Times*, suggests that the instrument occupied a musical space similar to that of Europe during the same period. Figure 3 shows how the mandolin may have been considered an instrument for a lady to play, perhaps in the context of parlour spaces for the upper middle-classes. However, as highlighted by O'Shea (2008), Irish traditional music is dominated by male musicians and a masculine culture for most of the twentieth century and the principal spaces for the tradition, notably the public house session, were not open to women until the latter decades of the twentieth century. Concert performances were quite frequent in Dublin with banjo and mandolin ensembles playing in a number of venues across the city (see Figures 4 and 5). Figure 6 shows that mandolins were on sale in Dublin as early as 1889 alongside banjos, guitars and melodeons.

Figure 3: Advertisement in Irish Times 20 September 1884


ABERCORN LADIES' COLLEGE,
52 Harcourt street, Dublin.
For Resident and Non-resident Students.
COURSE OF STUDY —
English Science and the Classics, Modern Languages, Music, including Organ, Piano, Harmonium, Harp, Violin, Zither, English Concertina, and Mandoline; Singing (English and Italian); Drawing and Painting.
Special Classes for Trinity College and Intermediate Examinations, which the Pupils have Passed successfully, and with honors.
Terms moderate and inclusive.

Figure 4: Concert Advertisement in Irish Times 1 June 1888

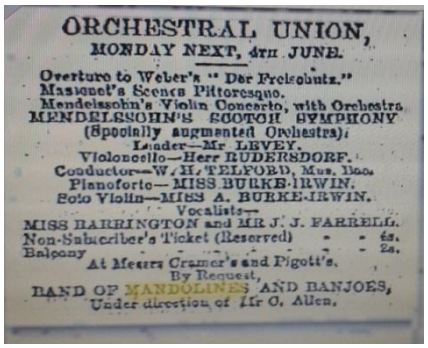

ORCHESTRAL UNION,
MONDAY NEXT, 4TH JUNE.
Overture to Weber's "Der Freischutz."
Massenet's Scenes Pittoresque.
Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, with Orchestra.
MENDELSSOHN'S SCOTCH SYMPHONY
(Specially augmented Orchestra).
Leader—Mr LEVEY.
Violoncello—Herr RUDERSDORF.
Conductor—W. H. TELFORD, Mus. Doc.
Pianoforte—MISS BURKE-IRWIN.
Solo Violin—MISS A. BURKE-IRWIN.
Vocalists—
MISS BARRINGTON and MR J. J. FARRELL.
Non-Subscriber's Ticket (Reserved) - - 4s.
Balcony - - - - - 2s.
At Messrs Cramer's and Pigott's.
By Request,
BAND OF MANDOLINES AND BANJOES,
Under direction of Mr O. Allen.

Figure 5: Concert Advertisement in Irish Times 9 March 1889

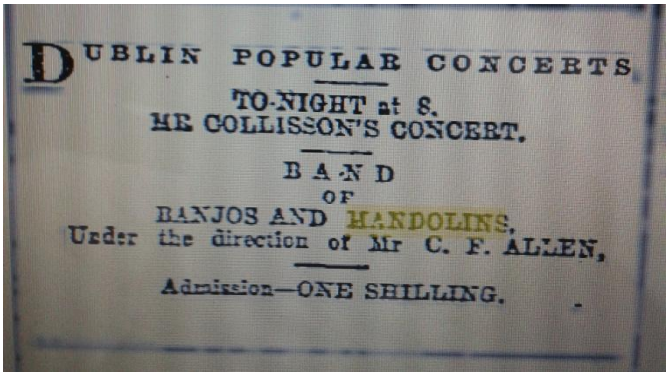
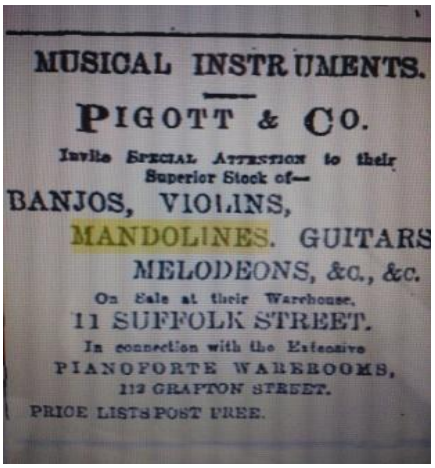


Figure 6: Advertisement in Irish Times 19 April 1889



In Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century the mandolin was played in many different contexts, by a wide array of professional and amateur musicians. According to Sparks 'Millions of instruments were bought, tens of thousands of original compositions and arrangements were published, and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the mandolin had become one of the most widely played instruments in many of Europe's major cities' (1995, p. 86). During the mandolin craze of the early twentieth century under the guidance of Italian mandolin virtuosos' mandolin ensembles in Britain, France, Belgium, Germany and Austria flourished. Mandolin orchestras that used all members of the mandolin family along with guitar, banjo and double bass became very popular. Performances in such prestigious arenas such as The Royal Albert Hall and Covent Garden promoted the mandolin as an instrument well suited in the performance of orchestral, operatic and chamber works. Many people chose to study the mandolin but the issue of poor manufacturing of cheaper models led to low musical expectations of the instrument as an article in *Banjo world* suggests:

> One often sees the mandoline amongst a lot of toys exhibited in shop windows. Such mandolines are nearly always German-made instruments, and probably the association of the mandolin with the toys is due to the fact that they are almost invariably made in the same workshop, which is but poor recommendation. If this is not the explanation then it is due to the mandolines comparative cheapness in manufacture. Nevertheless, it is a pity such a sweetly pretty instrument should be thus cheapened in the public mind (*Banjo World*, July 1898: 114 cited in Sparks, 1995, p. 98).

While the average standard of performance was probably not very high, this was an age when a thirst for self-improvement coexisted with an appetite for innocent entertainment; learning to play the mandolin was an agreeable an inexpensive way to satisfy both these desires (ibid). Spark's notes:

> Most of this activity consisted of inexpert players performing fashionable but undemanding music for the amusement of themselves and their immediate circle of family and friends, and is of more interest as a social rather than a musical phenomenon. However, there were many towns and cities where serious musicians (usually gathered around an Italian virtuoso) dedicated themselves to the instrument and attained artistic standards as high as those in Naples, Rome, Florence and Milan (Sparks, 1995, p. 86).

The development of the instrument is evident in Germany in the opening years of the twentieth century. It was here in 1904 a specialist periodical, *Mandoline: Internationales Musik-Journal,* featured reports, articles, and advertisements from across Europe and was translated into French and English. In Germany the mandolin remained an amateur instrument and developed a middle-class following (Sparks, 1995, p. 117). Many of the young players began to take an interest in folksong, singing, and playing the mandolin. Sparks notes: This new interest in national folk-music originating in 1897 amongst hiking groups encouraged teenage boys to get away from the mechanization of the city and to experience the countryside (ibid). This youth movement known as the *Jugendbewegung* (grammar-school) that would later became known as *Wondervogel* would have an influence on some of the most influential German composers of the time such as Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Paul Hindemith used it in a number of their compositions. Sparks notes the decline in the international appeal of the mandolin from the 1920s, although it gained some popularity in Japan where composers began to blend Western and Oriental approaches. While the mandolin remained popular in France, political movements in Italy and the popularity of the banjo in Britain contributed to the mandolin's decline in some parts of Europe. However, like Irish music, the Italian mandolin music remained popular amongst a growing American-located Italian diaspora.

2.2 The Mandolin in America

The social changes experienced throughout Europe by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were immense, with emigrants leaving their home place and travelling in large numbers to urban centres in England, America and Australia (Ní Chaoimh, 2010, p. 119). In the later part of the nineteenth century the flow of European emigrants to the US, particularly those of Italian, Irish, Polish and German descent, was converging on the big cities such as Chicago, New York, Boston and Philadelphia. Robert Cantwell notes that 'Around the time of the first substantial immigration to America, the popular taste was for exotic and foreign things, such as the mandolin' (1984, p. 221). Mandolins had several advantages for a country like the US in nineteenth and early twentieth century, where people were often on the move. Mandolins were portable, relatively easy to learn to play at least on a beginner level, and they could be used to play a wide range of musical styles (Dickson, 2006, p. 1).

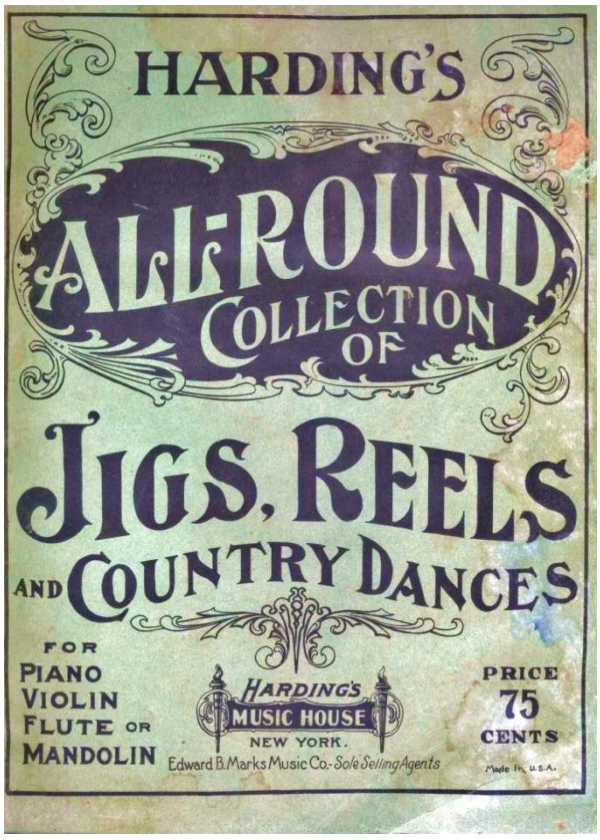
The image of the mandolin reflected an image of European culture and sophistication, and this was welcome, especially in the many relatively isolated towns and cities in North America where people were hungry for culture and entertainment (ibid). Sparks notes 'The Italian community at this time was scarcely integrated into mainstream popular culture, and the mandolin achieved widespread popularity there only with the emergence of a generation of indigenous players, who took their own inspiration from Italy but developed their own indigenous style' (1995, p. 121). The mandolin was essentially used by amateurs seeking simple recreational fun. They played 'waltzes, sentimental parlour songs, college songs, light classical music, and marches, as well as vaudeville-style ragtime and cakewalks' (Sparks, 1995, p. 126).

US manufacturers began to produce mandolins around 1890, when the demand for the instrument was evident, and importing them from Italy was impractical and too expensive for most would-be players (Dickson, 2006, p. 9). The Gibson Company had the most profound influence on the popularisation of the mandolin in the US during this time. Gibson broke away from the traditional bowl-back model and by 1905 developed the Gibson A4 model. Gibson's new design was based on the principles of violin construction, using a carved top and back and it was not long until it became the preferred style of mandolin used in American folk and popular music. The creation of an entire mandolin family consisting of the mandolin, the mandola, the mandocello, and the mandobass led to the formation of mandolin orchestras

that played a full range of orchestral music. By the turn of the century, mandolin ensembles were touring the vaudeville circuit, and mandolin orchestras were forming societies in schools and colleges across the country (Sparks, 1995; Dickson, 2006).

Vaudeville was a form of entertainment inextricably linked to rapid economic, technological and social change and became the first major professional outlet and commercial-performance conditioning for Irish traditional music. Marion Jacobson notes that 'The vaudeville tradition offered a never-ending variety of acts to a diverse, mobile, working class and lower-class audience that was increasingly in pursuit of leisure and eager to spend its disposable income on entertainment' (2012, p. 23). Vaudeville's complex formula that drew talent from immigrant ethnic performers, cobbling together dialect songs, slapstick skits, and crass ethnic stereotypes of Jews, Italians, Germans, and Irish, has been well documented by historians' (ibid). Irish musicians such as Mike and Joe Flanagan of The Flanagan Brothers were very popular on the circuit, particularly in the city of New York, playing at dances, in bars and in clubs, and also on radio, as well as recording over fifty 78 rpm recordings for several record companies (Moloney, 1978).

Figure 7: Harding's Collection of Jigs Reels and Country Dances 1905



It is at this point the mandolin can be seen to have entered Irish traditional music circles. A collection of two hundred jigs, reels, hornpipes, strathspeys and barndances published in 1905 shows that the mandolin was not only being used at this time but was being listed in publications of folk music in America as an instrument alongside flute and violin (see Fig. 7). One of the first Irish music collections to feature the mandolin was published in 1912 by Limerick born musician and collector Francis Roche. This collection *Irish Airs, Marches and Dance tunes* was arranged for violin, mandoline, flute and pipes and features a wide selection of tune types.

Captain Francis O'Neill's also refers to the mandolin in his *Irish Minstrels and Musicians* (1913). He writes of a Thomas Kiely, a friend of Edward Cronin (who contributed many tunes to O'Neill's collections) saying:

> Visits to his home were fraught with pleasure, especially when he played in concert with two young friends from Troy – Patrick Clancy on the flute and Thomas F. Kiely on the mandolin. Clancy, Mrs. Cronin's nephew possessed a most wonderful voice, powerful and mellow, and to our scientific ear the most delightful we had ever heard. On the violin the genial "Tom Kiely" swung the bow with a freedom which many professionals might envy. "The Connemara Fiddle", as we facetiously termed the mandolin, was his favourite instrument however, in playing Irish dance music he displayed a facility of execution almost inconceivable (O' Neill, 1913, p.345).

Given O'Neill's attitudes to tradition and authenticity as expressed in his writings, it is notable that he does not refer to the mandolin by name but highlights an attitude that would appear to have been shared amongst Irish musicians who may not have automatically accepted this new instrument. However, individuals such as Kiely and Roche are important in bringing the mandolin into these soundscapes, a process that is explored more thoroughly in this dissertation when considering musicians in Ireland in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The activities of the Irish community engaged in traditional music in America at the start of the twentieth century were of significant importance to the dissemination and longevity of Irish traditional music both there and in Ireland. MacMathuna confirms this when he states 'It would be true to say that over the period 1900 to 1950 most of the important developments in the field of Irish music that did happen took place in the U.S.A' (cited in O'Connor, 1991 p. 77). As well as the likelihood that the mandolin entered the soundscape of Irish traditional music in America, the development of technologies related to amplification and recording would also have implications for the potential role of and style on the mandolin.

2.3 The Bluegrass Mandolin

It was in the domain of Bluegrass where the mandolin gained heightened levels of popularity and became an instrument associated with this new popular form of music. A Bluegrass band typically consisted of four to seven individuals who sang and accompanied themselves on acoustic string instruments: two rhythm instruments (guitar and double bass) and several melody instruments (fiddle, five-string banjo, mandolin, steel guitar and second guitar). Inspired by the music of Appalachia, with its mixed roots in Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English musical traditions, Bluegrass music's repertory consisted of traditional folksongs dominated by newly composed music including sentimentally reminiscent secular songs, religious spirituals, revival hymns and instrumental numbers (Rosenberg 1985). Occasionally used for dancing, it was most frequently performed in concert-like settings, and sound media – radio, records, and television – have been important means of dissemination for the music (ibid). By the 1950s several local bands in the southeast were borrowing musical styles and repertoire from Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys and contributing to the spread of the Bluegrass sound (Cohen, 1988, p. 1). Bird notes:

> Monroe practically reinvented the mandolin, an instrument previously relegated to obscure orchestral and Italian music. Monroe's dominant right-hand technique, his novel use of syncopation, and his incorporation of blues notes sparked resurgence in the instrument and a scramble by others to cop his licks (Bird, 1981, p. 314)

Bill Monroe was born to a prosperous family of farmers near Rosine, Ohio, in Western Kentucky. The youngest child of a family of six his father was a dancer and his mother sang old-time songs and ballads, and played the harmonica, button accordion, and fiddle (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 28). Before the age of ten he began playing the guitar and mandolin. He had wanted to play the guitar but was overruled by his older brothers and assigned the mandolin in the family orchestra (ibid). Monroe was heavily influenced by the music that he had heard in his area such as the blues and church-sponsored singing schools, apprenticeship to older dance musicians, and contacts with black musicians – all were typical musical experiences for a rural southern white youth of the time (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 29). 'Monroe carefully preserved in his memory these musical influences from his youth; many of the folk and popular songs, dance tunes, and religious pieces he learned in western Kentucky were later to appear in his recorded and performed repertoire' (ibid).

In 1932 Monroe and his brother Charlie began performing for the radio station WLS. The radio station founded in the early twenties by Sears' department store brought their music

into millions of homes across eastern North America and was one of the first radio stations to play to a paying live theatre audience. 'The Monroe Brothers and their contemporaries belonged to the first generation of professional entertainers who used the automobile as a tool of the trade, travelling to concerts within the driving distance and broadcast coverage of their stations' (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 33). Throughout the 1930s they were broadcasting on all the major radio stations and soon were offered a record deal. Rosenberg states:

> The impact of the Monroe Brothers on the music scene in the Carolinas cannot be overstated. There were many brother duets like theirs, most of them featuring similar harmonies and the instrumentation of guitar and mandolin. A number of the factors made the Monroe's different. They sang higher and played faster than the others. Charlie's bass runs on the guitar were snappy and attracted attention; Bills mandolin playing, with its speed and dexterity, was unique. He showed how versatile and potent it could be as a lead instrument (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 34).

At the close of the 1930s Bill and Charlie's music became accessible to many younger men who emulated their music. In 1938 the brothers went their separate ways and Monroe wasted no time, placing an advertisement in the newspaper looking for a guitarist and singer. It was not long until he had gathered together Cleo Davis (guitar) Art Wooten (fiddle) and Amos Green (and began using the name Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, a title he had chosen because he was from Kentucky, the Blue Grass State. In addition to developing repertoire, Monroe worked diligently on technique and began showing the new members of his band exactly what sound he was looking to create. Their musical innovations included the use of unconventional keys moving songs and tunes up from G or A to B-flat or B and from C or D to E and went beyond the competence of many fiddlers and guitarists (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 48). In the autumn of 1939 Bill Monroe and his band travelled to Nashville to try the Grand Ole Opry. At this point Monroe had found a way to fuse the popular hillbilly songs of the time with the older string band music. By the middle 1940s, Bill Monroe had made the mandolin the centre piece of his first Bluegrass band.

Bill Monroe was the first Bluegrass musician to expose the mandolins versatility as a lead instrument and inspired guitar players to take up the newly popularized mandolin. Before Monroe, the mandolin would have been considered a delicate and un-intrusive instrument, after Monroe 'the mandolin was no longer a polite and demure parlor instrument' (Bruce, 2002, p. 1). Bird notes: 'Monroe practically reinvented the mandolin, an instrument previously relegated to obscure orchestral and Italian music. Monroe's dominant right-hand technique, his novel use of syncopation, and his incorporation of blues notes sparked resurgence in the instrument and a scramble by others to copy his licks' (1981, p. 315). His

music was also a successful solution to the problem of marketing a rural and traditional music to the new national public audience that increasingly was defining rural music as backward, comic and embarrassing in nature. Bluegrass was fashionable during the folk revival and had clear popular-culture connections, and was associated with the southern Appalachians (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 4).

Monroe's influence can be seen throughout America in the latter half of the twentieth century. One musician in particular who pushed the mandolin in new directions was David Grisman. Grisman who grew up in New Jersey was heavily influenced by Bill Monroe and learned his style impeccably (Bird, 1981, p. 314). He played with several Bluegrass groups as well as being the founding member of the psychedelic rock band Earth Opera. Grisman took the mandolin to new heights in 1975 with his group the David Grisman Quintet. The pioneering line-up included guitar, bass, fiddle, and two mandolins. Their self titled first album was released in 1977 and features eight original compositions that fused together elements of Bluegrass with classical and jazz, creating a sub-genre called 'dawg' music. By using two mandolins, Grisman was able to keep a constant rhythmic drive going. Three-note chords predominate, allowing more subtle voicing than with Monroe's four-note chords. Their second album *Hot Dawg* released in 1978 saw him collaborate with the virtuoso jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli where his complex melodic variations stretched the boundaries of bluegrass and put him on the map as a solo performer. His innovations spurred a new increased interest in the mandolin. Trager notes that 'Grisman developed a dense repertoire of acoustic instrumentals on the mandolin that stretched the boundaries of Bluegrass into a sound that fused Bluegrass and Jazz with his own as well as Classical and Gypsy music' (1991, p. 162). Other mandolin players of note during the twentieth century are Ricky Scaggs, Frank Wakefield, Ronnie McCoury and Mike Compton.

Bluegrass continues to thrive, encompassing a broad spectrum of musical approaches that range from close imitations of Bill Monroe's original sound of the late 1940s and early 1950s to contemporary offshoots that allow considerable infusion of ideas from swing, jazz, rock, and other idioms (Cohen, 1988, p. 1). The mandolin has been a huge feature of bluegrass music from the beginning and continues to evolve now being played in a wide range of musical genres and ethnic music from around the world, such as Irish traditional music and Rock 'n' Roll. Studies undertaken by Robert Cantwell (1984) and David Cooper (2009), have noted the close connection between Irish and Scottish traditional music and the music of Appalachia which formed the roots of bluegrass music. This connection with Irish traditional

music has been celebrated on a number of different albums over the past twenty five years. The most notable of these were recorded by the Irish traditional group, The Chieftains. In collaboration with many of the seminal bluegrass and country musicians such as mandolin players Ricky Skaggs and Ronnie McCoury as well as Earl Scruggs, Bella Fleck, Del McCoury and Alison Krauss albums such as *Another Country* (1992), *Down the Old Plank Road: The Nashville Sessions* (2002), *Further Down the Old Plank Road* (2003) fuse together tunes and songs from both traditions. The mandolin, utilised as both a melodic instrument and for rhythmic accompaniment is central to the sound of these albums.

Despite the development of a central role for the mandolin in Bluegrass music and the popularity of the instrument through this genre, it is evident in this study that Bluegrass music was not a significant influence on the mandolin players in Irish traditional music during the time period being examined. However, an awareness of the musical processes that take place in Bluegrass music can inform a study of similar processes in Irish traditional music, an understanding of stylistic development, and the potential for greater popularity and assimilation of the instrument into the soundscape.

2.4 Conclusion

On the back of developments in techniques, styles and instrument construction, the mandolin entered the twentieth century as a popular instrument in a variety of musical contexts. Its capacity to change and adapt to new performance contexts was of crucial importance to the development and status of the mandolin. This Chapter has shown despite the limitations of the instrument in regards to volume, a favourable response from notable composers, although in a limited capacity, proved vital to the status of the mandolin before the twentieth century. In response to the demands of the changing social environment, performance contexts and changing audiences, the mandolin entered the twentieth century in a variety of contexts.

In tracing the mandolin's transition from Europe to immigrant communities in US this Chapter has noted the great ease with which the music of the mandolin was circulated. This Chapter has provided evidence that the mandolin arrived in Ireland as early as 1889, and has demonstrated that at the time of its arrival many mandolin and banjo orchestras were performing in venues throughout Dublin. While the mandolin was not widely played in Irish traditional music until the late 1960s evidence through Irish music collections in the US indicates that the mandolin was being integrated into the soundscape of the tradition as early

as 1912. The emergence of the mandolin in bluegrass ensembles was also a significant development for the fortunes in the first half of the twentieth century. The musical contexts documented are an important part of the narrative of the development of the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music. In the concluding chapters the integration and adaptation of the mandolin will be explored and analysed.

Chapter 3 – Musical Contexts and Developments in Irish Traditional Music

The emergence of the mandolin and other novel instruments in Irish traditional music is inextricably linked to a surge of interest, experimentation and development in the Irish music tradition, when instruments such as the mandolin, banjo and guitar presented a new type of popular culture and new social contexts for performance and reception from the 1960s onwards. The interest in folk music during the 1960s and 1970s often led down two diverging paths: on one direction was a rediscovery of the heritage of Irish folk music, in the other was an interest in the newer music forms arriving from America. For some musicians, it was possible to travel both these routes at once, synthesizing the various traditions into a new music.

This Chapter opens with a brief historical background on the instruments used in Irish traditional music. This is followed by an account of the new instruments used in the performance of the music in latter half of the twentieth century. It will pay particular attention to the plucked stringed instruments and discuss some of the seminal players who assimilated them into Ireland's indigenous music. Musical contexts in Ireland, both before and after the mandolin's arrival are outlined and demonstrate that a number of subcultures existed. It will critically discuss the changing performance contexts in Irish traditional music from the middle of the twentieth century, when new performance spaces, in particular the emergence of ensemble contexts for Irish traditional music performance in which the mandolin achieves a particular role, is critically examined. The 1960s are also characterised by important innovations in individual and ensemble playing, melodic juxtaposition, harmonic filling-in, creative use of both key changes and rhythm changes, new scenarios for performance, and a general elevation in the technical capabilities of the instruments themselves and standard of technique used to play them.

The development of performance styles on the mandolin in Irish traditional music is influenced by the existence of a number of tutor books for the mandolin, banjo and fiddle. An analysis of these resources is presented in this Chapter and further informs the analysis of performance styles presented in Chapter Four. Kay Coakley's (1998) undergraduate dissertation *The Mandolin in Irish traditional music* presents an overview of tutor books, which is further developed for the purposes of this dissertation.

3.1 New instruments in Irish traditional music

Throughout its documented history of a little over two hundred years, Irish traditional music has remained as a symbol of Irishness, while contemporaneously it has continuously absorbed external influences. An integral element of the development of Irish traditional music has been the adoption and adaptation of instruments and influences from outside the indigenous culture. Smith notes 'Since the eighteenth century, as this genre of functional dance music has developed it has incorporated new instruments with relative ease, from the Scottish-influenced fiddle in the late eighteenth century, to the minstrel show banjo in the late nineteenth century, to a whole range of plucked bouzoukis, mandolas, and the like in the past twenty years' (1997, p. 433). Traditional Irish musical instruments fall into several categories: the ones for which Ireland is best known (harp, uilleann pipes, fiddle), the free reeds (various accordions and concertinas), the mouth-blown instruments (flutes and whistles), the plucked stringed instruments (banjo, mandolin, guitar, and others), and the percussion instruments (bodhrán, bones and spoons). However, the standard repertory of traditional instrumental music and many of the characteristic sounds and techniques of the tradition have mostly evolved from playing of the uilleann pipes, fiddle and flute.

Instruments like the banjo, mandolin, guitar and bouzouki can be heard to create sounds and use techniques that differ to more established instruments in the soundscape of Irish traditional music. The frets can place boundaries on pitch subtleties and ornamentation variations, which are possible on the fiddle, flute and uilleann pipes, are not easily achieved. The limitations of the mandolin and the tenor banjo due to their lack of sustaining power, as well as an inability to effectively slur notes together, may explain in part why it took so long for such instruments to be accepted into Irish traditional music performance. Plucked instruments, including the mandolin, are also tools that allow amateur musicians who have other musical interests to access Irish traditional music. In her overview of Irish traditional music, Williams states:

> The plucked stringed instrument family has often been a kind of first stage for outsiders to Irish music. Guitarists' banjo players, bouzouki players, mandolin players, and those who play hybrid stringed instruments can move easily from one genre of music to another, including Irish music as part of their musical exploration without being limited to it (2010, p. 140).

In her account of the instruments used in Irish traditional music Williams writes: 'instruments have different histories and purposes and that each one adheres to a particular set of practices' (2010, p. 130). For example, at the beginning of the twentieth century the harp was

used almost entirely for song accompaniment and was rarely part of the dance music tradition. An image was created and disseminated of the Irish *cailín* with red hair playing simple chordal accompaniment to her own sweet soprano voice, very often performing songs from the repertoire of Thomas Moore or gentle love ballads from the Irish tradition (Flannery 2014). As Lanier (1999) and Lawlor (2012) highlight, the role of the harp changes in the 1980s, evidenced primarily through recording of the playing of Máire Ní Cathasaigh. The harp becomes an instrument on which dance music is played; albums are produced without songs that are similar in structure to other solo instrumental albums in the Irish dance music tradition, such as those by Laoise Kelly (1999), Seana Davey (2010) and Michelle Mulcahy (2012).

A similar progression can be seen in the developing roles of the banjo, mandolin, guitar and bouzouki in Irish traditional music during the second half of the twentieth century. While these instruments do not share the same symbolic status as the harp, they entered the Irish traditional soundscape as instruments used mainly for song accompaniment. Their development into instruments used to play dance music can be attributed to a small number of individuals who occupied, or participated in, two musical worlds, performing on stage with ballad groups where the accompaniment of song was the principal practice, and playing in sessions, where dance music was pre-eminent. While many of these musicians came from outside the tradition it was through their involvement with the ballad and song tradition that the musicians concerned became aware that there was an exciting traditional music culture in existence.

The story of the tenor banjo revolves around a number of musicians from the beginning of the twentieth century. The four-string banjo, played with a pick, was developed *c.* 1900 during the American craze for mandolins and banjo orchestras. The first banjo player to record commercially was James Wheeler, who was featured along with accordion player Eddie Herborn in a Columbia recording in 1916 (Vallely 1999). Other notable figures on the Irish-American circuit that played mandolin included Michael Gaffney, who recorded with flute player John McKenna, and Mike Flanagan, whose recordings with his brother were hugely popular and influential during the 1920s.

While the use of banjo in Irish traditional music began in America at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not until the 1960s that it became popular amongst Irish musicians.

The first banjos seen in Ireland arrived in 1844 when the Virginia Minstrels performed in Dublin, Belfast and Cork. Hanrahan notes:

> It should be noted that examples of photographs of banjo players in the United States in the 1930s using a capo on the second fret exist. This definitely takes the tuning into the realm of the mandolin or fiddle with the bottom strings tuned DAE and the first string tuned to b. That original tuning has largely given way since to GDAe, from the lowest to the highest, in Irish traditional music (2012, p. 15).

Among the best known banjo players in the 1920s and 1930s was Mike Flanagan of the Flanagan Brothers, who made several commercial recordings between 1921 and 1933. Mike Flanagan was born in Waterford in 1887 and emigrated as a child, with his entire family, to the US in 1911. They were a very musical with his brother Joe playing the accordion and Mike playing the banjo, having originally played the mandolin (Hanrahan, 2012, p. 13). Like many of the Irish banjo players in this century, Mike invented his own style of playing beginning with the mandolin, learning on his own simply because there was nobody to learn banjo from (O'Connor, 2011, p. 35). After moving to New York in 1918 the Flanagan's soon developed a reputation as a popular dance-band and was very much in demand. Since then the instrument has had a painstakingly slow journey, in terms of acceptance and adaptation into Irish traditional music. The tenor banjo first came to prominence in Ireland through the céilí bands where it was used as a melodic instrument. When performed as a melody instrument, the sound of the tenor banjo was able to cut through the noise of a crowded dance floor almost as easily as an accordion.

However, the popularity of the four-string tenor banjo was greatly expanded through the playing of Barney McKenna of the ballad group the Dubliners. In the early 1960s, the commercial success of the Dubliners in the folk revival was to have a profound effect on the fortunes of the banjo in Irish music. Hanrahan notes:

> The Dubliners emerged as a highly acclaimed folk group in the 1960s and they achieved enormous international success with Barney playing a lead role. He brought a whole new style and approach to the music and was a noted solo player on the banjo and many of the players of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s followed Barney's example (Hanrahan, 2012, p. 20).

As the traditional music revival gathered pace in the 1970s, the tenor banjo became more popular than ever. Many players were inspired to take up the instrument through recordings made by Barney Mc Kenna of The Dubliners, Charlie Piggott of DeDannan, Kieran Hanrahan of Stockton's Wing and Mick Moloney. The tenor banjo is now accepted as an instrument on which Irish traditional music can be played and enjoyed. In recent times

players have developed an array of techniques for more accurately replicating the articulation and phrasing of the flute, fiddle and uilleann pipes most notably the use of plucked triplets. The instrument continues to grow in popularity and acceptability: as an indication of this, banjo classes were included at the Willie Clancy Summer School for the first time in 2005 and have grown in popularity since.

The Irish bouzouki developed through the playing of Johnny Moynihan and Donal Lunny, who used imported Greek bouzoukis and, in some instances, altered the number of strings and experimented with the tuning. Like the mandolin, the bouzouki has eight strings arranged in four pairs. The Irish bouzouki is a flat topped, teardrop shaped instrument and is tuned an octave below the mandolin. The bouzouki was adapted to Irish music in the 1960s by Johnny Moynihan and popularised by the playing of Donal Lunny, Andy Irvine, and Alec Finn (see Ni Fhionghaile 1990). Finn is noted for playing a six string Greek bouzouki in contrast with eight string versions employed by the others. Initially the bouzouki was employed in Irish music for song accompaniment but by the 1970s it was also used to accompany Irish traditional dance tunes. Groups such as Sweeney's Men and Planxty experimented with multiple layers of plectral accompaniment, using acoustic guitar, mandolin, bouzouki and banjo. Smith notes 'It was recognised that the instruments punch, droning and modal capacities, ability to play melodic lines or countermelodies as well as chords, and physical technique reminiscent of the familiar mandolin and tenor banjo, made it an attractive alternative to the more chordal guitar' (Smith, 2013, p. 111). This versatility and the creative opportunities it afforded innovative musicians appealed to performers seeking to establish new approaches in Irish traditional music.

The most common tunings for the Irish bouzouki are E'–A–D–G and D'–A–D–G. The open tuning of the instrument enabled it to accompany modal tunes easily and was used to great effect in the 'super groups' of the 1970s such as Planxty, De Dannan and Moving Hearts. With a few exceptions, bouzouki players developed a new sound that incorporated double stringed instruments such as the mandolin, bouzouki and twelve string guitar, thus creating a new sound, very different in timbre to anything else at the time.

The guitar has been used to accompany traditional music since the early 1920s when guitars were occasionally used to accompany Irish musicians who recorded in the US. Smith notes 'On these recordings it was mostly used within, ensembles, notably those of the Flanagan Brothers, although guitarists Jack McKenna, Michael 'Whitey' Andrews and Martin Christi

also provided creditable support to many pre-eminent fiddle players of the time' (2013, p. 452). Although the guitar was used to accompany some of the early recording artists, including Michael Coleman, it had little place in Irish traditional music until the 1960s. The Clancy Brothers incorporated guitar into their arrangements of Irish songs which was later taken up by ballad singers during the ballad boom. However, the ballad boom of the 1960s and 1970s led some musicians to experiment with the possibility of playing instrumental music on the guitar. The guitar's role in Irish traditional music was revolutionised in the 1970s when guitarists developed new accompaniment and tune playing styles. An important part of this innovation was the use of new tunings such as DADGAD and DGBDGB. Most notable players who found new ways to employ the guitar in Irish traditional music are Mick Moloney (b. 1944), Paul Brady (b. 1947), Dick Gaughan (b. 1948), Daithí Sproule (b. 1950) Steve Cooney (b. 1953), and Arty McGlynn who in 1979 recorded *Mc Glynn's Fancy*, the first solo guitar album of Irish music. Despite a number of subsequent tutor books and albums by various artists such as Paul de Grae (1996), Tony McManus (1998, 2002), John Doyle (2005, 2011) and John O' Shea (2014) the guitar has not become widely used as a melody instrument.

The story of the banjo, bouzouki and guitar mirrors that of the mandolin throughout the folk revival where it was used at first as an instrument to accompany folk songs and ballads. While the mandolin is rarely used for chordal accompaniment in the context of the dance music tradition, the variety of approaches, informed by the desire for different sounds, allied to the quiet nature of the instrument, presents a challenge for the development of a clear role for the instrument in the tradition. However, the familiarity of the sounds of plucked instruments in other traditions and the potential to use these instruments in the performance of other music's create a space and role for these instruments within the tradition, even if they are not universally accepted, respected or admired. The inclusion of these instruments also attracts a different audience that is familiar with, attuned to or is attracted to the sound of the mandolin, regardless of the genre.

3.2 Changing musical contexts in the mid twentieth century

The social context for music making, learning and performance shifted in a varied number of directions from the 1950s (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998; O'Shea, 2005; Kearney, 2007). This period can be viewed as a starting point from which multiple changes in economic, social and cultural practices began to take place. The transition from a rural to an urban context of

performance, the impact of recorded music, the influence of other American cultural traditions, all played a part in the transformation of Irish traditional music. Up to this point Irish traditional music remained a comparatively non-commercial activity associated with rural communities, where it played an important role in everyday life. During this time agriculture still accounted for almost half of the working population. The small farm rural economy, especially in the west of Ireland, was in an irreversible decline. Most young people knew that the only way to secure steady employment involved crossing the Irish Sea where they found themselves amongst the Irish communities in London, Manchester and Liverpool (Hall, 1995).

In the 1950s attempts to revive Irish traditional music came at a particularly low point in the fortunes of traditional culture in Ireland (see also Fairbairn 1993; Hamilton 1996; Kaul 2009; Moloney 1999; O Flynn 2009; Ó hAllmhuráin 2008; O' Shea 2005; Vallely 1999, 2004, 2008; Williams 2010). The influx of foreign produced popular culture was viewed as a stealth attack on national sovereignty and identity (O' Leary, 2013, p. 92). Smyth writes 'Many regarded it as part of the 'bogman' inheritance they wished to leave behind, while the minority who valued it did so, by and large, in terms that were not conducive to the long-term health of the music itself' (2005, p. 21). A number of people recollect the sight of fiddle players hiding their instruments beneath a coat when walking in public (Kearney, 2007, p. 3). Cultural developments did however take place, with multiple institutions in Ireland working towards the restoration of national cultural customs and practices including the Irish language, music, sports and dance (O' Leary, 2013, p. 135).

The establishment of the state sponsored body Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in 1951 was an important factor in the re-invigoration and promotion of Irish traditional music. The organisation's Fleadh Cheoil competition operated throughout the country stimulating interest, setting standards and engendering pride in the music at geographic scales which moved from the local to the national. Organisations such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann had a huge part to play in what instruments were used in the playing of Irish traditional music. The main aim of Comhaltas was to promote the core instruments in the tradition, such as uilleann pipes, fiddle and flute. The conservative approach held by Comhaltas towards instrumentation, particularly in relation to the plucked stringed instruments did little to promote the mandolin, banjo, guitar and bouzouki in Irish traditional music. Some of the attitudes of the organisation are quite clearly articulated by Ó hAlmháin in *Treoir*, the periodical of the organisation that is circulated to members.

> The mushroom growth in the popularity of ballads has some interesting side effects on traditional music. Promoters of ballad sessions think it is a good idea to intersperse a bit of music in between the ballads to break the monotony. This may be provided by traditional artists or by some members of a ballad group who thought it would be a nice idea if they did an instrumental spot in the middle of their act. This usually consists of a few overworked tunes on the banjo or mandolin, and usually ends up as a poor imitation of some of the more professional groups. If these artists think that they are helping Irish music by playing a few tunes in this manner they are sadly mistaken. If they are going to play Irish music let them go to the trouble of learning a few decent tunes from some of our more genuine artists. The traditional musician who performs at ballad sessions has a duty to play genuine music and not to bow to the wishes of the public by playing 'Mickey Mouse' tunes with heavy and inevitably discordant guitar accompaniment. Genuine artists should not change their style of playing or their tunes to suit the audience. The aim should be to traditionalise commercialism and not to commercialise tradition. It would be a sad day for Comhaltas if the revival of Irish music to its proper place in Irish life were to come as a by-product of the ballad boom (O hAlmháin, 1969, No. 9, p. 2).

While these types of attitudes towards the plucked string instruments were frequently expressed in articles in *Treoir* throughout the 1960 and 1970s many of the young musicians who had decided to play them were regular visitors to the Fleadh Cheoil Music Festivals organised by Comhaltas. It was in the festival environment where many musicians with no prior knowledge of Irish traditional music began to appear with mandolins, banjos and guitars.

By the late 1950s, Irish traditional music entered a new era of posterity. Spaces for socialising and music making changed quite considerably. As the music moved from the domestic to the public domain new performance contexts began to emerge that changed people's perception of Irish traditional music. Amongst the most significant development was Seán Ó Riada's activity in Dublin between 1953 and 1963 (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998; O Canainn, 2003; Kearney, 2007). His work today is still considered a cornerstone in the development of Irish traditional music. His gathering together of traditional musicians Paddy Maloney, Éamonn de Buitléar, Michael Tubridy, Séan Potts, Martin Fay, and Ronnie McShane to form Ceoltóirí Chualann in 1961 revitalised Irish traditional music and introduced it to a new audience. Ó Riada's ensemble model involved intricate arrangements using a combination of instruments new to traditional music such as the harpsichord, bodhrán and bones had profound and lasting effects on the presentation of Irish traditional music that spawned new groups who took performance styles into a more contemporary sphere. O'Connor notes: 'The ensemble became Ó Riada's vehicle for showcasing the wonders of the Irish traditional repertory and his ensemble model was taken up and used as the prototype Irish traditional band, as was his style of arranging' (1991, p. 102). Although the mandolin did not feature,

this was an opening up the Irish traditional music soundscape to new ideas in regards to instrumentation and performance contexts.

Folk clubs were an important element in the fabric of Irish musical life of the 1960s and 1970s and were linked to a perceived folk revival or re-imagination of folk music in Ireland. Largely an urban phenomenon, they existed in many towns in Ireland, alongside and distinct from both singers' clubs and public houses that held music and singing sessions. As performance spaces, folk clubs facilitated the formation and popularisation of a number of groups including The Johnston's, Sweeney's Men, The Dubliners and later Planxty. Through the use of guitar, mandolin, banjo and bouzouki and other related instruments, folk clubs fostered the popularity of instrumental accompaniment. This distinguishes them from sessions and gigs in public houses, which were developed to generate additional revenue for the publican. Furthermore the mode of presentation in folk clubs was decidedly more formal than that which prevailed in the public house session.

The public house session is a fairly recent development in Irish music history. Hamilton notes that' in some parts of the country, it entered pubs in the 1930s but in much of the country the pub session is predominantly a post-Second World War phenomenon' (1999, p. 345). Prior to the 1960s, traditional music was often played in people's kitchens, or to accompany dancing at house parties or in dance halls (Kaul, p. 705). The development of the public house 'session' owed much to the perceived revival in Irish traditional music through the work of Comhaltas and the success of Seán Ó Riada (Kearney 2013). As O'Shea notes:

> The confluence of economic growth with this mid-twentieth-century revival allowed an emerging subculture of musicians simultaneously to embrace these cultivated forms of Irish traditional music and to emulate the informal practices of an older generation of musicians in the session. During this period, publicans began to build 'music lounges' to cater for a young and more prosperous clientele, who now included women (O'Shea, 2008, p. 51).

By the 1960s, Irish traditional musicians adapted the session to create an informal performance of traditional music in a public house venue. The session served as a social outlet for many musicians of a variety of ages but it was a predominately masculine space. Compared to the situation in the 1940s and 1950s, the sight of dozens of teenagers at sessions playing fiddles, pipes, flutes and button accordions right alongside people in their thirties, fifties and seventies was a dramatic development in intergenerational musical practice. The session is a relaxed and spontaneous performance of tunes for the sole entertainment benefit of the musicians themselves, and perhaps a small audience of family and friends. While the

majority of music played is instrumental music, the dominant instruments used consisted of fiddles, flutes, pipes and the free reed instruments. As the pubs were quite noisy the mandolin was not suited to this environment

By the 1970s the session became a mainstay across the country. The session could be a voluntary activity but in many areas musicians received remuneration from publicans aware of the potential to attract customers, including tourists. It is estimated that there are now more than 1500 pub sessions weekly, many in some way commercial, with half of them running throughout the year (Vallely, 1999). Although the session has contributed to the drift away from solo performance and promoted the standardisation of style and repertory, some still maintain a specific music identity. In London during the 1950s the session was respite from alienation and hostility for migrant workers (Hall, 1995). For today's more affluent and cosmopolitan musicians, sessions provide a national and international network linked by the internet, through which musicians share expanding repertory and musical friendships. The session has also become a central site of cultural tourism in Ireland, with many pubs holding sessions specifically for the tourist market (see Hamilton, 1978; Carson, 1986, 1996; Fairbairn, 1994; Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998; Foy, 1999; Kneafsey, 2002; Morton, 2005; O'Shea, 2006; Kaul, 2007).

3.3 Impact of Technology

Technology has facilitated the internationalisation of playing Irish traditional music for over a century. Internationalisation creates new contexts for change, assimilation and development in the music. According to Susan Motherway 'Developments in technology and communications facilitate interaction between local cultures, prompting these societies to embrace all cultures and accept difference' (2013, p. 26). The possibility of preserving musical performances by recording utterly changed the social and artistic meanings of music. Music technology has changed musical experience by simultaneously bringing music into private spaces, while also separating music from its original context (Bohlmann 1988; Chanan 1995; Firth 2003). Developments in recording technologies led to many Irish musicians producing their own recordings from as early as the 1890s. Increased interest in ethnic music following the World War One influenced record companies to record music from different cultures who were part of cosmopolitan American society. Record labels across the U.S saw a huge potential in recording the music of all the cultures that had set up home in the New World. A wider consideration on the effects of the dissemination of

commercial recordings on the tradition can be found in Hamilton (1996a). Briggs and Burke in their *A Social History of Media* (2010) also provide valuable introductions to media history, covering significant developments from the print revolution to the internet.

The recording and distribution of Irish traditional music began as early as 1898 in the USA, as the early gramophone companies attempted to exploit their new technology by producing records that targeted the large number of recent immigrants to the country from Ireland as well as other European countries (Hamilton, 1996a). With recording technology, music could be disseminated, manipulated, and consumed in ways that never had been possible. Recording affected the nature of both music production and music consumption. Recording separated consumption of music from live performance; until the availability of recordings, music could be heard only as live music. Now listening could be done alone and in private. Recording technology also furthered the trend toward standardisation of musical sound and performance because, as people became attuned to recording-induced expectations, professional musicians could not deviate too much from these public expectations.

According to Hamilton (1996a), during the period between 1899 and 1942, song accompaniment accounted for 47.7 % and instrumental music for 53.3% of the recordings made. Most of the early records aimed at the Irish market were of the stage-Irish variety, already present in vaudeville. The relationship between instrumental music and song as revealed by the 1920s recordings is profoundly different to that experienced in Ireland, and yet there is ample evidence to show that in many cases the same musicians were involved in playing dance music and in providing 'orchestral' accompaniment for what were essentially vaudeville or 'Irish Tenor' singers (Hamilton, 1996a, p. 87). Harry Bradshaw, who has done extensive research this in this field, traces the beginnings of the 'authentic' Irish product to 1916 when stating:

> A change for the better came about in 1916 through the courage and determination of Cork-born emigrant Ellen O'Byrne, who, with her husband, managed the O'Byrne De Witt Irish Gafonola and Victor Shop in New York's Third Avenue. Ellen's belief that records of Irish music and song made by real Irish performers would sell, if they were made available. Through an arrangement with Columbia, she made records in 1916 with baritone George Potter and accordion and banjo players Eddie Herborn and James Wheeler. These records were eagerly bought and were an immediate success. The Irish traditional music industry was launched (Bradshaw, 1991, p. 52).

In the early 1920s commercial sound recordings of Irish traditional music began to appear. The development of the recording industry along with the establishment of radio stations across America transformed Irish music in both the United States and Ireland. The fiddle,

accordion, flute, and uilleann pipe were preferred lead instruments in recording of the period. Other melody instruments recorded to a much lesser extent during the same period were the piano, whistle, banjo, harmonica, and piccolo. While solo recordings of instruments were consistently made throughout the period, it was much more common to record a lead instrument with accompaniment on the piano or guitar, or two lead instruments (for example, fiddle and accordion) with accompaniment. The most influential of them were probably the recordings made by three fiddlers from Co. Sligo: Michael Coleman, James Morrison and Paddy Killoran. Other notable Irish musicians include The Flanagan Brothers, John McKenna and Michael Gaffney who recorded Irish traditional music on the accordion, whistle, banjo and banjo-mandolin.

Radio too was a key conduit of Irish traditional music and song. In 1926, on New Year's Day, Raidió Éireann began broadcasting from Little Denmark Street in Dublin. As noted by Nicholas Carolan (2005), the early broadcasting of traditional music was influenced by Gaelic League ideals, and the emphasis was on Dublin-based performers and on professional or semi-professional players (p. 9). The opening of the Athlone station in 1933 provided increased exposure in rural areas, and this contributed to a greater awareness of different musicians, style and repertoire (Scahill, 2013, p. 870). The range of instrumental music was almost entirely limited to Uilleann pipers, fiddle players and small ensembles. While the availability of electricity made the new medium possible in urban areas the radio did not become widespread in rural areas until the 1940s. The radio allowed people to access music and musicians from many parts of Ireland and further a-field.

Another advantage of the radio was the opportunity it afforded traditional musicians to hear repertoire and styles from other parts of the country. In the 1950s the development of the outside broadcast unit allowed for musicians to be recorded in their local areas or at the Fleadh Cheoil festivals taking place across the country. The radio became an increasingly influential factor in the evolution of Irish traditional music at both local and national levels (Breathnach, 1971). Some of the first recorded examples of mandolin playing in Ireland were collected at the Fleadh Cheoil held in Dungarvin, Co. Waterford in 1957 by Fr. Lyons. On these recordings the mandolin is played by Frank Wisenor from Co. Antrim in a trio with Seamus Richmond and John Christie on fiddles. Their repertoire included 'McDermott's/Maid of Castlebar/Tim Moloney', 'The Luckpenny / The Killimor Jig', 'McMahon's'. Wisenor plays in unison with the fiddles, adding plucked trebles to the melody replacing the roll on the fiddle with a treble. On the Scottish march 'Bonnie Lass of

Bonacorde' he also plays in unison with the fiddles but uses the tremolo ornament on sustained notes. Wisenor was also recorded playing solo mandolin on the reel 'Sligo Maid' (Figure 8) and the jig 'The Killimor Jig' (Figure 9) where he plays trebles, in a similar manner to that performed with the fiddles.

Figure 8: Sligo Maid

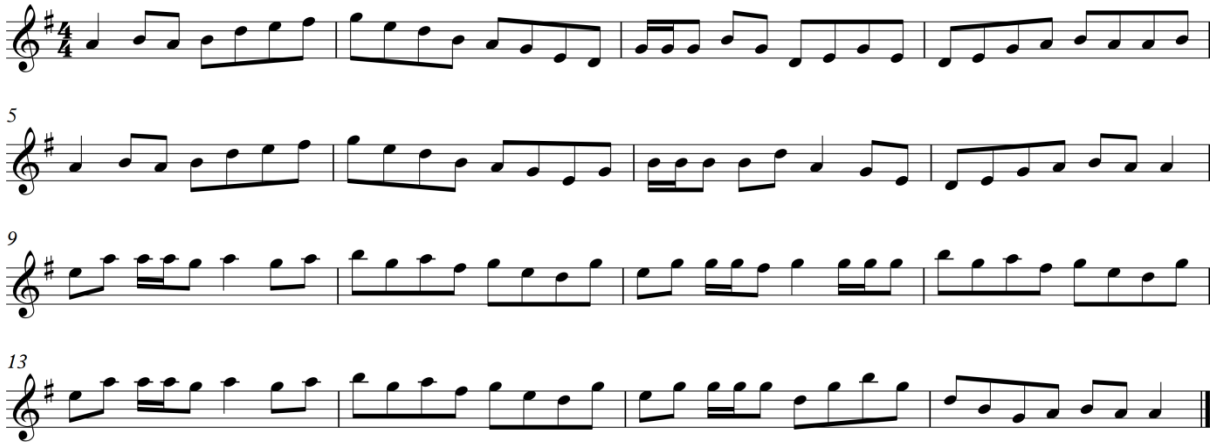
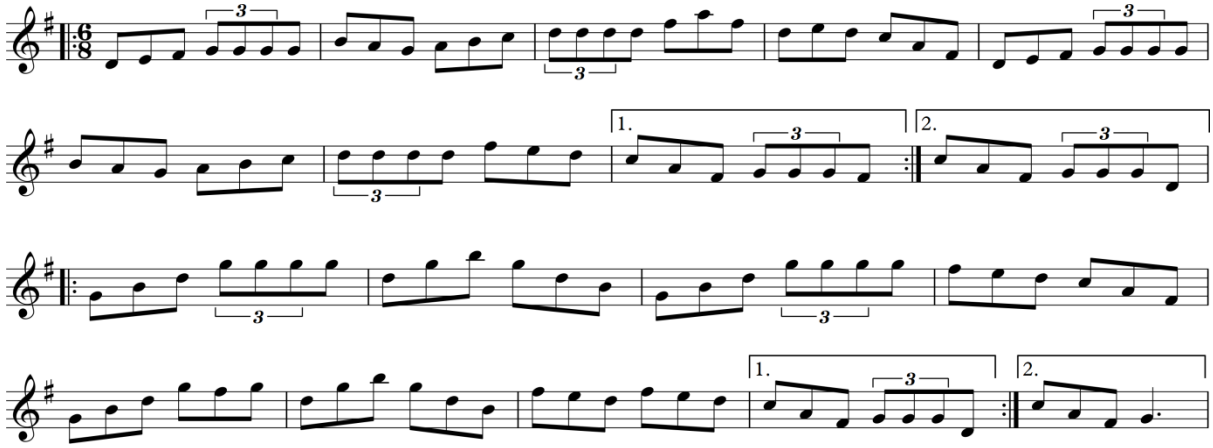


Figure 9: Killimor Jig



Recordings collected by Ciarán MacMathuna feature William Whelan playing solo mandolin on the tunes 'Piper thro the Meadow Straying', 'The Blooming Heather/Tatter Jack Walsh' and the hornpipes 'Dunphy's/Harvest Home'. Other notable recordings of the mandolin collected by MacMathuna feature the fiddle player Larry Redican (1908–1975) from Boyle, Co. Roscommon. Redican who emigrated to the US in the 1920s was better known as a fiddle player, receiving lessons from the Dublin fiddler and composer Arthur Darley. On these recordings Redican plays solo mandolin on a number of well known tunes like 'Sporting Paddy', 'Tansey's' and 'Reel of Bogie' amongst a number of untitled tunes. His technique is

notable for his use of the triplet and treble ornament as well as the speed and dexterity of playing, which can be heard on the recordings.

Ciarán MacMathuna (1925–2009) a collector and broadcaster from Limerick played a significant role in bringing Irish traditional music into Irish homes. His radio programmes *A Job of Journeywork* and *Ceolta Tíre* run from the mid 1950s until 1970 and highlighted all aspects of Irish traditional music. Vallely states 'His relaxed microphone style built a radio following in what was the key period of revival of interest in Irish traditional music'(Vallely 1999). According to Smyth 'he was on a mission to collect songs and stories, music, poetry and dance before they were buried under the coming tsunami of pop' (Smyth, 2009). In 1954, he joined Radio Éireann where he was employed to travel around the country recording Irish traditional musicians. He would also spend time in England and Scotland and in 1962 MacMathuna travelled to the U.S to record Irish traditional musicians for Radio Éireann. During his visit to the US MacMathuna came upon The Clancy Brothers and on his return to Ireland he brought back some of their records. The following year they found themselves playing a sold-out tour of Ireland, followed by success in England and other parts of Europe soon afterwards. The Clancy Brothers were a huge influence on the future ballad groups such as The Dubliners, Sweeney's Men and The Johnston's all of whom include the mandolin as an instrument for song accompaniment.

In the 1960s, agencies also began to emerge, including Gael Linn and Claddagh, which helped disseminate the music and provide support for performers of Irish traditional music. These recordings still are considered valuable today and are continuing to influence the style and technique of current traditional musicians on both sides of the Atlantic (Hast and Scott, 2004). O Shea notes:

> Recording companies set up by culturally motivated groups – Gael-Linn, with its promotion of the Irish language and traditional music, and Claddagh, the project of 'gentlemen pipers' Garech Browne and Ivor Browne – promoted both established traditional musicians and members of an urban revival alongside radio and television programs devoted to traditional music (2005, p. 103).

Another popular event in the dissemination of Irish traditional music was the introduction of television. On RTÉ's opening night on 31 December 1961, for instance, the McCusker Brothers Céilí Band was among the performers, followed by Seán Bracken's Loch Gamhna Céilí Band and the Kincora Céilí band also appeared (Scahill, 2013, p. 977). The establishment of RTÉ on New Year's Eve in 1961 was surrounded by great festivity and

excitement. For instance, the McCusker Brothers Céilí band was among the performers Television was a key conduit in the globalisation of American popular culture, especially, rock-n-roll and pop music, but it also served as a platform to promote Irish traditional music. Dooley notes, 'television was the prime catalyst for the penetration of urban consumerism into the countryside' (2012, p. 67).

During the 1960s the stereotype of the folksinger entered the domain of popular culture. Specialist programmes such as 'Ballad Sessions' (1964), 'What Zozimus Said' (1965) and 'Ballad Sheet' (1969) began to highlight the ballad boom featuring a number of Irish traditional musicians and singers from across the country including Willie Clancy and Seamus Ennis. The television also allowed for the collection of visual documentation of musicians from across the country with television crews travelling to the Fleadh Cheoil festivals to record musicians.

Despite a great deal of valuable work being carried out by individuals working on behalf of radio and television agencies, the developing dominance of popular culture on the airwaves led to groups advocating for more Irish traditional music content. Criticisms of RTÉ's treatment of traditional music were led by Comhaltas through the 1970s and pointed to the lack of broadcasts of traditional music and indeed the lack of quality of that which was broadcast (Scahill, 2013, p. 978). Despite this, there is invaluable archival footage from this period, as presented again in the twenty first century by Nicholas Carolan on the series *Come West Along the Road*. However, as before, it is notable that the mandolin rarely features in these programmes.

The use of amplification became an ever increasing feature from the 1960s. Many of the groups who were receiving commercial success had moved from playing in small pubs in Dublin city and were now playing in venues such as The Olympia and The Embankment in Tallaght. The need for amplification in these new performance spaces was crucial to be heard in these new venues. Amplification brought about an opportunity for new instruments or the use of instruments that may not be heard in an acoustic setting, especially for the mandolin Examples include Planxty and Clannad where a subtle use of mandolin was made possible by amplification.

3.4 The Urban Folk Revival

In Ireland the revival turned up a tremendous wealth and diversity of music through radio shows and records. It also prompted the cause of many instruments such as the mandolin, banjo, guitar and bouzouki in the performance of Irish folk music. By the 1960s the mandolin began to emerge as an instrument used by many ballad groups that were gathering momentum in Dublin's inner-city. The general mood in Dublin at this time was one of optimism which saw the breaking down of social barriers and differences between town and country engineered by a common appreciation of the music (O Broithe, 1999, p. 275). Ballad clubs sprang up across Dublin and were full with young people who had no previous exposure to this type of music. It was here where many musicians gathered to play music, and build musical friendships that would later change the face of Irish traditional music.

As the cornerstone on which the Dublin folk revival was built the American folk revival had a huge impact on instruments used to accompany Irish songs and tunes. Heavily influenced by the folk revival occurring in America, and the popularity of The Clancy Brothers, a new found interest in Irish songs and music took the capital by storm. While the majority of the music of the Clancy Brothers was accompanied by guitar and five-string banjo, the mandolin was used on their album *The First Hurrah* in 1964 on the song 'The Leaving of Liverpool' which released No. 6 in the Irish charts of that year. It spawned a generation of guitar strummers and spoon tappers, from the brash to the musical, the obscure to the idolised, who poured out their hearts in the so-called 'singing pubs' of the nation (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998, p. 238).

Figure 10: The Dubliners in O'Donoghue's [Courtesy of the Irish traditional music archive]

The urban folk revival or the 'ballad boom' in Dublin, according to a number of sources, is said to have taken root in O'Donoghue's Pub on Merrion Row in Dublin's inner city **(**Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998; Vallely 1999, 2011; Ferriter, 2012**)**. It is here a network cultivated on the exchange of music ideas and repertoires, generated innovative vocal and instrumental techniques. Curran notes: 'Coverage of folk or traditional events was practically non-existent until the Evening Press introduced a column in the early 1960s entitled 'On the Folk Scene' which tapped into the revival of folk music among urban audiences' (Curran, 1999, p. 60). There were a number of public houses across Dublin throughout the 1960s that specialised in the performance of Irish traditional and folk music. By the middle of the 1960s the ballad boom had advanced, and had settled down into a semi-commercial nationwide scene. Ensembles like The Dubliners became the newer voices of the revival, combining traditional dance tunes and songs with contemporary styles and genres. The folk revival did resuscitate traditional music on the island and, in the process, helped to enhance the popularity of many traditional performers. The popularity of bands such as The Dubliners, The Johnston's and Sweeney's Men were touring nationally and internationally. At this time periodicals were published that specialised in all aspects of the folk revival. The first edition of *Folk*

Magazine in 1967 featured the band Sweeney's Men and shows Andy Irvine holding a mandolin, Joe Dolan with a guitar and Johnny Moynihan with a bouzouki.

Figure 11: Folk Music Magazine [courtesy Irish Traditional Music Archive]

Published on a monthly basis *Folk Magazine* was a platform upon where musicians with an interest in Irish folk music could discuss new trends in Irish folk music (Figure 11). It also highlighted Irish traditional music festivals, musicians, national folk band competitions, album reviews and ballad centres across the country. The monthly edition carried news about competitions and conventions, arrangements, news from the folk clubs, gossip, and columns by key figures in the folk revival. Despite the ensuing commercial success of these groups the mandolin remained outside the mainstream of Irish instrumental music.

3.5 Ensemble contexts for the mandolin from the 1970s

The 1970s marked a period of significant social and musical change, which impacted on the mandolin and its role in Irish traditional music. The most notable developments emerging from this period included innovative ensemble arrangements and the introduction of new instruments such as the mandolin, banjo, bouzouki and guitar. The mandolin found new popularity during the 1970s and consequently emerged in new performance contexts. In the 1970s, many groups were inspired by the new style pioneered by Ceoltóirí Chualann and The Chieftains. This period was a time when the traditional music of Ireland was being rediscovered and reinvigorated by the younger generation who performed Irish ballads and traditional dance music in new ways. Throughout the decade more bands joined the folk revival using a wide array of instrumentation. The 1970s witnessed the formation of a constellation of Irish super-groups that served to define the popular side of Irish traditional

music during subsequent decades (Williams, 2010, p 230). The mandolin took a firm root in Irish traditional music through influential performers including Andy Irvine, Mick Moloney, Dave Richardson, and Brian McDonagh. The formation of bands such as Boys of the Lough, Clannad, the Furey Brothers, Horslips, Oisín, Planxty and Stockton's Wing were all experimenting with new instruments and approaches in the performance of Irish traditional music and song.

The 1970s was also the decade in which commercialisation began to take root in Irish traditional music and when professional touring bands became a reality. This commercialisation can be evidenced in terms of the shift from acoustic to amplified contexts, and also in terms of repertoire, harmony and rhythmic emphasis in ensemble style. We hear in the albums of the 1970s to 1990s a gradual musical change, whereby the older acoustic music integrated elements of popular music, attracting new audiences and enhancing the financial viability of the touring band. Increasing access to diverse musical soundscapes changed the way in which audiences received, and performers represented, traditional music.

Figure 12: Planxty live at The Embankment (courtesy of the Irish traditional music archive)

Figure 13: Seamus Heaney, Willie Clancy and singer Ronnie Drew (Courtesy of Irish traditional music archive)

Clannad were formed in the late 1960s in Gweedore, Co. Donegal. Rather than adopting the styles of English and American popular music they amassed a treasury of local songs from which they created an individual sound, underpinned by the use of the Irish language and the prominence of the harp. The group consisted of siblings Ciarán Ó Braonáin (bass, guitar, keyboards and vocals), Máire Ní Bhronáin (harp, vocals), Pól Braonáin (flute, guitar, percussion and vocals) and their uncles Noel Ó Dúgáin (guitar, vocals) and Pádraig Ó Dúgáin (guitar, mandolin, vocals). Their self titled debut album *Clannad* was released in 1973 and features the mandolin on the song 'Thíos Cois Na Trá Domh' where tremolo is prominently used. The harp is prominent on this album, accompanying the majority of the songs. Their second album, *Clannad 2* (1974) features the mandolin in the opening song 'An Gabhar Bán' playing in unison with the tin whistle. It is also used on the songs 'Rince Philib a'Cheoil' and 'Teidhir Abhaile Riú'. On their third album *Dúlaman* (1976), the mandolin took on a more prominent role in the ensemble featuring on almost half of the songs 'Two Sisters', 'The Galtee Hunt', 'Éirigh Is Cuir Ort Do Chuid Éadaigh', 'Mo Mháire' and the jig 'The Jug of Brown Ale' where it plays in unison with the harp and tin whistle. By the 1980s the mandolin began to feature less in their arrangements as they began to experiment with electronic sounds, including keyboards, electric guitar, saxophone and synthesiser.

Another important musical family at this time were The Fureys from Ballyfermot in Dublin. The family of four brothers Eddie, Finbar, Paul and George recorded a number of albums

featuring the mandolin. Prior to the formation of The Fureys in 1976 two of the brothers Eddie and Finbar Furey toured as a duo and in the late sixties they performed with The Clancy Brothers appearing on two of the influential folk groups albums *Christmas* (1969) and *Flowers in the Valley* (1970). As a duo Eddie and Finbar recorded six albums in the seventies. On *The Dawning of the Day* (1972) the album cover features a Neapolitan mandolin, uilleann pipes, fiddle, five string banjo, whistles, guitar, bodhrán and a conga drum. The mandolin is included in the majority of songs, playing tremolo in 'Farewell to Tarwathy', 'My Lagan Love' and 'Jennifer Gentle' adding to the intensity of the performance. Seven further albums followed: *Four Green Fields* (1972), *A Dream in my hand* (1974), *I Live not where I Love* (1975), *The Farewell Album* (1976), *I Know where I'm Going* (1976) and *Banshee* (1978), with Eddie playing mandolin and guitar, and Finbar playing uilleann pipes, flute, guitar and banjo. During this time their brother Paul was performing in the group The Buskers with Davey Arthur and Brendan Leeson. The Buskers recorded two albums, *The Life of a Man* (1973) and *The Buskers* (1974), with both Davey Arthur and Brendan Leeson playing the mandolin on the dance tunes, ballads and songs. In 1976 all the brothers joined forces with Davey Arthur and formed The Furey Brothers and Davey Arthur.

'Folk rock' music grew in popularity during the early 1970s, particularly in England where groups like Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention were experimenting with a mixture of electric instrumentation and 'traditional' material. Horslips formed in Dublin in 1970 when Barry Devlin (bass guitar, vocals), Eamon Carr (drums, bodhrán, percussion) and Charles O' Connor (fiddle, mandolin, concertina, vocals) met while working on a beer commercial (Smyth, 2005, p. 41). They were later joined by John Fean (guitar, banjo, vocals), and Jim Lockhart (keyboards, flute, tin whistle, uilleann pipes, vocals) and began developing a distinctive voice in Irish music. They formed their own record label OATS which gave them more control over licensing and distribution deals which allowed them to maintain greater financial and artistic control over their own music. Horslips gained their reputation from fusing Irish traditional music with rock music, creating a new genre known as Celtic Rock. The bands first single, 'Johnny's Wedding' (1972), is performed on the mandolin, accompanied by drums and electric bass. Their debut album, *Happy to Meet – Sorry to Part*, released the same year, continued this trend of blending Irish traditional and rock music. In 1973 they released *The Táin*, a concept album based on the ancient Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (The Cattle Raid of Cooley). A highlight of the album was the track 'An Dearg

Doom' based on the Irish tune 'Máirseáil Uí Néill' (O'Neill's March) which had come to prominence only a few years previous when Seán Ó Riada recorded it on the album *Ó Riada sa Gaiety* (1971). Their next five albums, although heavily influenced by Irish mythology, saw the group move away from playing traditional tunes to focussing on rock music style.

Stockton's Wing, formed in 1977 by Paul Roche (flute), Tommy Hayes (bodhrán), Kieran Hanrahan (banjo, mandolin), Tony Cullinane (guitar) and Maurice Lennon (fiddle), brought another dynamic to Irish traditional music through their blend of traditional music sets with ballads and folk songs. Each musician was an all-Ireland Fleadh Ceoil champion on his respective instrument. On their debut album *Jigs, Reels and Songs* (1978) Hanrahan alternates between the banjo, mandolin and harmonica. The mandolin appears on three tunes from the album 'Lord McDonald's', 'Charlie Lennon's Mazurkas' and the slip-jig 'The Drops of Brandy' where it plays in unison with the fiddle and flute, and later in harmony as shown in Figure 14. On their second album *Take a Chance* (1980) the mandolin appears on three of the tunes, 'My Darling Asleep', 'Sonny Brogans' and 'The Boys of the Lough' reel'. The album features a mix of tunes and songs, some of which was composed by the band. Hanrahan uses a number of techniques such as plucked trebles and triplets, double stopping, chordal accompaniment and tremolo. The opening track 'My Darling Asleep' features unison mandolin and flute with Hanrahan taking a contrasting contrapuntal melodic line and playing of the open D and G strings as shown in Figure 15. Throughout the 1980s Stockton's Wing toured the European folk festival circuit extensively collaborating with Bella Fleck, The Dubliners and Maura O Connell, and in 1984 they embarked on their first American tour to promote their album *American Special.* Their live album *Take One*, released in 1985, features the mandolin on the majority of the tunes, playing in unison with the flute and fiddle.

Figure 14: The Drops of Brandy

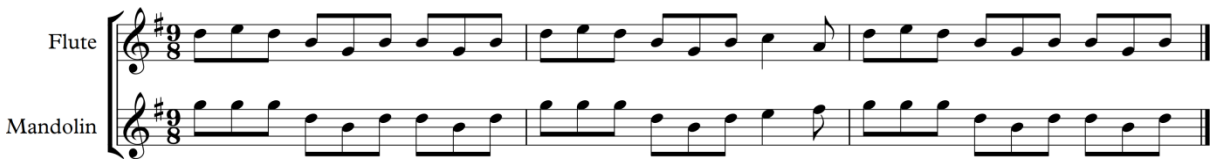
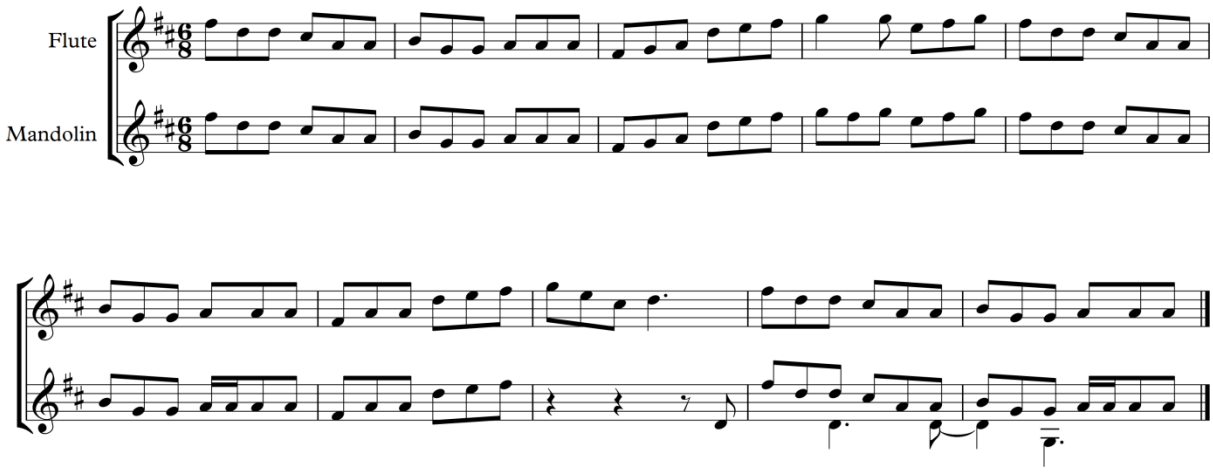


Figure 15: My Darling Asleep



When studying Irish traditional music of the 1980s, one can divide it into two distinct but overlapping groups: the professional, commercial musicians, and the amateur musicians who played for the love of the music in pubs and singing clubs. In the professional realm, many of the musicians who were at the forefront of the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s were embarking on solo careers. Andy Irvine and Mick Moloney produced solo albums with one of the most significant being the release in 1980 of Mick Moloney's solo album *Strings Attached* (see Chapter Four). This album was the first recording of Irish traditional music played on the mandolin and banjo and was a milestone for both mandolin and banjo players alike. Other notable Irish traditional groups that used the mandolin in a limited capacity in the 1980s included De Dannan, Altan, Dervish and Patrick Street.

During the 1990s Ireland experienced an unprecedented economic boom. This rapid economic growth referred to as the 'Celtic Tiger' created a context through which Ireland developed a more visible cultural presence on the global stage (O'Toole, 1997; Kaul 2009). The 1990s witnessed a period of intense growth and increased interest in Irish traditional music and dance linked to both an improved economy and the popular and commercial success of *Riverdance* **(**Ó Cinnéide, 1999, 2002; Sommers-Smith, 2001; Scahill, 2009). Opening in April, 1994, *Riverdance,* which began as a seven-minute interlude during the Eurovision Song Contest, introduced a whole new audience to a non-competitive, more relaxed, and more experimental version of Irish step dancing and traditional music (Sawyers, 2000). In February of the following year it opened at the Point Theatre in Dublin as a full length Irish dance show. By September 1996 *Riverdance* had been performed four hundred times and had been viewed by over 1.3 million people, both nationally and abroad. The principal instruments used in *Riverdance* were the uilleann pipes and fiddle, as well as the

low whistle, a relatively recent addition to the soundscape of Irish traditional music. The composer Bill Whelan (b. 1950) created a symphonic backdrop for the production incorporating other ethnic instruments which related to the various forms of dance featured, including Russian folk ballet and Spanish flamenco (Ó Cinnéide, 2002). The commercial success of *Riverdance* and *River of Sound* and their blending of diverse techniques and styles may be seen as a motivating factor in the development of the first Crossroads Conference (1996) that discussed innovation and change in Irish traditional music. *Riverdance* utilised both Irish and other instruments with full orchestra, and it led to the development of new audiences for Irish traditional music, representing the beginning of a related revival of Irish traditional music and dance.

Throughout the 1990s, there has been much debate about continuity and change within the competing ideologies of 'tradition' and 'innovation' epitomised by the Crossroads Conference (Vallely et al, 1999). However, the mandolin is largely absent from this discourse. While the mandolin was featured by a number of groups including Four Men and a Dog, Dervish, The Sharon Shannon Band and the Irish American group Solas, it had a more prominent role in The Josephine Marsh Band and Lia Luachra. Declan Corry from Tyrone who played with the latter two groups was an established mandolin player who in 1978 won the Fleadh Ceoil competition under the category of Rogha Ghleas (Miscellaneous). In 1996 he recorded the album 'I can hear you Smiling' with the Josephine Marsh band. Although Corry was a proficient bouzouki player, the mandolin took precedence, with ten of the thirteen tunes on the album featuring Corry playing the mandolin. All of the tunes on the album either feature solo mandolin or unison playing with the accordion, accompanied by guitar and double bass. Corry's individual technique is evident in all the recording.

In Lia Luachra the mandolin had a prominent role in the overall group. The members consisted of Shane Bracken (concertina) and Tricia Hutton (fiddle) along with Declan Corry (mandolin, bouzouki) and John Hicks (guitar, vocals). Their self titled debut album released in 1998 featured the mandolin on the majority of sets of the tunes. The album fused influences from Irish, Cape Breton and Eastern European traditions. It also features a waltz composed by Corry entitled 'Two Black Russians' (Figure 17). The first tune, 'Paddy Taylor's', was played on the guitar with the mandolin playing in harmony a third above as shown in Figure 16. The last tune in the set is played in duet between the concertina and mandolin, with both musicians demonstrating an awareness of the technical challenges of each instrument.

Figure 16: Paddy Taylor's reel

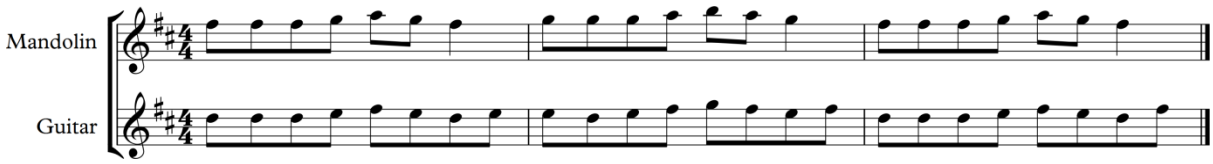
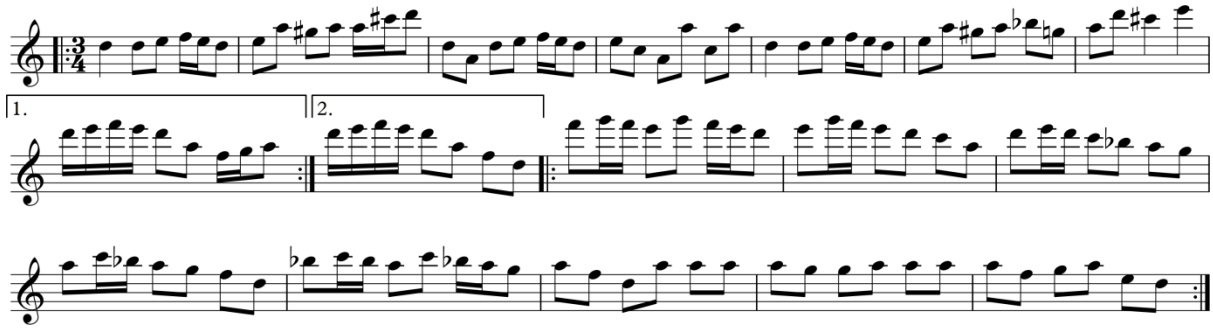


Figure 17: Two Black Russians



The inclusion of the mandolin by Comhaltas in 1990 as an instrument for competition in the Fleadh Ceoil marked a new recognition of the instrument. While the acceptance of the mandolin could be considered long over-due, this decision by Comhaltas was of central importance for the recognition of the instrument in Irish traditional music. The demographic of competition prize winners throughout the 1990s proved that the mandolin was a popular instrument, played across the country by both male and females of all ages.

By the late 1990s the potential for the mandolin as a solo instrument in the playing of traditional dance music was explored further by Irish musician Paul Kelly (ref Chapter Four) and the English musician Simon Mayor. The release of Paul Kelly's *A Mandolin Album* in 1998 coincided with the release of Simon Mayor's *New Celtic Mandolin.* While Mayor had released a number of solo mandolin albums before, this album was his first recording that consisted solely of traditional tunes from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, as well as some of his own compositions. Kelly's album however, featured material ranging from traditional music to newly composed tunes in the traditional idiom, to tunes from Scandinavia as well as piece by Debussy, 'La fille aux cheveux de lin'. These albums with their wide ranging selection of music from diverse traditions highlight the versatility of the instrument and its suitability for performance in Irish traditional music and other genres.

3.6 Developing Style and Technique on the Irish Mandolin

The term 'style' in Irish traditional music can refer to the manner of performance unique to an individual musician or alternatively, those common features of performance which distinguish the majority of performers from a particular area (Ó Canainn 1978). The first significant investigations into 'style' in Irish traditional music began in the early 1960s through a series of radio shows produced by composer Sean Ó Riada. In his radio series *Our Musical Heritage* (1962) he focused on the instrumental traditions of the regions of Sligo, Clare, and West Limerick/North Kerry. According to Lawrence McCullough

> Style in traditional Irish music, though guided by certain conventions, is not perceived by traditional musicians as rigid, static set of rules that music be dogmatically or lavishly followed. It is, instead, a flexible, context-sensitive medium through which an individual's musical expression can be given a form and substance that will invest his performance with communicative values (McCullough, 1977, p. 97).

Niall Keegan has noted that 'style' (2010) 'is an important but elusive concept in the world of Irish traditional music' (p. 1). Characteristics that determine style according to Keegan (2010) are ornamentation, phrasing, articulation, variation, intonation, tone, dynamics, repertoire, duration, emphasis, speed, instrumentation and instrument specific techniques. There is a variety or ornamentation techniques used in traditional music. These techniques are essential to creating the overall sound of the music, yet they are rarely notated in tune books and other publications relating to Irish traditional music. The use of the term 'style' in Irish traditional music scholarship is most commonly associated with the more established instruments in the tradition (McCullough, 1977; O Canainn, 1978). New instruments such as the mandolin, banjo, guitar and bouzouki only until recently have developed certain styles. However, over the last century many changes have taken place that has affected the way Irish traditional music is performed and what instrument it is played on. At the time of the mandolins introduction into Irish traditional music and as revealed in the Case Studies in Chapter 4, developing a style and technique on the mandolin came from close scrutiny of musicians on instruments such as the uilleann pipes and fiddle. Many of the musicians also scoured printed music collections for tunes and songs and purposely travelled to the West Coast of Ireland to learn from the most notable Irish musicians of the time. From the 1990s a number of tutor books specialising on new instruments such as the mandolin, banjo, guitar and bouzouki began to appear in music shops offering to teach beginner and intermediate musicians[2].

[2] Billaudot (1987); De Grae (1989, 1991, 1996); Henigan (1999); Kirtley (2003); MacQuaid (1995); Scahill (2008, 2012); Ó Callanáin & Walsh (1989); Wackers (2012); MacLeod (2001).

There has been a significant increase in the number of mandolin tutors available in recent years. They are not only confined to Irish traditional music and cover a wide range of styles and music genres. Tutors specialising in genres like Bluegrass, Classical, Blues, Rock, Gospel, Ragtime, Jazz and Popular music are valuable sources of information relating to late twentieth and twenty first century attitudes to the mandolin, and demonstrate the versatility of the instrument in being able to occupy so many different musical contexts. While these tutors relate to other styles and traditions they can also be useful in understanding the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music.

Although Irish traditional music may be learned from graphic notation systems, it is not performed from any prescriptive text. In *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*, the Irish folk scholar, Brendan Breathnach states that 'traditional music can be learned properly only by ear' (Breathnach, 1971, p. 122). He develops this opinion further, stating:

> When a printed text is used, as an aid to memory, in acquiring a grouping of notes which the ear refused to pick up, or later to ones repertoire, the text should not be regarded as sacrosanct, since a version of a tune acquires no particular validity by being committed to print. The setting played may have been good or bad; the transcription may be accurate but skeletal, defective although detailed. Imitating the style of some outstanding player is an excellent way of making progress in the initial stages of learning but it is not a course one should persist in (ibid)

The challenge presented by Breathnach's statement, is addressed to some extent in tutor books through the provision of a CD. Anthony Warde (2005) and Marla Fibish (2012) have both released a DVD tutor which allows a more visual presentation. Tutors on the art of playing mandolin are not new. The nineteenth century abounded with manuals on how to play the mandolin in various styles. However, since the introduction of the mandolin into the Irish traditional music soundscape there has only been a small number of mandolin tutors published that specialise on the instrument's use in the tradition. Tutor books are one resource that have enabled those interested in learning the mandolin, access to playing the instrument through instruction on technique and, to a lesser extent, style. Notable tutor books published on playing the mandolin in Irish traditional music have been Carroll (1991, 2011), Berthoud (2004, 2008) and Rossi (2014). In these tutor books the fundamentals of mandolin technique are taught through tunes in standard notation and/or mandolin tablature. With any new instrument it is important for musicians who have an interest in the mandolin to acquire knowledge of how it should be played and to this end tutors can serve as an important resource for musicians who want to play the mandolin. While tutor books serve as an

informative introduction to learning the mandolin they cannot replace learning from musicians.

The first tutor book to address the mandolin was John Loesberg's *Chords for Mandolin, Irish Banjo, Bouzouki* (1989). In this tutor Loesberg covers such things as scales, chord relationships, how to use the capo along with 96 chord diagrams. The first comprehensive tutor for the mandolin in Irish traditional music was Padraig Carroll's *The Irish Mandolin* published in 1991. Carroll's tutor book is aimed not only at the beginner, but is also useful to the mandolin-player with some knowledge and experience who wishes to learn more. All of the tunes in the book are accompanied by a cassette tape/CD. The first ten pages of the tutor include a brief history of the mandolin followed by comprehensive diagrams showing the different parts of the instrument; how to hold the instrument; left and right hand technique and tuning. Carroll's book is broken down into five sections that build up gradually as new fundamental elements are introduced. Each section begins with clear statements of goals and ends with a summary of what was covered and provides suggestions for further development. The book encompasses a wide range of material transcribed in music notation. However, Carroll also encourages his readers to move away from the notation and stresses the importance of being able to hum the melodies from memory before trying to play them. The provision of a CD is important in this regard to provide an aural resource for the learner. Each section deals with different tune types beginning with simple tunes such as the waltz-time tunes 'Fáinne Geal an Lae' and the 'Swedish Waltz' in the first section, to jigs and polkas in the second section and hornpipes, reels and Slip-jigs in section 3 and are supported by brief historical backgrounds on each tune type. In between are several slides from the Sliabh Luachra region and a few original tunes composed by the author. Section 4 provides some variations of tunes such as the 'Green Fields of America' which is followed by a segment on ornamentation where he encourages the learner to work out their own ornaments. He also tackles the tremolo ornament on the song 'As I Roved Out'. There is very little inspection on ornaments specific to Irish traditional music such as trebles, and triplets. In the final section Carroll addresses the 'session' environment and points out the importance of listening and observing musicians who play on other instruments. Carroll's tutor book lacks any detailed examination on ornaments such as trebles, triplets, droning, hammer-ons and pull-offs, double stops and chording. His attention to pick direction appears at the beginning of the book but then disappears completely from the musical examples. This could cause issues for

the absolute beginner who might pick up bad habits due to not being sure where and when to play an up-stroke or down-stroke.

Philip John Berthoud's *Irish Mandolin Playing – A Complete Guide* (2004) presents a complete guide for the absolute beginner but is also useful for mandolin players wishing to develop their repertoire and technique further. All of the tunes and exercises in the book are included on the accompanying 63 track CD. In this tutor book, Berthoud begins by giving clear and detailed instructions (with informative diagrams that illustrate clearly) on how to hold the mandolin and the plectrum, fingering, tuning, basic scales, posture and the layout of the fret board. With Berthoud's approach, there is no requirement for prior learning and the first few examples are simple tunes such as 'Tell Me Ma' and 'Danny Boy' followed by tunes such as the popular 'Star of the County Down' and 'The Derry Air'. His use of standard notation and tablature caters for both the literate and non-literate musician. An introduction to mandolin tablature and pick direction indicators, give the beginner a solid grounding on how to use the instruction material.

The book begins with simple exercises giving the student a basic right-hand pattern beginning with open strings and simple scale passages. The material follows a coherent sequence of progression with a broad variety of tune types (jigs, polkas, double jigs and hornpipes) with informative descriptions and styles. Berthoud's approach to practicing is very informative, outlining problem areas commonly encountered. He talks from his own personal experience and proposes solutions, using exercises to address potential weaknesses, such as the use of the little finger. Many of the music examples are followed by notes that provide hints for playing each tune, for example, how to position your fingers when playing more advanced tunes. Berthoud makes a distinction between tunes learned by ear, and those learned from music notation, and he recommends a number of different sources such as other musicians, recordings, teachers, evening classes and live performance.

The author encourages playing with other musicians, and recommends the 'session' as a place to observe other musicians. He provides brief descriptions of the different tune types such as reels, jigs, double jigs and hornpipes. The book takes the reader from the basics of the mandolin through to more advanced topics such as creating variations, playing with other musicians and practicing effectively. Berthoud's approach to practicing is very informative, outlining problem areas commonly encountered. While this tutor book is a great recourse the only deficiency is the lack of attention Berthoud pays to ornaments on the mandolin. While

ornaments like trebles and triplets appear in almost fifty percent of the musical transcriptions he does not deal with them in any comprehensive way.

What is evident from a critical review of these resources is that the style and approach presented varies to some extent. It is interesting to note the biographical details of the authors/tutors, many of whom do not come from Ireland. Rossi's approach is very much influenced by European traditions including the cittern, while Fibish appears particularly influenced by American musical traditions. Thus, there is some diversity in the styles performed on the instrument but this is similar to the variety found on many other instruments in the tradition including the fiddle, flute and uilleann pipes.

Although instrumental tutors are still published, the internet has now become a very important device for musicians who want to learn to play Irish traditional music. Related developments have included internet resources beginning with MadforTrad although this did not include the mandolin. More recently, Paddy Cummins has presented tutorials through the Online Academy of Irish Music (OAIM). In eighteen lessons (the first six being free) Cummin's teaches the basics of mandolin playing beginning with how to hold the instrument, strings names, how to position the fingers on the fret board, scales, plectrum motions and ornamentation. He then follows this up with a selection of twelve separate lessons where he teaches a wide selection of well known tunes in the tradition, with two of the lessons honing in on the use of the plectrum and the triplet ornament.

In recent years, online resources such as YouTube have also been very important in the development of various musical styles and repertoire on the mandolin. For many musicians interested in playing the mandolin the internet provides examples of musicians that may not be immediately accessible within a locality. Audio-visual resources explore and provide instruction on different styles and musical genres for a range of instruments including the mandolin. Videos specialising on particular Irish traditional tunes can now be downloaded, slowed down and learned at a pace that suits each individual musician. While the competency of some of the musicians uploading videos varies greatly, there are many videos that are of excellent quality that provide a constructive introduction to Irish traditional music. The internet also allows for mandolin players and enthusiasts to access recordings of players such as Andy Irvine, Mick Moloney, Barney McKenna, Brian McDonagh and Paul Kelly in both live performances and studio recordings.

3.7 Conclusion

There are many factors which influenced the adoption of the mandolin and facilitated its integration into Irish traditional music. A brief examination of the core instruments used before the introduction of the mandolin and other plucked string instruments has shown that the standard repertory of traditional instrumental music and many of the characteristic sounds and techniques of the tradition mostly evolved from playing of the uilleann pipes, fiddle and flute. Although the use of the mandolin in Ireland was never great in comparison to the level of usage of older, more established instruments (fiddle, uilleann pipes and flute) it did play a significant part in the modernisation of the indigenous music of Ireland through the latter half of the twentieth century.

This Chapter has acknowledged the various musical, social and cultural processes at work during the twentieth century and demonstrates that this period was a time of great change in the performance, reception, dissemination and sound of Irish traditional music. The role of new media and technologies cannot be underestimated in terms of generating links and national interest in Irish traditional music throughout the twentieth century. This Chapter has highlighted some of the technological developments such as radio, television, recording technologies, changes in iconography of music and musicians, changes in the wider function of music and new scenarios for performance, and demonstrates how they all had a part to play in the development of instrument usage in the latter half of the twentieth century. It has provided evidence that although historically the mandolin is associated with the urban folk revival it was being used by Irish musicians at the Fleadh Ceoil in Co. Waterford in 1957 where it was used alongside the fiddle and also used as a solo instrument in the performance of Irish dance tunes.

This chapter has provided a critical overview of the urban based folk revival and has shown the interrelationship between urban and rural musical worlds. Through studying the urban folk revival it is very clear that the impetus for change in the Irish soundscape came from outside the tradition rather than from within when many young musicians were experimenting with new ideas. Within this commercial world in which it emerged, the mandolin played a distinctive role firstly as an instrument used for song accompaniment and later as an instrument suitable for playing Irish dance tunes. This is demonstrated through the groups who used ‘traditional’ instruments alongside new instruments such as the mandolin, guitar, banjo and bouzouki. In particular the emergence of ensemble contexts for Irish

traditional music performance in the latter half of the twentieth century, in which the mandolin achieves a particular role, has been critically examined and demonstrates how the mandolin was indigenised into the Irish soundscape. An analysis of tutor books and other resources from the 1990s demonstrate how the instrument had become established as an instrument suitable for playing Irish traditional music due in part to the development of styles and techniques relevant to the tradition. It is through the contribution of selected musicians from the 1960s that the mandolin found a particular role in the Irish music soundscape. Therefore, the next Chapter will examine the contribution of selected mandolin players' from the 1960s through to 2000.

Chapter 4 – Early Performers on the Irish Mandolin

The narrative of the mandolin in Irish traditional music as demonstrated in the previous Chapter belongs to a period of extraordinary change when a new national and international consciousness of Irish traditional music and song was generated. Some of the notable mandolin players who were prominent at this time include Barney McKenna, Mick Moloney, Andy Irvine, Dave Richardson, Brian McDonagh and Paul Kelly who found a way for the mandolin to play within the aesthetics of Irish traditional music. Changes in the soundscape of Irish traditional music involved experimentation including internal and external influences, which provides a contextual framework for research on the mandolin and its role in Irish traditional music. One of the most significant innovations in traditional music in this period was the introduction and subsequent popularisation of instruments new to the tradition, notably plucked string instruments.

The use of stringed accompaniment was popularised in Irish music through a ballad tradition characterised by the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem in the US in the late 1950s. As folk and ballad groups developed, singers and vocal groups began to incorporate instrumental dance music, which brought about the merging of elements from outside the tradition and the indigenous dance music tradition. Many ensemble groups that combined ballads and lyric song with instrumental dance music emerged during this period of change and innovation. Mandolin players developed a distinctive role as melody players in the context of the dance music tradition, in contrast with guitars and other accompanying instruments. Chapter 4 focuses on the aforementioned mandolin players and through analysis will provide an interpretive framework through which the potential for the mandolin in the soundscape of Irish traditional music can be critically assessed.

4.1 Barney McKenna

Barney McKenna (1939-2012) was born in the Liberties and grew up in Donnycarney on the north side of Dublin in a musical household. Barney's father played the melodeon and his uncles played fiddle, flute and mandolin. He was the eldest of four children and from a young age he learned the mandolin by ear from his Uncle Jim. In the *Drop of the Hard Stuff* sleeve notes McKenna remembers breaking the strings of his Uncle Jim's mandolin and his Uncle Barney's fiddle, and even blowing his father's melodeon out of tune. McKenna also

had family in Co. Meath where he spent a lot of time growing up. These visits to Co. Meath were to be the catalyst to McKenna's musical journey as Kelly states:

> His interest in music came from an early age visiting his family in Co. Meath. His family came from Meath and he spent a lot of time there as he was growing up. Times were hard and musicians found it difficult to locate friendly venues for their music. It was mostly in each other's houses they played in those days, but Barney was luckier than most as the music had come down through several generations and the legacy of his uncles and grandfather ensured he had the music engrained in him (Kelly 2001).

Prior to his involvement with the ballad scene in the 1960s McKenna was part of a very vibrant Irish traditional music scene in Dublin. He began playing with Paddy Moloney, Sean Potts and Michael Tubridy, who would later go on to become members of Ceoltóirí Chualann, practising three times a week in Moloney's home. McKenna went to school with Paddy Moloney and they both regularly attended The Pipers' Club on Thomas Street and The Fiddlers' Club on Church Street. Here McKenna became acquainted with fiddle and mandolin player John Sheahan and singer Luke Kelly. In 1962 McKenna began playing with 'The Ronnie Drew Band' playing regularly in O'Donoghue's Pub on Lower Baggot Street. Shortly after they changed their name to The Dubliners, and in 1963 they signed a contract with Transatlantic Records, which brought them national and international attention. Performing both ballads and dance music, the band was integral to the folk revival of the 1960s.

McKenna's mandolin playing can be heard on the majority of The Dubliners albums. In 1965, on their live recording *The Dubliners in Concert*, McKenna and Sheahan performed the slow air 'Roisín Dubh' and three ballads, 'The Patriot Game', 'Easy and Slow' and 'The Leaving of Liverpool' on the mandolin. McKenna and John Sheahan play in duet for many of the songs and slow airs. In 1963, they performed on Neapolitan mandolins for the RTÉ televised broadcast of 'Ballad Sessions'. They also accompanied the well known piper Seamus Ennis for the Gaelic song 'An Poc ar Buile'. Along with Ronnie Drew and Bob Lynch, they also performed 'Mc Alpine's Fusiliers' and 'Donegal Reel/Boyne Hunt', with McKenna playing the banjo.

In Figure 18 the extensive use of tremolo in the ballad 'The Leaving of Liverpool' is transcribed, as well as the use of scale passages and a brief phrase of counter-melody in bars 9 and 12. The use of tremolo introduces a new and distinctive sound to Irish traditional music that is influenced by techniques already developed on the instrument.

The Dubliners achieved considerable commercial success. Their 1967 album *A Drop of the Hard Stuff,* which was later re-titled *Seven Drunken Nights*, stayed in the UK chart for four months and peaked at No.7 in June of that year. The mandolin is a prominent instrument on three of the ballads 'Mc Cafferty', 'The Travelling People' and 'The Black Velvet Band', the last of which was the second single from the album which reached No. 4 in the Irish singles charts and No. 15 in the UK singles charts. Their follow up album *More of the Hard Stuff* sees the appearance of the mandolin on the ballads 'The Croppy Boy' and 'The Shoals of Herring' and again features examples of McKenna and Sheahan utilising a great deal of tremolo-picking. In 1968, the album *Drinkin and Courtin* the mandolin is used on the ballads 'The Parting Glass' and 'My Little Son' and again in 1968 on the album *At It Again* on 'I wish I were back in Liverpool' and 'Go to Sea no More'. On the ballad 'Song for Ireland' the mandolin also plays tremolo in the introduction, accompanied with guitar and tin whistle playing in harmony of thirds, fourths, sixths, sevenths and octaves as shown in Figure 19.

The use of the mandolin in the performance of the dance music repertoire is very rare on studio recordings by The Dubliners, with both McKenna and Sheahan predominantly playing the banjo and fiddle respectively. One set of tunes that appears on a number of their live recordings is a set aptly named 'The Galloping Mandolins'. In this set they play in duet for the hornpipes 'Chief O'Neill's Favourite' and 'The Trumpet Hornpipe' followed by the reel 'The Mullingar Races'. This set of tunes involves McKenna and Sheahan playing a number of variations. In the first tune as shown in Figure 20 they use the plucked treble in bars 3 and 8, but on the repeat as seen in Figure 21 they use some subtle variations beginning with the first bar, where they play a crotchet instead of two quavers and in bars 6 and 7 they play plucked triplets. In the B section they also use a triplet variation on the note C natural as shown in Figure 23.

The second tune in the set 'The Trumpet Hornpipe' (see Figure 24) begins with a succession of treble notes and is a notable feature of this particular tune. It requires great control of both right and left hand technique. In the final 4 bars both mandolins play in duet, playing two bars in harmony G – G7 – C – C minor descending into a V-I cadence from the D in the third bar to G in the last bar, at which point they have returned to unison playing (Figure 25). The descending movement towards the cadence is also emphasised by the downward movement of Sheehan's harmony line. The movement into the two parts followed by the emphatic unison downward scale emphasises the subsequent perfect cadence which brings the tune to an end.

Figure 18: The Leaving of Liverpool

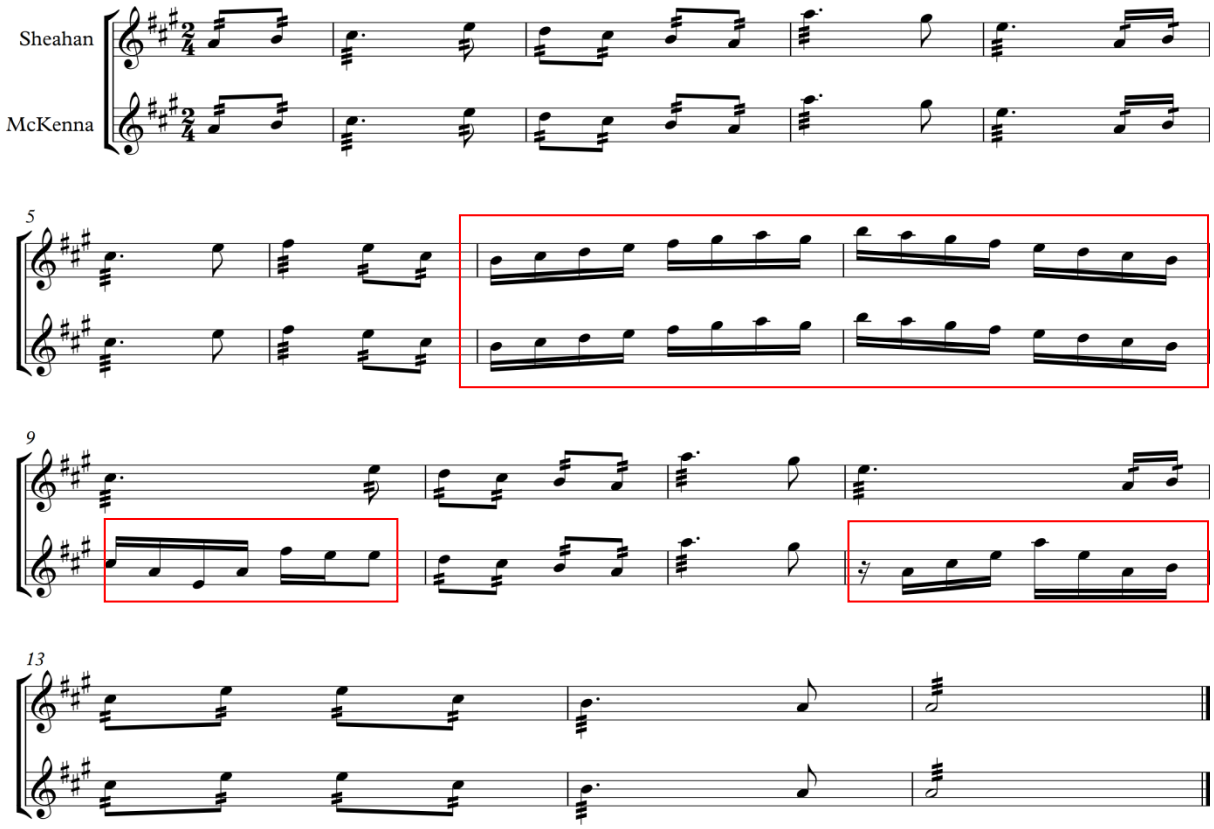


Figure 19: Song for Ireland

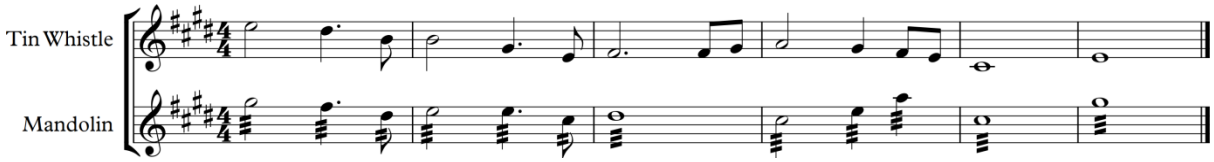


Figure 20: Chief O' Neill's Favourite with treble

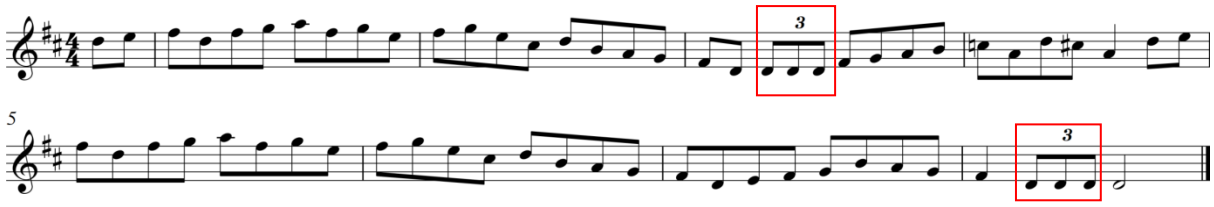


Figure 21: Chief O'Neill's Favourite variation and use of trebles and triplets

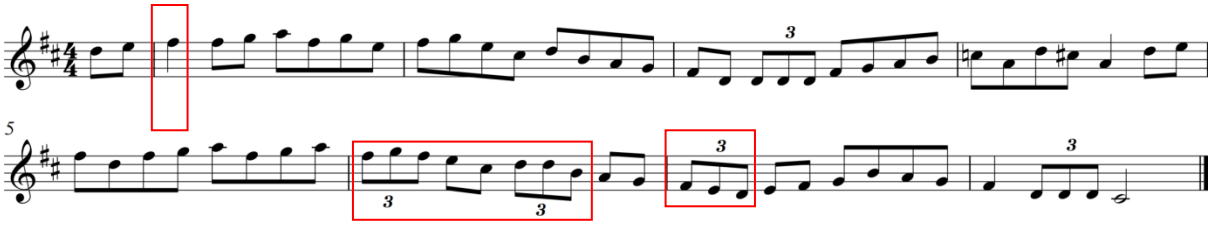


Figure 22: Chief O'Neill's Favourite B section

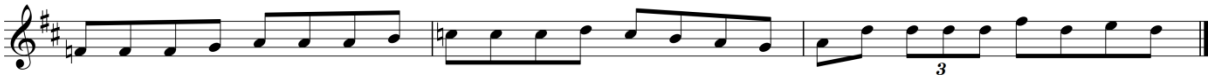


Figure 23: Chief O'Neill's Favourite B section triplet variation

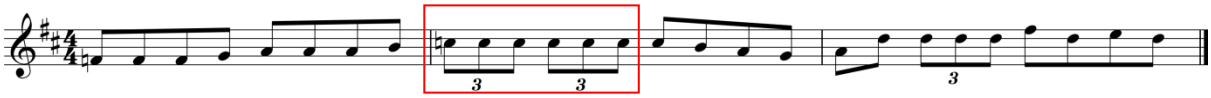


Figure 24: Trumpet Hornpipe Introduction with triplets

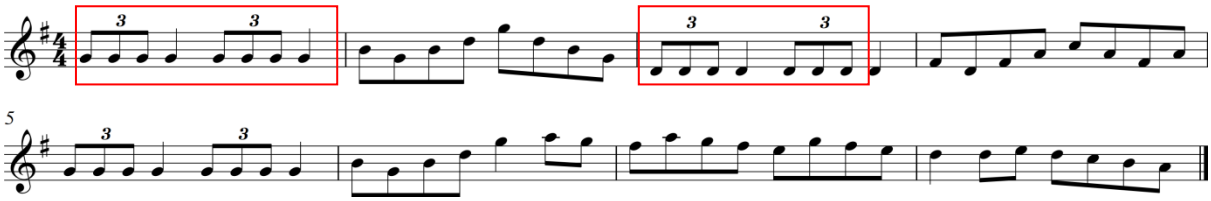
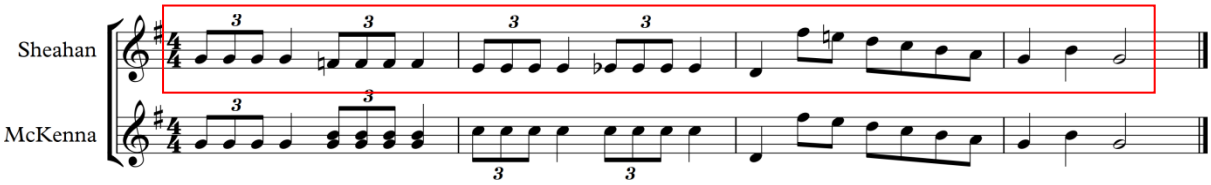


Figure 25: The Trumpet Hornpipe with triplets and harmony



In 1975, McKenna travelled around Europe with accordion player and television producer Tony McMahon. They visited Ennis, Brittany, St. Tropez, Andorra, Germany and Italy playing Irish traditional music for the television series *The Green Linnet*, broadcast on RTÉ as a six part documentary series travelling in the footsteps of the travelling musician Johnny Doran. In the fifth episode they visited Italy where McKenna was filmed performing on a Neapolitan mandolin, playing tremolo and singing an Italian song to an elderly Italian man on a side street. This series placed McKenna, who was better known as a ballad musician, to the

fore of Irish traditional music scene in Ireland and highlighted the overlap of folk and traditional worlds.

The potential for the mandolin in Irish traditional music is demonstrated by the Dubliners primarily through the use of the instrument for song accompaniment and in the playing of slow airs. McKenna's collaborations with some of the most influential Irish traditional musicians throughout his life enabled him to traverse the worlds of folk and ballad singers and the instrumental dance music tradition. Even though McKenna is mostly known as a banjo player it is important to note that he began playing Irish traditional music on the mandolin. He also performed and recorded with Boys of the Lough, the Chieftains, Christy Moore, The Pogues and Damien Dempsey, contributing to the popularity of the banjo and the mandolin in Irish traditional music. He has influenced banjo and mandolin players such as Kieran Hanrahan, Gerry O'Connor and Paul Kelly (Hanrahan, 2012).

4.2 Andy Irvine

Andy Irvine was born in St. John's Wood, North London, in 1942 to an Irish mother and a Scottish father. His mother was an actress and through this he became a proficient actor himself, receiving his first significant break at the age of nine. He started playing guitar at the age of thirteen, studying briefly under the renowned English classical guitarist Julian Bream (O'Toole, 2006, p. 36). Bream was to have a significant effect on Irvine's musical journey as Andy recalls: 'Julian was the first person I ever heard close up playing a musical instrument, other than the piano. I was reduced to tears' (ibid). He became very proficient on the classical guitar and after leaving school at the age of sixteen he decided to pursue a career as a full time actor. In the early fifties the *skiffle* movement was taking England by storm. Artists such as Lonnie Donegan was the inspiration for many artists, none more so than Irvine himself. It was through Donegan that Irvine became aware of the music of Woody Guthrie. The influence of Woody Guthrie on Irvine's development as a musician is an influential factor on the songs he wanted to sing and his choice of instrumentation:

> I used to sit all day, alone, and listen to Woody Guthrie and practise. I was playing with my thumb. I didn't know anything about a flat-pick, but I could do the best imitation of Woody. (…) I wanted to play every instrument he played. That's why I took up the harmonica and mandolin. When I discovered Irish and British music, I figured out how to adapt my basic Woody Guthrie 'scratch' style on guitar to playing songs on the mandolin (Andy Irvine Interview, December 2013)

In 1962, Irvine travelled to Dublin taking acting roles in The Olympia, The Gate and The Pike Theatre. It was in O'Donoghue's public house on Merrion Row where he became acquainted with Luke Kelly, Ronnie Drew, Barney McKenna and Johnny Moynihan. While in Dublin, Irvine decided to abandon his acting career and opt for one in music. He became interested in finding songs, spending a lot of his spare time collecting songs as O'Toole notes:

> He scoured old songbooks like *The Child Collection* and Sam Henry's *Songs of the People* and Bert Lloyd's *Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* in the National Library. He and the rest of Dublin's young beatnik generation, drew inspiration from the BBC *Radio Ballads* of Ewan McColl, Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker, the exhilarating Irish music collected and presented by broadcasters like Ciarán MacMathuna on Radio Éireann, and songs from the endless store of American old-time music' (cited in O'Toole, 2006, p. 44).

Irvine played in many venues across Dublin and soon became a regular fixture on the emerging folk scene. In 1965, after hearing about the adventures of two of his musician friends who had travelled to Denmark, Andy developed a desire to travel and experience other places and other musical cultures. He first travelled to Europe busking on the streets of Munich and Vienna with Galway musician Joe Dolan. On their return to Ireland in the summer of 1966 they first moved to Galway, later moving to Dublin were they signed with Des Kelly of the Capitol Showband and along with Johnny Moynihan formed the group Sweeney's Men.

Sweeney's Men were heavily influenced by the 1960s Irish ballad scene which had its roots with bands like The Dubliners and The Clancy Brothers. They were also heavily influenced by what was happening in the U.S. Their first single 'Old Maid in the Garret' released in May 1967 was recorded for Pye Records in Dublin and became a Top Ten hit in the Irish charts (O'Toole, 2006). Their second single 'The Waxie's Dargle' released in January 1968 was even a bigger success reaching number two in the Irish charts. Even though short lived, the instrumentation used by Sweeney's Men consisting of tin whistle, concertina, harmonica, guitar, mandolin, banjo and bouzouki had a seminal influence on the make-up of future Irish folk groups.

After leaving Sweeney's Men Irvine took to the road again, travelling and busking in Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. It was during this time Irvine developed an interest in

Balkan rhythms. He recalls this first encounter with Balkan music in O'Toole's *Humours of Planxty:*

> We were in a truck when we first heard Bulgarian music. I was bowled over by it. The driver was trying to talk to us and we didn't have enough Bulgarian and the engine was very loud anyway, so he turned on the radio. And this music came out and I thought, "Wow, that must be Bulgarian folk music!" I was hooked. It was like Woody Guthrie. From the first bar I was, "Yesssssssss!" (Cited in O'Toole, 2006, p. 80).

On his return in 1969, O'Toole states 'Andy carried with him the magic of this mysterious new music and it continued to inform the music he played and enkindle the other musical cultures he was interested in' (ibid). In the opening months of the 1970s he was introduced to the Friday and Saturday night gigs in Slattery's on Capel Street. It was in Slattery's where Andy would spend the next few months performing to earn money as he recalls:

> On a Monday there was the Blackbird Folk Club downstairs, there were two clubs on a Tuesday, Wednesday was the Traditional Club upstairs, Thursday was something else. One week I played seven times, I literally played them all. I can see myself setting out winter summer and spring with the big Peter guitar that I played, wrapped in a brocade bedspread that somebody had given me, and the mandolin, getting on the bus into town from Donnybrook and walking up Henry Street to Slattery's. It wasn't great money, but it kept me going. It was a Godsend really" (Cited in O'Toole, 2006, p. 83).

It was in these circles he first became acquainted with Donal Lunny and Christy Moore and would be the beginning of a musical friendship that would span over forty years. In 1971, Andy Irvine along with Christy Moore, Donal Lunny and uilleann piper Liam O'Flynn recorded *Prosperous*. This collaboration would lead to the forming of Planxty in 1972. Planxty like Sweeney's Men were mainly a song based band. Their sources for songs were other singers, especially old traditional singers, and old song collections (ibid). Irvine's mandolin playing was to become a distinguishing feature of all Planxty's music. Through his intricate and creative style of playing of the mandolin he brought a new harmonic and rhythmic depth to Irish traditional music.

Planxty's take on mostly traditional songs and tunes, several being composed by Irvine, was unique. Their eponymous album *Planxty* was released in 1973 and, according to O'Toole 'is a milestone recording in Irish music' (2006, p. 129). The first song on this album 'Raggle Taggle Gypsy' is followed directly after by an instrumental arrangement of 'Tabhair Dom Do Lámh'. This was a new concept in Irish traditional music and was frequently and was

popularised by the group through their commercial recordings and live performances. Irvine's incorporation of harmony and contrapuntal devices can be heard on the majority of Planxty's music. Figure 26 shows the uilleann pipes playing the main melody while the mandolin underpins with a quaver based countermelody. On the O'Carolan tune 'Sí Beag Sí Mhor', the mandolin and uilleann pipes play in contrary motion using intervals of thirds, fifths, sixths and sevenths with Irvine also playing chordal accompaniment in bars 3 and 4 (Figure 27).

Irvine, unlike a number of mandolin players at the time did not use the tremolo technique for song accompaniment, but instead he developed his own personal style. An example of this style is his delicate mandolin playing in songs like 'The West Coast of Clare', a song written about his time spent in Milltown Malbay which is accompanied in the introduction by Liam O'Flynn on the tin whistle playing a contrasting sustained counterpoint based on the intervals of a sixth, seventh and octave (Figure 28). On the song 'Little Musgrave' the mandolin introduces the song and is followed by the bouzouki playing in contrary motion which adds to the rhythmic and harmonic movement of the music (Figure 29).

Figure 26: Tabhair Dom Do Lamh

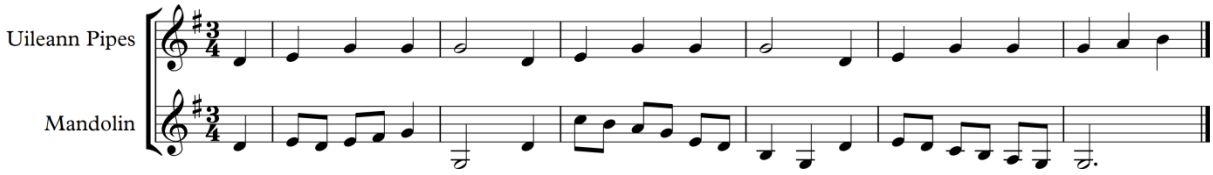


Figure 27: Sí Beag Sí Mhór

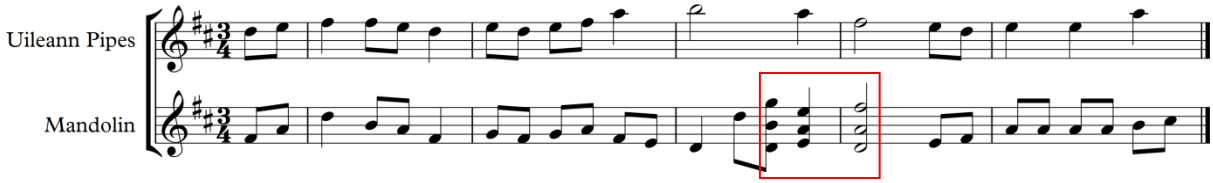


Figure 28: The west coast of Clare mandolin introduction.

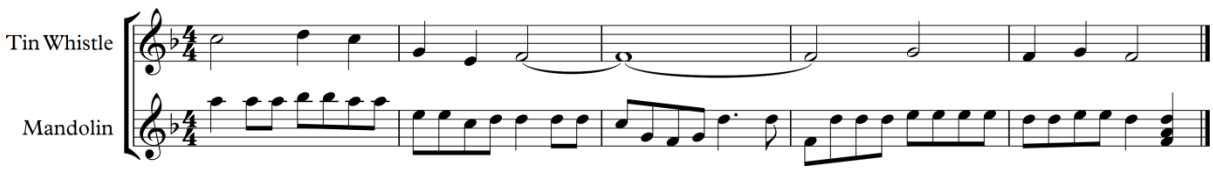
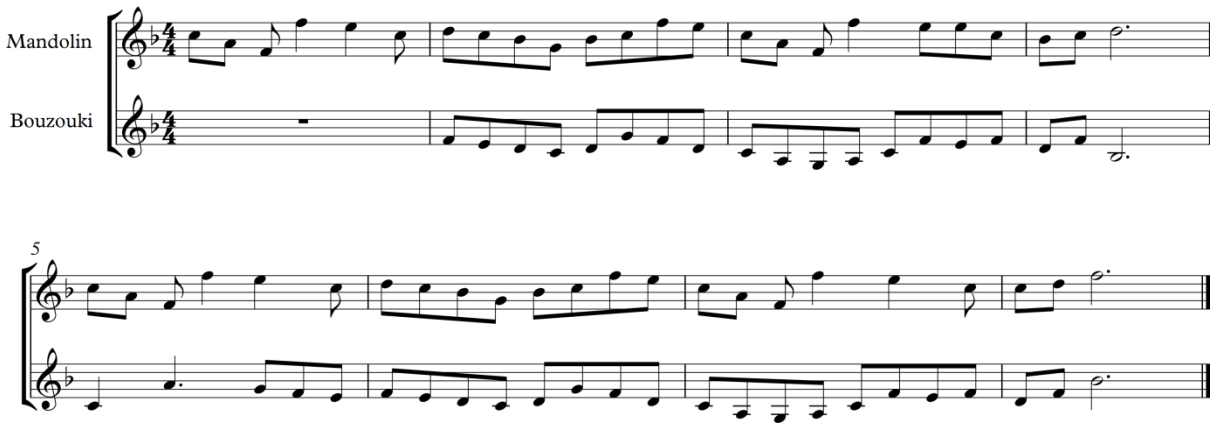


Figure 29: Little Musgrave Introduction played on mandolin and bouzouki



The influence of his experiences travelling around the Balkans had a massive influence on Irvine's style which can be heard on all Planxty albums. This is evident through his use of different time signatures which he incorporated into arrangements of Irish songs. For example, the final song on their debut album 'The Blacksmith' is followed by an instrumental section played on the mandolin, uilleann pipes and bouzouki where he moves from compound time to duple time (Figure 30). Irvine's incorporation of scale passages can also be heard on all Planxty albums combined with accompanied mini solos on the pipes and bouzouki between the verses of songs, acting as the glue that binds the numerous features together. In the 'The Plains of Kildare' which he recorded with Paul Brady in 1975 he combines both unusual time signatures and scale passages as shown in Figure 31. This adds great rhythmic interest and variation to the melodic line.

Figure 30: The Blacksmith

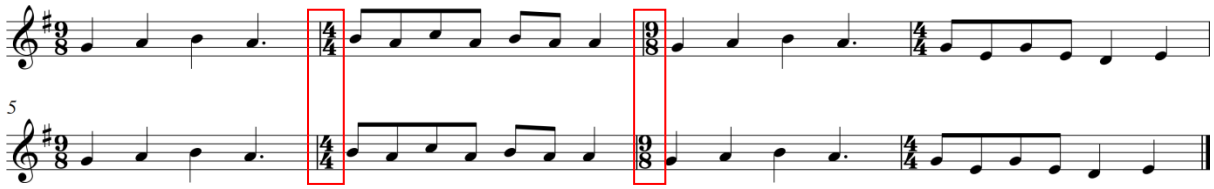
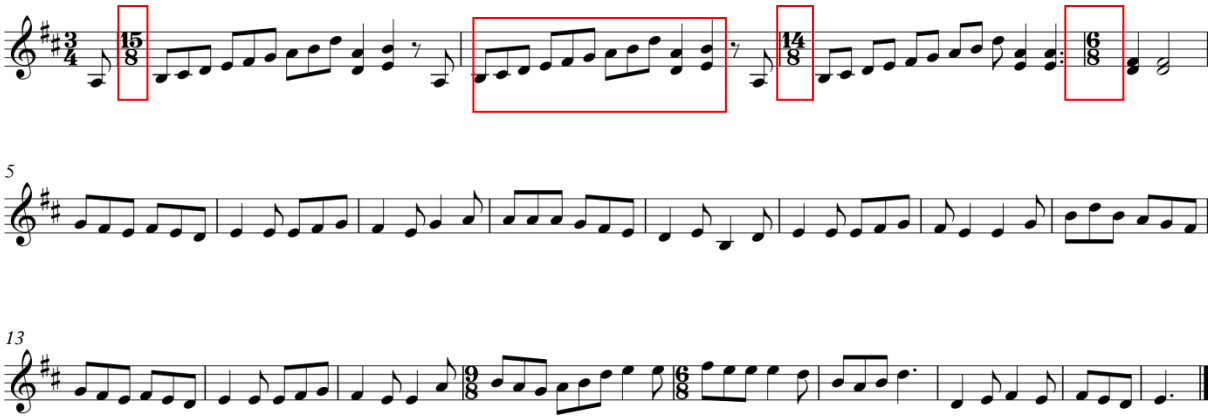


Figure 31: The Plains of Kildare



Andy Irvine is one of the most regarded and well-known musicians in the Irish folk scene for the past forty years. In Planxty he proved it was possible to popularise Irish music outside of its immediate environment without diluting it in any way. His approach to playing the mandolin was quite unique. By taking advantage of the mandolins ability to drone beneath melodies and to punch out melodic counterpoint or linear melodies which were subordinate to and supportive of the main melody, he created aural space that further accentuated the song or tune that was being played. Through his creative style of extending the harmonic possibilities of accompanying instruments in Irish traditional music he brought a new stylistic approach to Irish traditional music that had a big influence on a new generation of mandolin players such as Brian McDonagh.

Since his time with Planxty he has recorded with a wide array of musicians and also embarked on a solo career, releasing his first solo album *Rainy Sundays…Windy Dreams* in 1980. On this debut album Irvine, once again pushed the boat out in regards to instrumentation in Irish traditional music. Featured on the album is soprano sax, Fender Rhodes, bongo and congas together with guitar, fiddle, guitar, jaw harp, and accordion. In 1984 he gathered together musicians from around Europe and formed the group Mosaic, mixing Irish traditional music and Eastern European music. In 1985 he was a founding member of the group Patrick Street along with fiddle player Kevin Burke and button accordion player Jackie Daly. In recent times the mandolin has moved backwards in Irvine's recordings and live performances, preferring to play the octave mandolin with the capo on the fifth fret.

4.3 Mick Moloney

Mick Moloney was born in Co. Limerick in 1944. As a child there was little Irish traditional music played in his area, but he grew up in a musical environment, as his parents and brothers and sisters played the piano and sang at family gatherings. Moloney began playing guitar, learning not only how to play chords but also learning how to play the melodies of Irish traditional tunes. He later found that the picking style he had developed was eminently suited to the playing of traditional music and he decided to learn the banjo and mandolin, developing his own technique on each instrument (Stoner, 1978).

Similar to a lot of musicians at his age in the 1950s, Moloney's route into playing folk music came through listening to American musicians like Leadbelly, Big Bill Broonzy, Woody Guthrie and the most importantly the Irish group The Clancy Brothers as he remembers:

> We got excited by this, and then realised that all this stuff was around us at home and I went out and started learning when I was about fifteen or so, learning from other musicians around me at home that maybe, if I hadn't had those influences, I might have just ignored. But as it turned out, there was a living tradition beside me, and that's what really got me into it' (Winick & Hornberger 1989).

Another major influence on his musical journey was the *skiffle* movement pioneered by Lonnie Donegan in the UK. The *skiffle* movement with its origins in the US became a thriving music scene in England around 1954. Chambers notes, *skiffle* 'offered a major democratisation of music making for people. With little money and limited musical skill it became possible to be directly involved in popular music' (Chambers, 1986, p. 46). Spencer Leigh describes the sound of these bands, noting '[t]he flavouring was essentially three guitars, an acoustic bass […] and a washboard that was played with thimbles. Some people used banjos and mandolins instead of guitars' (2002, p. 57).

Moloney's first band was the Emmet Folk Group with Donal Lunny (who would later go on to form the group Planxty and The Bothy Band) and Brian Bolger and they regularly performed on the folk club circuit in Dublin in the early 1960s. When not in Dublin, Moloney spent a lot of time travelling in Co. Clare where he states 'a whole new world opened before his eyes' (Moloney 1978). It was here he met musicians who were highly regarded in the tradition and learned how to play Irish traditional dance music. Among those he met were flute player Paddy O'Donoghue and other members of the Tulla Céilí band, as well as accordionist Tony McMahon, future Chieftain Séan Keane, and banjo player Des Mulcair. He also received encouragement from Willie Clancy, the legendary piper from Milltown Malbay.

In 1967, Moloney's career developed further when he was asked to join The Johnstons, a ballad group consisting of Lucy, Adrienne and Michael Johnston from Slane in Co. Meath. When Michael Johnston left the group he was replaced by friend and mandolin/guitar player Paul Brady. Their self-titled album released in 1968 comprised of all traditional folk material arranged by Moloney and Brady on the mandolin, guitar and banjo. The Johnstons were one of the first groups to combine traditional material with contemporary songs. They received international success first in London and later in the US with folk repertoire arranged with accompanying strings such as the guitar and mandolin (Ní Fhuartháin, 2013, p. 546). The inclusion of a more contemporary repertoire from 1969, much of it written by Brady, fractured the group, and in its final incarnation it was a duo of Brady and Lucy Johnston. The duo disbanded in 1973. In his time with The Johnstons, even though used sparingly, the mandolin had an important role in their overall sound and featured on a number of their recordings such as 'The Lark in the Morning', 'The Lambs on the Green Hills', 'Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore', 'The Newry Highwayman', 'Sorry the Day I was Married', 'The Flower of Northumberland' and 'Fhir a' Bhata'. In the Scots Gaelic song 'Fhir a' Bhata' he uses tremolo throughout as shown in Figure 32.

Following a tour to North America with The Johnstons in 1972, Moloney emigrated to America in 1973. On his arrival he used his credentials as an Irish musician to involve himself with the thriving Irish traditional music scene there. He pursued an academic degree in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania and between his studies he began recording and producing albums with a number of Irish musicians in America. In 1977 he produced Terry Teahan and Gene Kelly's album *Old Time Music in America* and in 1978 he produced and played guitar and banjo on Martin Mulvihill's *Traditional Irish Fiddling from County Limerick* and in the same year recorded with Eugene O'Donnell on the album simply named *Eugene O'Donnell and Mick Moloney.* He also co-founded the Green Fields of America, a touring ensemble vital to the widespread appreciation of Irish traditional music in the US.

In 1980 Moloney recorded his first solo album *Strings Attached.* This album was a milestone in Irish traditional music, as it was the first album devoted to playing Irish traditional jigs, reels, hornpipes and set dances on the mandolin and banjo with guitar, bouzouki and piano accompaniment. Moloney drew inspiration from many of the Irish traditional musicians he played with in Dublin, Clare and London. On the sleeve notes Moloney also makes reference to musicians such as Mike Flanagan and draws attention to the fact that Barney McKenna and

Paddy Keenan's fathers were both mandolin players. In doing so, he is creating a historical narrative for the mandolin and banjo in Irish traditional music.

On *Strings Attached,* Moloney demonstrated the potential of the mandolin as a solo instrument in the performance of Irish traditional music. An examination of 'Arthur Darley's' jig', also known as 'The Swedish Jig' as shown in Figure 33 shows him using a number of different techniques such as chordal accompaniment and the playing of the open D string. This is a very unusual lively Irish dance tune as it changes to a slip jig rhythm of 9/8 in bar 8 and also moves to a minor key at the beginning of the B section. It is also unusual that it is a tri part ABC structure. The use of chords and open strings can also be heard on his arrangement of the Turlough O Carolan's reel 'Loftus Jones' (Figure 34). Moloney introduces the tune by playing the chords G and D followed by playing the open E string by pulling of his finger from the F sharp. In the second bar he strums the open strings G and D while letting the G note an octave above ring out. This is followed by playing the open string in bars 2, 3 and 5 establishing a short drone like effect, and the use of the double stop on the fourth beat of bars 3 and 4 creates a rhythmic hiatus which adds to overall musical interest of his interpretation.

In the B section he uses a combination of the triplet and treble ornament as shown in bars 2, 3 and 5 (Figure 35). On the repeat he plays a slight variation in bar 4 playing a descending and ascending triplet formation (Figure 36). These rhythmic and melodic variations add interest and individual style to his interpretation of O'Carolan's music. In the hornpipe 'Tom of the Hill' he also uses a number of different stylistic approaches. In particular his use of plucked triplets, open strings and chordal accompaniment in 2 and 3 note chords is notable (Figure 37). In the 'Gooseberry Bush' he also incorporates chordal accompaniment as shown in bars 2 and 3 of Figure 38 making use of the open G string by playing an second inversion of C major. In the repeat of 'Richard Brennan's' jig shown in Figure 40 he elaborates on the tune by playing 2 and 3 note chords as well as incorporating open A and D strings. All of these recordings demonstrate Moloney's ability to incorporate into his performances techniques unique to the mandolin, thus creating variation and sustaining musical interest.

Figure 32: Tremolo on the song Fhir A' Bhata

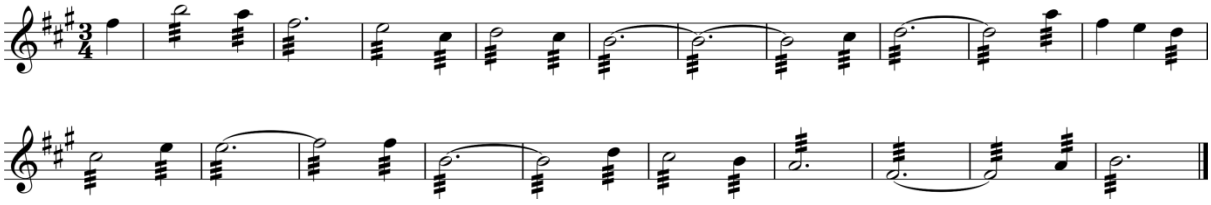


Figure 33: Arthur Darley's/Swedish Jig

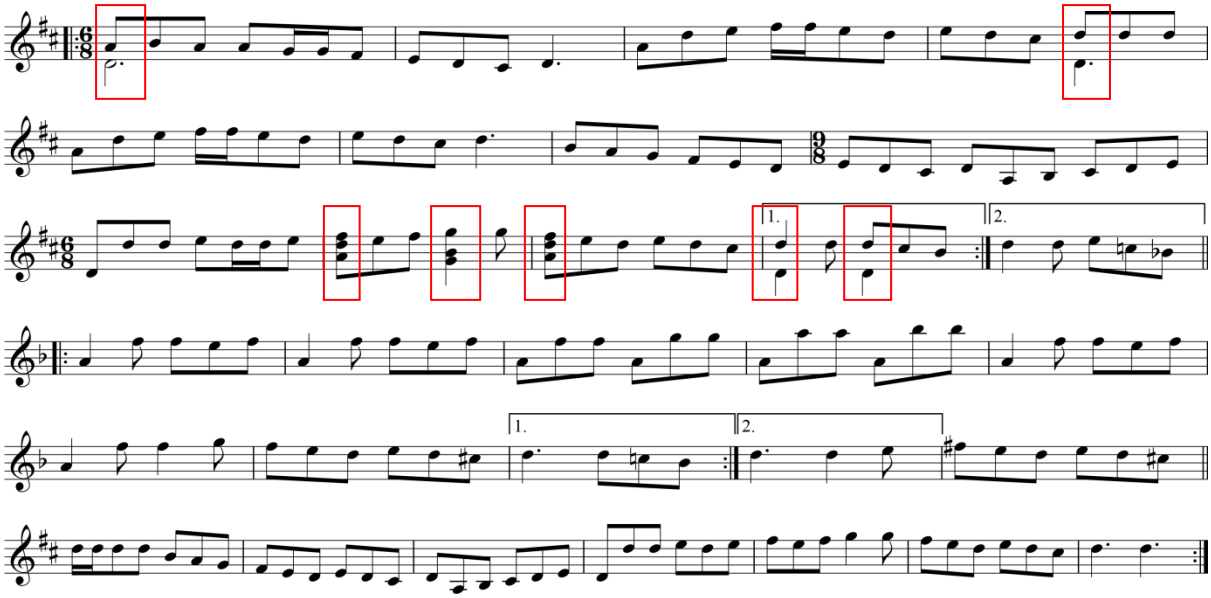


Figure 34: Loftus Jones

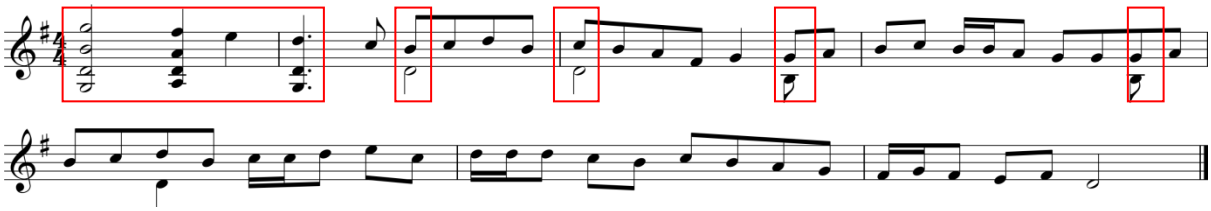


Figure 35: Loftus Jones triplets and trebles

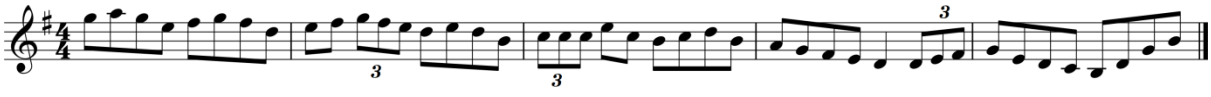


Figure 36: Loftus Jones variation

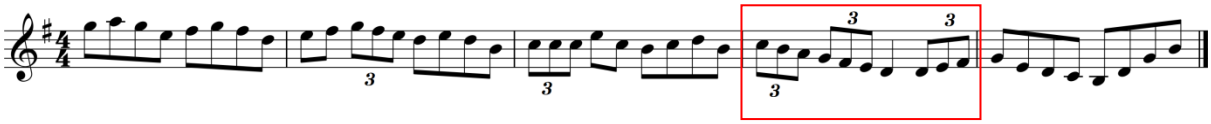


Figure 37: Tom of the Hill

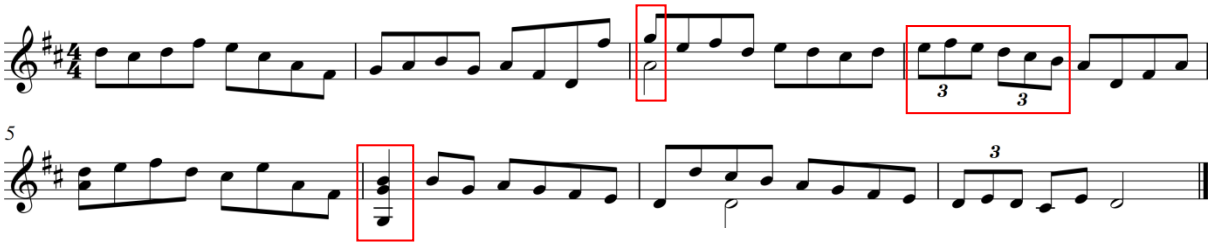


Figure 38: Gooseberry Bush

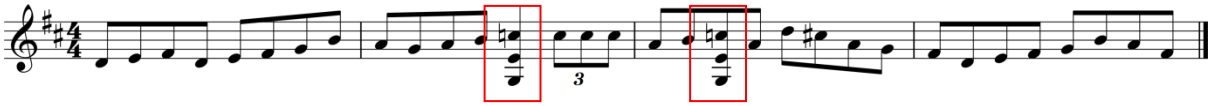


Figure 39: Richard Brennan's Jig

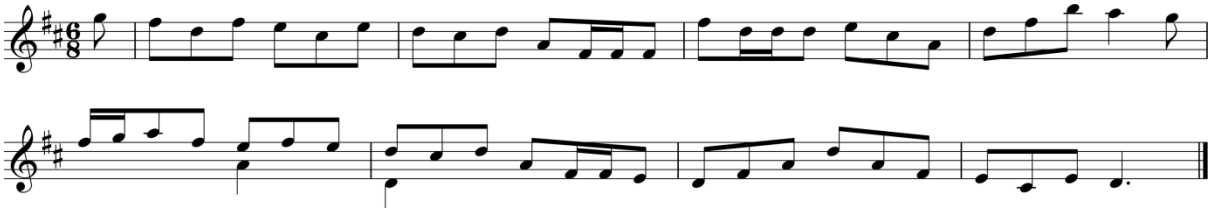
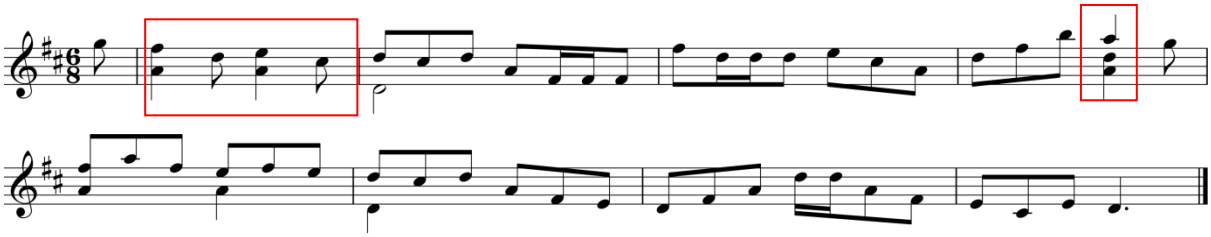


Figure 40: Richard Brennan's Jig repeat



As Moloney was one of the first to record an album dedicated to playing Irish traditional music on the mandolin and banjo, he is integrally important for this research. Although he began his musical career in a more commercial music world through bands such as the Emmet Folk Group and The Johnstons he developed roles as an academic, music producer and musician with a focus on Irish traditional music. In 1999 he was awarded the National Heritage Award from the National Endowment of Arts – one of the highest honours a traditional artist can receive in the US. In 2014 he received the Gradam Ceoil award for his outstanding contribution to Irish music. It was in the US he became relevant for a less commercial but undoubtedly institutionalised world of Irish music, especially within academia and the Comhaltas branches across the US.

Through his performances, lectures and recordings, Mick Moloney has brought attention to the mandolin as an instrument in Irish traditional music. On the liner notes of *Strings*

Attached Moloney he states: ‘certain tunes are more suitable for mandolin than banjo because of a greater potential for putting in chords and letting notes drone on’ (Bretholz, 1980). His *Strings Attached* album influenced prominent banjo players/teachers/adjudicators on the scene today such as Marcus Moloney, Brian Fitzgerald, Seamus Egan and others, becoming a point of reference similar to that of Tommy Peoples to fiddle players or Matt Molloy to flute players. He is one of the leading authorities on Irish music in the USA. He assembled the Irish-American contingent for the Smithsonian Institution’s Bicentennial Centre over a period of 25 years. Moloney has acted as producer and consultant for numerous musical and cultural projects on both sides of the Atlantic, and he has performed and recorded extensively. As a singer he has recorded Irish and more recently Irish-American popular songs; he is also a highly regarded and influential banjo player and has appeared as guitar accompanist on dozens of recordings

4.4 Dave Richardson

Dave Richardson was born in 1948 in Northumbria, the border county between England and Scotland. He grew up in Wallsend-on-Tyne and by the time he reached his mid-teens he became aware of the rich musical heritage of the area. This included the local Northumbrian and Tyneside music and also the music of people from Ireland and Shetland who had moved into industrial Tyneside to work. One of his first memories of music was through the playing of his father, who had a small repertoire on an old wood-ended twenty button Lachenal Anglo that had belonged to his father. This would be the catalyst to his future musical endeavours as he remembers:

> I recall being very curious about how much sounds came from the instrument and that when given the chance to try it myself I could make nothing at all of it (naturally enough). But something had me hooked **(**Dave Richardson, personal correspondence, June 2014**)**

Richardson’s father was a member of the local choir at the soap factory where he was employed and as soon as he was old enough he joined. This experience was to prove to be a very important for his oral musical skills:

> Although I hated every aspect [sic.] of church and got out as soon as I was large enough to assert myself I did enjoy the singing and in a rudimentary way learned to follow a tune along a musical staff and more importantly how to learn something by ear…I was not learning the tunes from scores at all (ibid).

While at school, influenced by popular culture on the radio and television, like many of his age, the guitar was the choice instrument. Richardson at this time was also playing the mouth

organ and began imitating a number of blues musicians and Bob Dylan. His first encounter of instrumental traditional music was in 1963 when he first visited the folk club at the Bridge Hotel in Newcastle. He encountered a number of musicians from Ireland, Shetland and Northumbria such as Colin Ross, Ivor Smith, John Doonan, Billy Pigg and Andy O'Boyle who are considered today 'source' musicians. He, also like many who became interested in folk music began looking through tune books:

> I started out learning tunes on a tin whistle, mostly by ear. I taught myself the notes of the staff so I could try and learn tunes from the first Northumbrian Pipers' Tune Book (1934?) which was in my local library. Once I realised the extent of the Irish and Scottish repertoire…thousands of tunes, lots of variety I was drawn to that and somewhat away from my Northumbrian tunes… I ended up playing tunes from all of these sources **(**Dave Richardson, personal correspondence, June 2014**)**

Richardson was also very aware of the mandolin players in Bluegrass music like David Grisman, Mike Marshall and Bill Monroe but it was not the style of music he wanted to emulate. His first encounter with a mandolin was in 1964 through the father of a school friend and later he borrowed one from his girlfriend. In 1968 he bought his first mandolin, a Swedish model made by respected guitar makers *Levin.* There were no mandolin players at the time to emulate so for the most part he sat down and figured it out himself by ear, while also picking up tunes from other players on other instruments. He remembers in the early sixties seeing Barney McKenna and John Sheehan playing in duet on the slow air 'Roisín Dubh' reinforcing the importance of the Dubliners as an influence of the development of the mandolin in this context.

In 1973 Richardson was asked to join Boys of the Lough and with him brought a wide array of instruments:

> When I joined Boys of the Lough in March 1973 all I brought to the party in a way of instruments was a long-necked octave mandolin of my own design, made by Gerald Short of Chesterfield, a 1930 Vega "Little Wonder" plectrum a.k.a. tenor banjo and my old (1855) wooden-ended Wheatstone 48 button English concertina. In the summer of 1973 I was able to buy a beautiful old Vega "cylinder back" mandolin […] I began using it immediately and it can be heard on Boys of the Lough: Second Album **(**Dave Richardson, personal correspondence, June 2014**)**

The music of Boys of the Lough ranged widely through the instrumental (flute, fiddle and pipes) and vocal traditions of Ireland, Scotland, Shetland and North America. They were one of the first groups of Anglo-Irish musicians to achieve acclaim during the folk boom of the early seventies. Richardson's contribution to the band through the playing of mandolin, cittern, English concertina and the button accordion provided a strong platform for the

soloists and made a significant contribution to the overall characteristic sound of the group. On *Second Album,* released in 1974, Richardson uses a number of techniques such as double stopping, droning of notes and open tunings**.** The third album 'Live at Passim' recorded in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 17, 18 and 19 November 1974 is testament to the virtuosity of each of the musicians in the group. A review of the album in the Folk Review magazine stated at the time:

> I can only say of a rock band like Yes or ELP conceived and executed anything like it, the musical press would be dripping with cries of 'Genius' and 'Masterpiece' and it would sell a million. Its time some radio or TV producer had a sudden rush of blood to the head and put on a series of programs by the Boys of the Lough (Folk Review 10 August 1975, p. 22)

The album *Lochaber No More* released in 1976 features the mandolin on two of the Shetland reels 'Kataroni' and 'Da Back Reel'. The mandolin playing the melody enters on the repeat of 'Kataroni', swapping with fiddle and is repeated again on the B section of 'Da Back reel'. On the tune 'Tame her when the snaw falls' the mandolin begins the tune playing the melody, and uses a small amount of double stopping, swapping with concertina, flute, bodhrán and bones in a call and answer style on the repeat. On 'Jackie Donnan's Mazurka' and 'Bonnie Charlie March' the mandolin and concertina play in duet. Their 1977 album *Good Friends Good Music* recorded at Eamon Andrew's studio in Dublin uses the mandolin on five of the tracks. The opening tunes 'Breton Wedding March' arranged by Tony McMahon and Barney McKenna features McKenna on the banjo. Richardson uses many different techniques, strumming chords, letting notes ring, double stopping and at points playing counter melodies.

On the album *Regrouped* released in 1980 the mandolin is used on six of the tunes. This album also sees the introduction of Len Graham (vocals, bodhrán), Martin O'Connor (2 row button accordion) and Tich Richardson (guitar) into the ensemble. This album features a set of tunes 'The Bamboo Flute/Albert Hose/Annalese Bain', the second being one of Richardson's own compositions. 'Albert House' is introduced with the mandolin accompanied by his brother Tich on the guitar providing chordal accompaniment (Figure 41). The guitar accompaniment is very different from other albums with Tich Richardson, brother of Dave, accentuating the root of the chord on the first and third beat of each bar. In this tune he utilizes the triplet and treble ornaments with a prominent variation in the final four bars (Figure 42).

The polka 'I'll Buy Boots for Maggie' is introduced on the fiddle with the mandolin entering on the repeat. On this track, Richardson plays the open A string throughout which provides a

drone like effect under the main melody while the tied crotchet and minum creates a sense of syncopation (Figure 43). Other tunes on the album that feature the mandolin are 'The Humours of Ballinahinch' and 'The Floggin' and on the polka and 'O' Connor's'. In 'The Humours of Ballinahinch' Richardson once again plays a drone note by playing the open D string (Figure 44). The album *In the Tradition* released in 1981 features the mandolin on the tunes 'The Eclipse' (Figure 45), 'Kiss her under the Coverlet' (Figure 46) and 'The Lads of Alnwick', a well known Northumbrian pipe tune. In this set the mandolin is accompanied by the guitar and acoustic bass, playing quick melodic runs throughout.

In the Eclipse hornpipe he uses the triplet ornament and deviates from standard notational practice in his use of accidentals to colour the melody. The speed and agility of both his left and right hand technique, particularly on the second tune is very difficult to copy. In the first tune 'Kiss her under the Coverlet' Richardson tunes the bottom two pairs of strings up a tone to get A E A E going from bass to treble across the whole instrument. By doing so he increases the resonance and sustaining power of the instrument.

On the album *Open Road* released in 1983 the mandolin take a more prominent role, featuring on Richardson's own composition 'Calliope House' and 'Big Jerry Mc Aloons', 'The Spey in Spate' and the jig 'Petticoat Loose'. 'Calliope House' is now among the recorded works of many well-known bands (Figure 47). It has been recorded by The Waterboys, Patrick Street and Two Men and a Dog and was performed in the stage show of *Lord of the Dance*, and on the HBO television series *Sex in the City*.

Figure 41: Albert House Jig

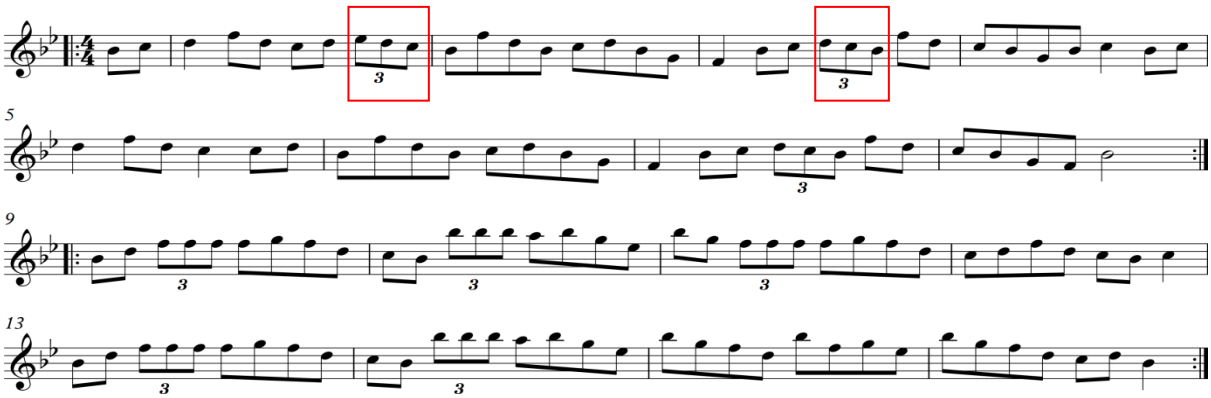


Figure 42: Variation of Albert House Jig

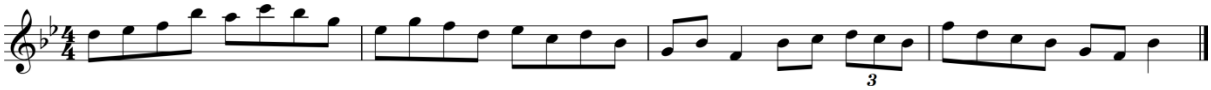


Figure 43: I'll Buy Boots for Maggie

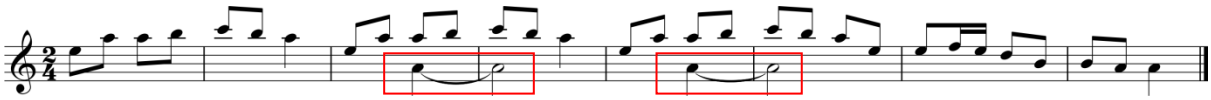


Figure 44: The Humours of Baliinahinch

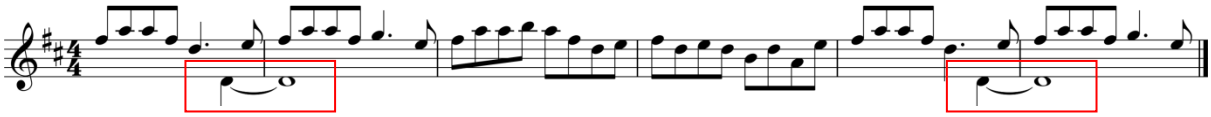


Figure 45: The Eclipse Hornpipe Introduction

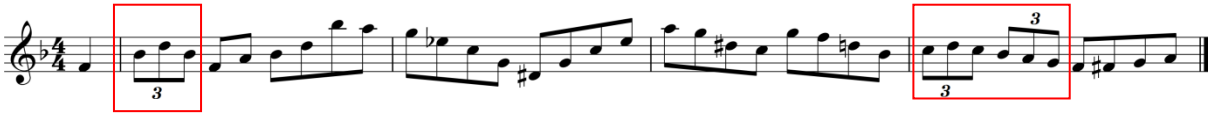


Figure 46: Kiss her under the Coverlet

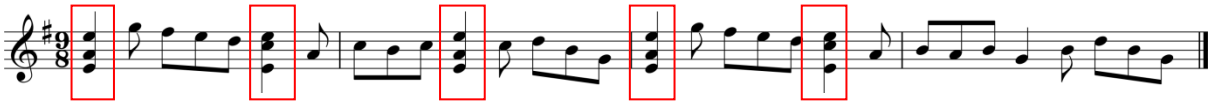
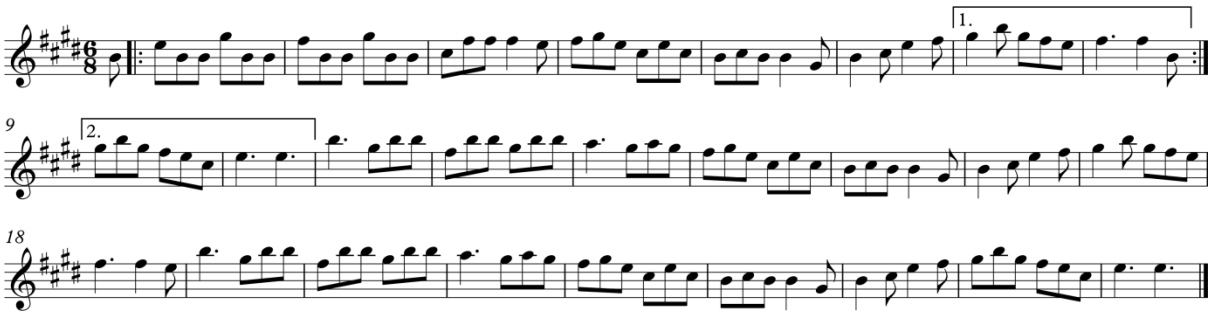


Figure 47: Calliope House



The story of Boys of the Lough spans over forty years and to date little has been written on the bands accomplishments in the traditional music scene both in Ireland and in England. Since joining the group in 1973 Richardson has been a driving force not only as a mandolin player but also as an accomplished musician on the concertina, banjo, cittern and button accordion. As a multi-instrumentalist Richardson played a crucial role in the overall dynamic of the group. In Boys of the Lough the mandolin played a very important role in their overall sound and was used to great effect in a variety of ways. This is most evident on their earlier recordings where the mandolin is more prominent in their overall sound, often used as a solo instrument, in the introduction and transitions of tunes, weaving in and out at strategic points in the set or playing in duet with the fiddle and flute. Through doing this Richardson showed the capabilities of the mandolin in a more 'traditional' environment and in doing so enhanced the reputation of the mandolin as an instrument to be taken seriously. His accomplishments as a mandolin player gets a special mention in a review of their album *Live at Passim* in the book '1,000 Recordings to Hear before You Die'. The description of the album makes special reference to Richardson stating:

> In performance, the Boys of the Lough display the kind of steady-handed agility often associated with jazz musicians – their straightforward songs are enlivened by conversational asides (many from mandolin virtuoso Dave Richardson) and moments of almost giddy, unexpected joy (Moon, 2008, p. 110).

The association of a traditional band with jazz music may not turn as many heads in 2008 as it would have in 1975 but it is a true representation of the virtuosity of each of the musicians involved in Boys of the Lough. The groups arrangements of dance music, along with the range of tone colours, supplied by a wide array of acoustic instruments was very popular particularly in the US where they spent a lot of their time. In the forty years they have been together they have travelled the world on a number of occasions and in 1992 they played at

Carnegie Hall with Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys. Dave Richardson who retired from Boys of the Lough in December 2011 was a leading figure in the group for almost forty years. His position in the band went far beyond the role of musician. He also composed a number of new tunes for the group on the mandolin, some of which have been taken up with enthusiasm by other musicians and groups around the world.

> I enjoy the mandolin as a vehicle for composing tunes. It is enjoyable to work around the fingerboard a little, just checking out any alternative fingering or putting tunes into different keys to see how they sound and how they fall to the fingers in the new key. I am having a conversation with the instrument, not a shouting match **(**Dave Richardson, personal correspondence, June 2014**)**

He also worked tirelessly in the background running the group, organising their tours and recording schedules. As a mandolin player he has been a major influence on Scottish mandolin player Dagger Gordon who recorded two albums *The Highland Mandolin* in 1988 and *The Frozen River* in 2001. He has also influenced American mandolin player Paul Kotapish who has recorded three albums with Irish fiddle player Kevin Burke in the group *Open House*.

4.5 Paul Kelly

Paul Kelly was born in Tallaght Village, Dublin in 1957. One of his first memories of music came through his older siblings who were listening to records of The Dubliners. At the age of six he started playing the guitar, preferring to play the melody of songs other than chords. One of the first tunes he learned to play was 'Never on Sunday' by The Ventures and 'Theme for Young Lovers' by The Shadows. His first experience of traditional music came from listening to The Dubliners LP records owned by his older siblings, which he listened to on a regular basis. By the time he was twelve he was not playing as much music, but a visit from his neighbour Des Carthy in 1969 would spark his interest in Irish traditional music. After hearing that Paul and his brother had a banjo and guitar in the house Carthy invited them to join him each week to an informal session in St Mary's School on The Greenhills Road that he had set up. At this point Kelly was mostly playing tenor banjo and mandolin. After his brother stopped going to the Greenhills sessions, Kelly kept attending. Des was a great influence on the young musician instilling discipline in him and the ability to learn tunes properly.

> Des took me to sessions, I would go down every Tuesday and first of all he would give me half a tune and I'd play it and learn it and then the second week… he would give me the

> second half. Then half a tune was not enough for me I wanted one tune and then two tunes… During my teenage years I was insatiable for tunes, I learned hundreds of tunes (Paul Kelly Interview, July 2014)

There was not a lot of Irish traditional music in the Tallaght area at this time so they would have to travel further a-field. Carthy would regularly take himself, Tom Moran, Frank O'Riordan and Liam Kennedy to villages around the Wicklow area:

> A lot of the music I played as a youngster was played out away from Dublin, not in Dublin. We used to go out to Blessington, we went out to all the little villages around the lake like Lacken, Donard and Hollywood in particular was very popular, we used to go to Hollywood all the time (Paul Kelly Interview, July 2014)

By the time he was eighteen his friend and neighbour Frank O'Riordan had access to a car and they would regularly travel to Doolin, Co. Clare. It was here Kelly cut his teeth as a traditional banjo and mandolin player. While there they were told about a fiddle player who lived in Ennistymon by the name of Gerry Egan. They decided to pay a visit and after that they gravitated towards Ennistymon. It was here he came across players such as Noel Hill, Tony Linnane, The Russell Brothers and Kieran and Mike Hanrahan. He states:

> I used to go down every opportunity and I was known in Doolin. I never went to live down there as a lot did around that time, but my experiences in Clare… my good fortune to be able to play with these great musicians brought me up a couple of notches as a musician (Paul Kelly Interview, July 2014)

Kelly was a regular visitor to the Fleadhs taking place across the country. In 1975 he was presented with the Slógadh[3] award in the Rogha Ghleas category playing the banjo. He was also playing regularly with fiddle and concertina player John Kelly and fiddle player Joe Ryan in O'Donoghue's on Baggot Street in Dublin After leaving school he took a job at Walton's Music on North Frederick Street, working in the stock room. Walton's was a popular music shop in Dublin that stocked a wide range of instruments as well as sheet music and other resources. His experience of woodwork at school went towards him being taken under the wing of Joe Croft who was the main instrument repairer at the time for Walton's. By the time Kelly was twenty three he started his own business repairing and tuning piano accordions setting up shop on Capel Street in Dublin.

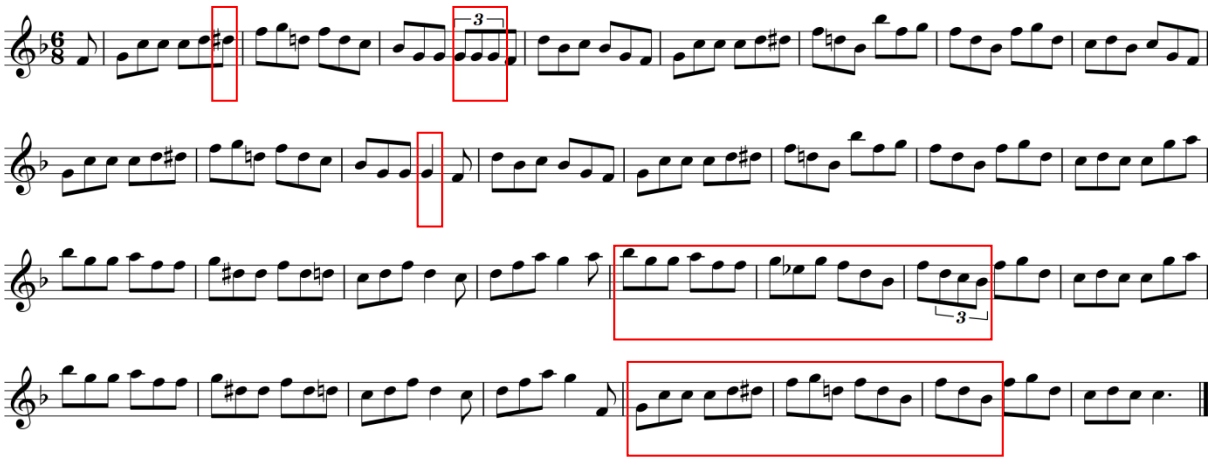
During the 1980s Kelly's musical direction and output changed quite considerably. He spent four years playing fiddle with the Sackville String Band, a five piece Bluegrass outfit who

[3] Slógadh was a performance/competition based 'youth arts festival' series run through the medium of the Irish language. Begun by Gael Linn in 1969, it covered traditional music song, solo instruments and ensembles and set dancing (Vallely, 2010, p. 621)

were one of a few Irish groups at the time bringing American Bluegrass music to a wider audience. They played regularly in Slattery's of Capel Street and concerts and festivals across the country. In the latter part of the eighties he was still playing regularly at sessions across Dublin and in 1986 he was approached by Mick Hanly and asked if he wanted to start a country band. In early 1987 while playing in the Lincoln Inn at the back of Trinity College he gave Joe Foley a book on how to construct a Bluegrass mandolin and by October Foley had constructed a left-handed mandolin for him. He then later joined the very popular band The Fleadh Cowboys playing fiddle and mandolin. They had a regular spot in The Olympia Theatre in Dublin and were the forerunners of the *Midnight at the Olympia* gigs during the late eighties.

In 1992 after he had established himself as a studio session musician he returned to his roots as a member of The Sharon Shannon Band replacing Máire Breatnach, playing fiddle and mandolin and touring the US, Europe and the UK. In 1997, Kelly founded his own record company named Malgamú Music. Trying to tap in to the new eclecticism in Irish traditional music, he encouraged artists to experiment with other musical styles, although it was always important to him to keep Irish music at the core. Over the next five years he recorded, produced and appeared on albums with Seán Whelan (1998), Lia Luachra (1998, 2000), Kevin O'Connor (1999) and De Jimbé (2001). In 1998 he released his debut solo album on the Malgamú Music label called *A Mandolin Album.* Many of tunes from the album were composed and arranged by Kelly himself including 'The Golden Peg', 'The Emigrants Sheds, 'The Orange Peel reel' 'The Dresden Reel' and 'The Bike in the tree'. He also plays tunes from Sweden, Greece, South America and a piece by nineteenth century composer Claude Debussy, demonstrating a wide range of sources and influences on his music.

Figure 48: The Golden Peg Jig Full



On the first track on the album 'The Golden Peg' (Figure 48) the mandolin starts the tune with Kelly who is left handed playing in a muted fashion. What is most notable in this original composition is not only the unusual key signature of F major but also Kelly's use of chromatism. On the repeat, in bar 11, instead of playing the triplet ornament on G, he plays a crotchet. In the B section he uses a number of melodic variations as shown in bars 21 through to 23 and 29 through to 31 as well as rhythmic variation where he plays a triplet on the notes D, C and B but on the repeat he plays 2 semi-quavers on the notes D and B (Figure 48). On the second tune in this set 'Amanda Lynn's' jig he plays a number of subtle rhythmic and melodic variations as seen in bars 1 and 5 in Figure 50 and bar 3 in Figure 51 where he plays a triplet ornament on the notes F, E and D. In the set 'The Minor Reels' the first tune in the set 'Lads of Laois' as can be seen in Figure 52, the first time it is played it begins on the note D sharp but on the repeat as shown in Figure 53 he plays D natural. There are also a number of melodic and harmonic variations used in bars 1, 2, 5 and 6. In the second bar in Figure 53 rather than playing a treble on the note A, Kelly plays a triplet on the notes A, B and C but returns to the A triplet in bar six again. In 'Mc Glinchey's' reel Kelly uses a number of subtle melodic and rhythmical variations. Figure 54 shows the first time the tune is played. In bar 3 of Figure 55 instead of playing notes C and D he plays D and B and again in bar 4 instead of playing F and G the notes G and D is played. In bar 2 of Figure 56, he plays a crotchet on the G note instead of two semi-quavers on the notes G and A and in bar 5 two semi-quavers on the note C sharp and a quaver on D and in the third bar in Figure 57 he plays a treble ornament in third bar. These examples are indicative of Kelly's eclectic approach to the instrument and demonstrate his exploration of the technical possibilities inherent in mandolin playing.

Figure 49: Amanda Lynn's Jig

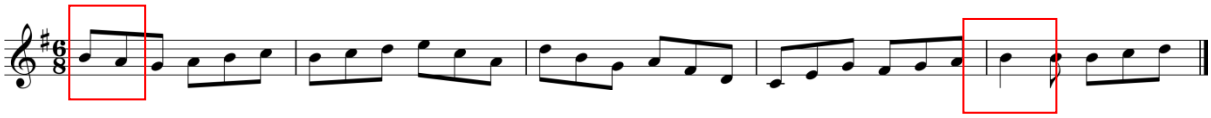


Figure 50: Amanda Lynn's Jig Melodic and Rhythmic Variation

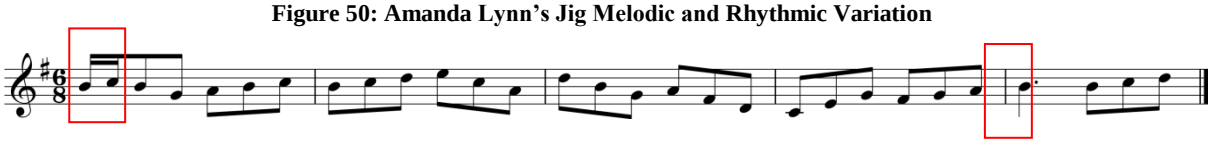


Figure 51: Amanda Lynn's Melodic and Rhythmic Variation

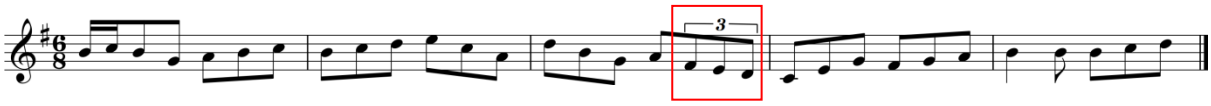


Figure 52: The Lads of Laois played first time

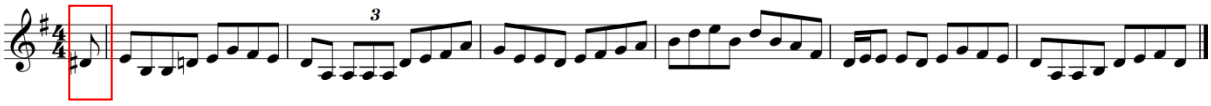


Figure 53: The Lads of Laois repeat

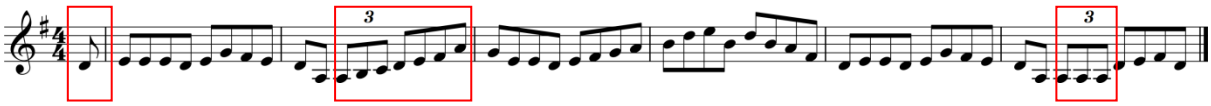


Figure 54: Mc Glinchey's First Time

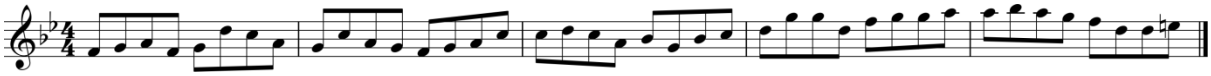


Figure 55: Mc Glinchey's melodic variation

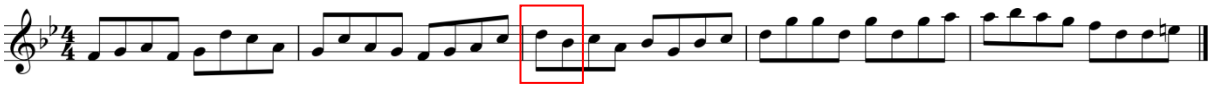


Figure 56: Mc Glinchey's Melodic and Rhythmic Variations

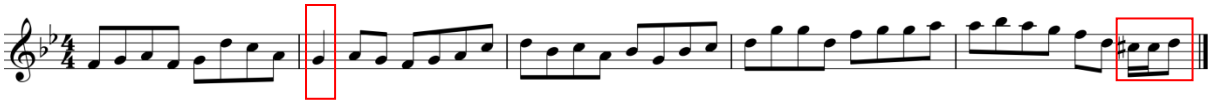
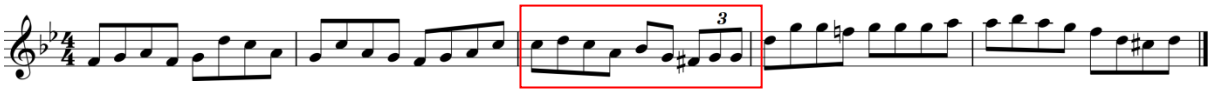


Figure 57: Mc Glinchey's Melodic and Rhythmic Variations



Since the release of his solo album in 1998 Kelly has played with a number of different groups. In this time he has recorded with The Wolfe Tones, Lia Luachra, The David Munnelly Band, Frankie Lane, Jerry Fish and the Mudbug Club and is currently playing and recording with ex De Dannan singer Eleanor Shanley. In 2014 he embarked on tour of Europe with The Dublin Legends, a band led by The Dubliners fiddler player John Sheehan, modelled on the Dubliners with Kelly filling the role of Barney McKenna. He has also been a regular visitor to Hollywood in Co. Wicklow where he played as a child for the 'Music under

the Mountains' Irish traditional music festival established in 1991 where he teaches workshops on the mandolin and fiddle.

In 2002 he began teaching in Ballyfermot College of Further Education teaching Irish traditional and World music. In 2007, he published a book called *110 mandolin tunes.* All the tunes in this collection were drawn from Paul's own repertoire and nicely reflect his innate sense of musical adventure and his in-depth knowledge of the techniques and structures most appropriate to mandolin playing in Irish traditional music. Most of the tunes are part of standard traditional repertoire, but the settings are very specifically mandolin versions and not just transcriptions of standard versions. In 2010 and 2011 on the back of his solo mandolin album he was invited to travel to Savona, Italy by Carlo Aonzo to discuss the development of the mandolin in Ireland and teach tunes composed by Turlough O Carolan.

Paul Kelly's musical journey has taken him through a wide array of musical instruments and genres of music for over forty years. From his first experiences as a child playing in Dublin and Wicklow, and later as a teenager in Clare, to his success with bands such as The Fleadh Cowboys, the mandolin was always an instrument close to his heart. While many mandolin players during this time levitated towards other instruments such as the banjo, mandola and octave mandolin Kelly levitated back towards the mandolin composing new tunes and promoting it in a number of different ways. His promotion of the instrument through recordings, publications and teaching of the mandolin both at home and abroad, has created a 'role' for the mandolin in Irish traditional music in the twenty first century. His book of Irish traditional tunes on the mandolin has been sold all over the world and some of his own compositions have been assimilated into the broader tradition. In the future he intends to record another mandolin album dedicated to Irish traditional music.

4.6 Brian McDonagh

Brian McDonagh was born in 1959 in Walkinstown, Co. Dublin. Growing up there was a piano in his house which he never got around to learning, but after his older sister was bought a guitar he began playing a few chords. He found the guitar difficult to play as the fret board was too big for his small hands. Even so, he was able to play a few songs by artists such as Leonard Cohen, Donovan, The Beatles, Paul Simon and Cat Stevens. While at secondary school in Drimnagh Castle he saw a banjo-mandolin and a mandolin hanging in the local grocery shop and noticing how small the neck was he knew exactly what instrument he

wanted to play. The following Christmas, his mother and father took him into Walton's in Dublin to buy him a mandolin. The mandolin was the first instrument McDonagh could play proficiently. He began by listening to LP records, slowing them down and learning tunes orally. His first experience with playing Irish traditional music came through listening to Christy Moore's album *Prosperous* released in 1972 and Horslips *Happy to Meet – Sorry to Part* also released in the same year. He remembers

> The first night I had it I was playing Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore by Horslips…I learned all that album…the hardest being The Musical Priest (Brian McDonagh Interview, August 2014)

In the late seventies, once he was old enough he began attending the Sunday morning sessions in Slattery's of Capel Street and the afternoon sessions in The Baggot Inn. He recalls the scene in Dublin at this point:

> At that time in Dublin was alive with this music, there was a real scene you know, everyone was enthusiastic about the music, trying different instruments, different tunings, talking to each other about it. It would remind you of Paris during the impressionist era with painters all going around, these were except musicians who were all trying to find instruments (Brian McDonagh Interview, August 2014)

He would also frequent the Pipers Club on Thomas Street and the Wrens Nest in the Strawberry Beds. It was at the Wrens Nest where he met with like-minded musicians and they would play through the first Planxty album, from start to finish. This would have a major effect on his style of playing the mandolin:

> It would have to be Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny. I would have seen my style as a bit from either of them. Andy is very precise with his plectrum and when you listen to them recordings the sound he is getting from the instrument is extraordinary… we used to always wonder how the hell did they get such a great sound and it really comes down to him getting a great sound from the instrument himself (Brian McDonagh Interview, August, 2013).

He also became interested in English folk bands such as Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention. It was at this point he became acquainted with a number of folk musicians who were playing around Dublin. While playing music in The Suffolk House on Suffolk Street himself and his brother Tom were asked to join the group Oisín. The band consisted of Geraldine MacGowan (vocals and bodhrán), Shay MacGowan (guitar), Mick Davis (fiddle), Tom McDonagh (bouzouki) and Brian McDonagh (mandolin). They began playing in many of the main folk venues across Dublin such as the Purty Kitchen, Slattery's, The Old Crescent and the Meeting Place before releasing their debut album in 1976. Their eponymous album Oisín recorded in one week was produced by Paul Brady and on release was nominated as

album of the week on RTÉ radio. The mandolin features on eight of the tracks from the album and is heavily influenced by Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny. Similar to Planxty, Oisín played a mixture of songs and tunes. The first set of tunes on the album beginning with 'Doherty's Jig' is played on the mandolin and bouzouki, with the mandolin playing the melody accompanied by the bouzouki playing both the melody as well as chordal accompaniment. On the first song of the album 'Geordie' McDonagh plays in tremolo style as shown in Figure 58. The song 'The Peeler and the Goat' is introduced by the mandolin followed by the bouzouki playing both rhythm and harmony primarily in thirds, fifths, sixths and octaves in the voices (Figure 59). The rhythmical interplay is straightforward with the only striking aspect being divisions of a crotchet and a quaver in conjunction with three quavers.

Their second album *Bealoideas* also produced by Paul Brady released in 1978 saw them tour Europe together with Clannad and was popular in Germany, Holland, France and Italy. The mandolin features on seven of the ten tracks on the album. On the 'The Gold Ring' the mandolin and bouzouki play in duet for the entirety of the tune with McDonagh using a number of techniques such as playing chords, playing of open strings and rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. Figure 60 shows an example of some of the rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment with the bouzouki playing on the main melody while the mandolin moves in contrary motion. The harmony is tonal with harmonies primarily based on thirds, fifths and octaves in the voices. Their third album *Over the Moor to Maggie* also released in 1980 was produced by the traditional fiddle player Paddy Glackin. On the 'Star of Munster' jig the fiddle and bouzouki play in duet for one round of the tune followed by the mandolin playing the melody on the repeat utilising the plucked triplet in the shape of 2 semiquavers and a quaver (Figure 61). The 'Orphan Jig' begins with the fiddle and mandolin playing in duet playing a full round of the tune before the introduction of the guitar. In the B section of the tune while the fiddle holds the tune, the mandolin introduces a number of variations, moving in thirds, fifths, sixths and showing a combination of both parallel and contrary motion as shown in Figure 62.

Figure 58: Tremolo on the Song Geordie

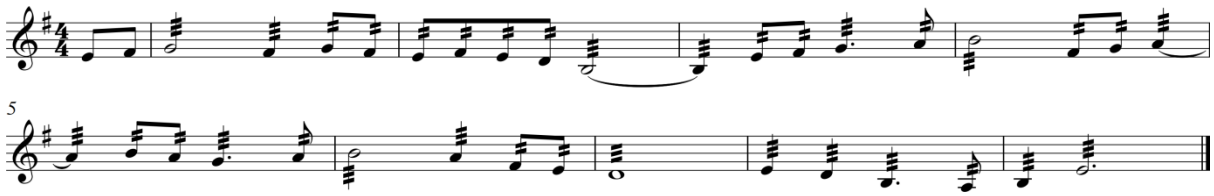


Figure 59: The Peeler and the Goat Introduction

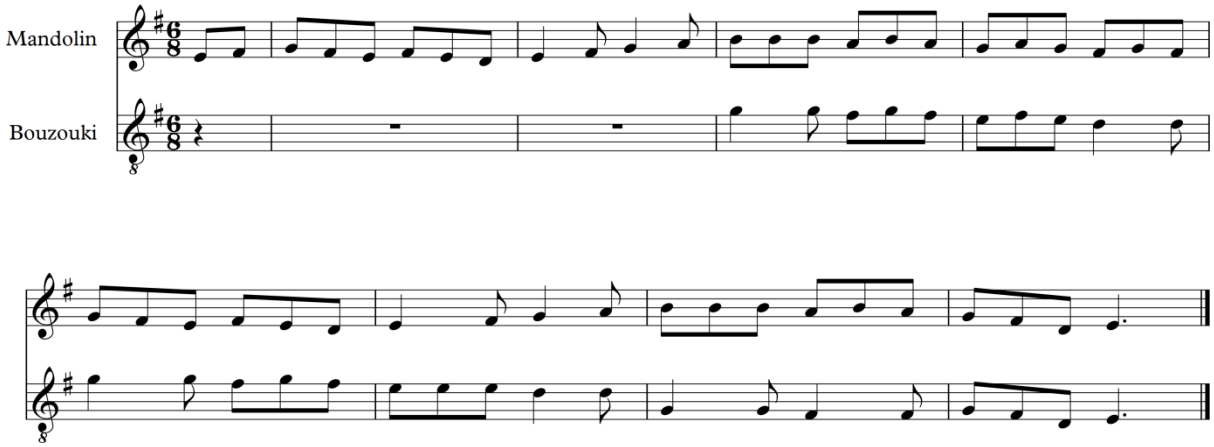


Figure 60: The Gold Ring mandolin and bouzouki

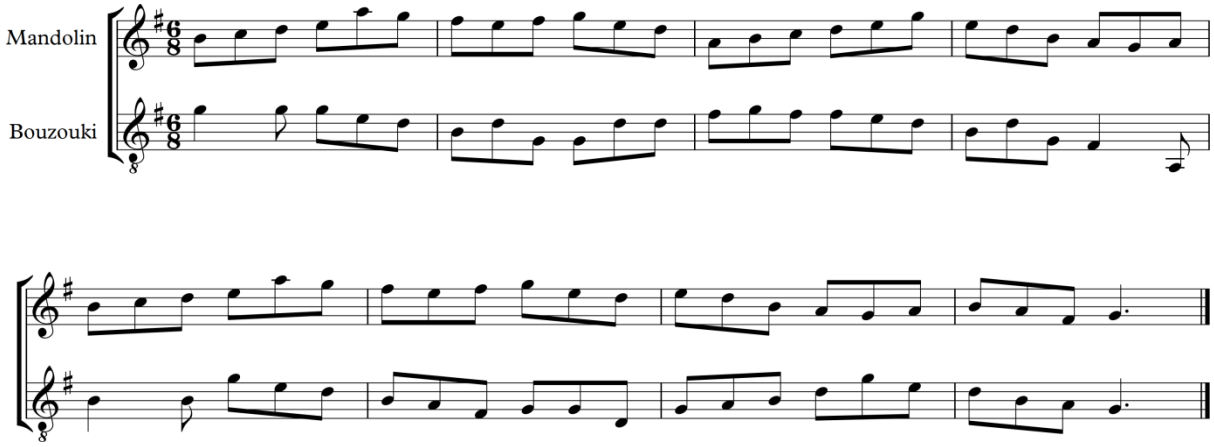


Figure 61: The Star of Munster Reel with triplets

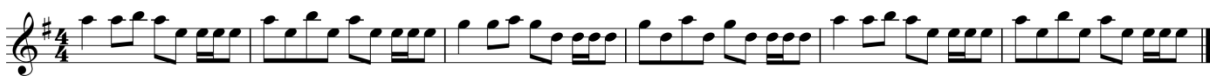
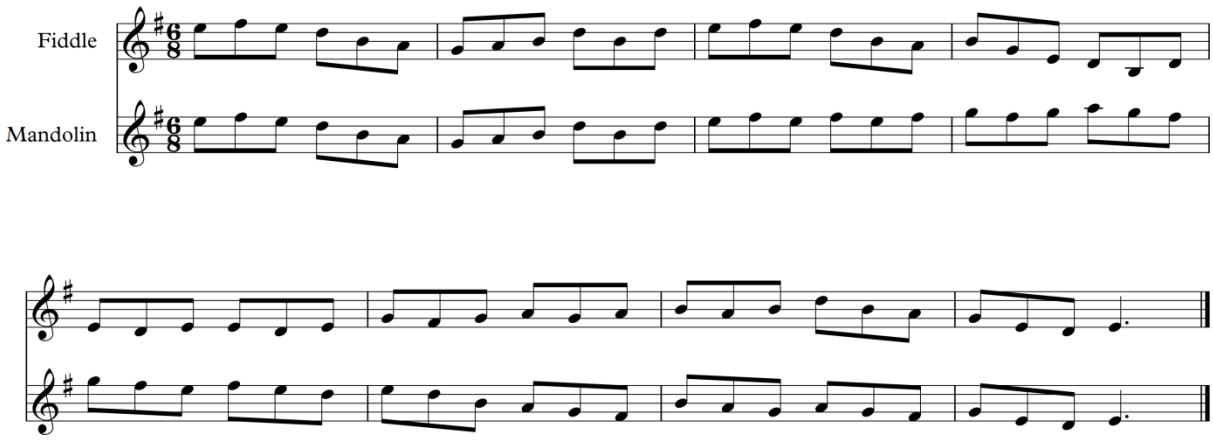


Figure 62: The Orphan Jig mandolin and fiddle interplay



As all the musical examples have indicated McDonagh prefers a simplified approach to rhythmic accompaniment. There is nothing particularly innovative in Mc Donagh's mandolin playing but the influence that Planxty had on the group is very evident. By the time Oisín released their fourth album *The Jeanie C* in 1982 McDonagh had left the band. After leaving Oisín, he took a break from playing music professionally and decided to study art.

In 1990 he moved to Sligo and became acquainted with a number of excellent musicians, one of whom was approached by a local entrepreneur to record an album of music from Sligo. The assembled group comprised Shane Mitchell on the accordion, Liam Kelly on the flute, Michael Holmes on the bouzouki, Brian McDonagh on the mandola and mandolin and fiddle player Martin McGinley. In 1989 they released their debut album under the name *The Boys of Sligo* that featured thirteen sets of tunes from the Sligo area. In 1991 they were joined by singer Cathy Jordan and fiddle player Shane McAleer. This added a new dynamic to the group and in 1992 their second album *Harmony Hill* under their new name *Dervish* won widespread critical acclaim. The instrumentation in Dervish was very different to that of Oisín and by the time they released their second album the mandolin took a secondary role in the band with McDonagh playing the mandola. Dervish is one of the most successful Irish traditional music groups of the past twenty years and McDonagh has been a very important part of the line-up. In this time they have travelled the world on numerous occasions playing at festivals around the world and in 2007 represented Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest. Even though the mandolin has not been a major feature in the group it was still the instrument that introduced McDonagh to Irish traditional music. Through playing the mandolin from such a young age and particularly the influence of Planxty on his approach to playing was paramount to his development as a musician.

4.7 Conclusion

Through the exploration of the development of mandolin playing styles in the latter half of the twentieth century, this Chapter presents a unique appraisal of mandolin players in Irish traditional music. The research informs an understanding of the wider soundscape of Irish traditional music and, in particular, changing aesthetics and contexts in the latter half of the twentieth century. All of the musicians examined in this chapter, by their musical actions and choices, successfully indigenised the mandolin into Irish traditional music and showed that it was possible for the mandolin to function within the aesthetics of the tradition.

For each of the musicians highlighted, biographical details have provided an important source of material for consideration in relation to this analysis and provide important insights into each of the musician's first musical experiences, instrument choice, musical influences, career, recordings and musical development. As musicians, many of them shared a common trajectory. In each case, with the absence of an existing style for the mandolin, they were forced to invent and re-invent what the instrument meant to the music, often borrowing techniques from core instruments like the pipes, fiddle and flute. Equally unavailable was tuition on the mandolin, resulting in many of the players' self-sufficient approach to developing their own styles on the instrument. For many, the mandolin was the instrument that allowed them to engage with the world of Irish traditional music while still being able to occupy a number of different musical worlds some of which achieved commercial success helping to give the mandolin wider exposure. Many of them came to Irish traditional music from outside the tradition, being heavily influenced by popular culture on the radio and television particularly musical developments in the US and the UK.

Despite many similarities, it is evident that each of the musicians developed an individual style and approach to the instrument, influenced primarily by other instruments in the tradition. While Irvine is most often associated with a vocal repertoire and the performance of countermelodies as accompaniment, many of the others are primarily melody players. While all of the musicians studied performed as part of an ensemble, it is Mick Moloney and Paul Kelly who released solo recordings on the instrument. Thus it remains that there is a limited canon through which to engage with mandolin styles in Irish traditional music.

Through the analysis presented in this chapter, it is possible to observe the development of the mandolin from an instrument used for song accompaniment, into an instrument on which Irish traditional dance music could be played. Given the evidence presented, all of the

musicians highlighted worked extensively with countless musicians in a variety of contexts, many of whom were to the fore in the Irish traditional music community in the twentieth century. Absorbing styles of other traditional musicians exemplifies the indigenisation of the mandolin into the tradition.

While a selection of albums have been examined in detail, this chapter has stretched over four decades of mandolin playing in Ireland, and has demonstrated the successful integration of the mandolin in the soundscape of Irish traditional music. Although this chapter has presented an in-depth overview of some of the seminal recordings that feature the mandolin, it is by no means exhaustive. However, through appraising several contrasting albums and musicians it has demonstrated that the mandolin was used in a variety of settings ranging from urban based ballad groups and ensemble groups to intimate solo recordings. It has further highlighted the variety of mandolin playing styles ranging from well known Irish traditional tunes, to creative arrangements of Irish traditional music, and original compositions.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The main aim of this dissertation has been to document the developing role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music, and to establish how it became assimilated, even if in a limited capacity, into the Irish tradition. By critically examining the history of the mandolin, from its popularity on mainland Europe in the eighteenth century, to its arrival into Irish traditional music in the mid-twentieth century this dissertation has demonstrated the versatility of the mandolin over the past three centuries. In this time the mandolin has occupied a number of musical spheres, moving from an instrument played by street musicians to the concert halls of Europe and the pub sessions of Irish folk and traditional musicians.

Through archival research, it was possible to conclude that, although the mandolin was available for sale in Dublin in 1894, it did not come into widespread use among the traditional music community until the 1960s. When the mandolin first arrived in Ireland in the late nineteenth century, it was at a time when the popularity of the instrument was at its peak in Europe. Evidence from contemporary newspaper advertisements for music shops and concerts that were taking place in Dublin during this period finds the mandolin, similar to the harp, as an instrument used by the middle class for song accompaniment. While there were many factors which influenced the developing popularity of the mandolin in Ireland during the middle of the twentieth century, the US and British 'folk' revival is significant. However, the styles that develop on the mandolin in Irish traditional music utilise different techniques and approaches, borrowing from other genres while introducing influences from established traditional instruments. The mandolin was easily adapted to Irish traditional music because of its similarity to the fiddle in terms of tuning and fingering.

While the main focus of the dissertation has been on the 'role' of the mandolin in Irish traditional music it has become evident that many of the instruments introduced during the twentieth century, particularly the plucked stringed instruments, took time to be accepted. One of the challenges to assimilation of the mandolin into Irish traditional music was the association of the mandolin and other plucked instruments with the emerging folk and ballad tradition, which evolved parallel to a revival of the Irish dance music tradition. This process may have begun or been more prominent amongst an international audience where audiences may have accepted the instrument more readily based on the popularity of particular groups. However, the concurrent use of the mandolin as a beginner instrument due to its size may affect attitudes to its credibility as an instrument in the tradition.

From the outset, I felt that it was important to acknowledge the impact and legacy of a number of principal mandolin players who have influenced the development of the mandolin as an instrument in Irish traditional music. As a mandolin player who was heavily influenced by a number of the musicians highlighted in this dissertation I felt the need to document and analyse their contribution, innovations and recordings. The choice of mandolin players was shaped in part by their profile and recordings and thus only considers one aspect of influence on the wider musical traditions. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to include case studies on all mandolin players and notable examples that were considered but not further developed include Kieran Hanrahan, Pádraig Ó Dúgáin, Declan Corey and Charles O'Connor, Enda Scahill and Martin Howley.

In spite of sometimes negative attitudes towards or even ignorance of the instrument, this study has revealed how the mandolin played a role in the popularisation and re-invigoration of Irish traditional music in the second half of the twentieth century. This dissertation has revealed the multi-faceted role of the mandolin within the Irish soundscape over four centuries. Through an in-depth analysis of recordings this dissertation has demonstrated that the mandolin was a much favoured instrument, firstly amongst a number ballad groups and later through a number of new ensemble groups who were achieving both national and international acclaim. While the role of the mandolin differed from group to group, its emergence into the Irish soundscape through groups such as the Dubliners, Sweeney's Men and The Johnston's amongst others was crucial in highlighting the potential for the mandolin.

The introduction of the mandolin in a more urban based, commercial music environment was of central importance to the popularity and longevity of the mandolin in the Irish music soundscape. As musicians, many of them shared a common trajectory. Many of them came to Irish traditional music from outside the tradition, being heavily influenced by popular culture on the radio and television and musical developments in the US and the UK. In the absence of a mandolin teacher to emulate, they developed their own personal styles and techniques of mandolin playing. For many, the mandolin was the instrument that allowed them to penetrate the world of Irish traditional music while still being able to occupy a number of different musical worlds.

As the traditional music revival gathered pace in the 1970s, the mandolin became more popular than ever with a wide array of musical ensembles. The potential of the mandolin in the playing of Irish traditional tunes at this point was further explored by such bands as

Planxty, Boys of the Lough, Oisín, Clannad, The Buskers and Stockton's Wing. Recordings by these groups were enormously influential, and bolstered an explosion of interest in Irish traditional music and particularly in the mandolin. Mandolin players such as Andy Irvine, Dave Richardson, Mick Moloney and Brian McDonagh all approached the mandolin in a variety of ways. It is at this point the mandolin became a more prominent instrument in the playing of tunes in groups such as Planxty and Boys of the Lough and Oisín. In Planxty, the mandolin took on a lead role in the overall sound and was well suited to this new style of ensemble playing. Andy Irvine's use of harmony and counterpoint was a turning point for the mandolin which saw many musicians taking up the instrument, although this dissertation acknowledges that few imitate his approach. In Boys of the Lough the mandolin entered a more 'traditional' soundscape and was given an equal role alongside instruments such as the pipes, fiddle, flute, banjo, concertina and bodhrán.

The use and role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music is often challenged by the choice or presence of the banjo and fiddle by musicians, particularly when it came to playing Irish traditional dance tunes. Many mandolin players also played the banjo and/or the fiddle and many of those considered in this dissertation are multi-instrumentalists thus limited the extent to which the mandolin can be considered a primary instrument. The folk groups of the 1960s such as The Dubliners, The Johnston's and Sweeney's Men used the mandolin mainly for song accompaniment. In The Dubliners, the use of the mandolin in the accompaniment of songs and slow airs gave the instrument a very definite role at a time when many young people were becoming interested in folk music. The influence of this highly commercialised musical environment was crucial for the longevity of the mandolin in Irish music.

Central themes in the study of the role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music echo the studies of other instruments in traditional musics and consider introduction and assimilation, attitudes towards authenticity, commercialisation, diasporic communities and gender associations. It is noticeable that in this dissertation, the musicians examined are all male but it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the construction of gender identities for the instrument in the tradition. While the dissertation does consider the impact of American and British musical influences and includes case studies of musicians that live outside of Ireland, the research focuses primarily on the Irish tradition in an Irish context. All of the musicians studied have recorded commercially and, while some consideration is given to the influence of commercialisation in traditional music, the dissertation focuses primarily on the

development of styles and approaches in the context of a traditional, if always evolving soundscape.

In almost sixty years since its appearance in the folk groups of the 1960s the mandolin is now a commonly used instrument for people who want to play Irish traditional music. This dissertation focuses specifically on the mandolin over a forty year period beginning in the 1960s through to 2000s and through the analysis of the pivotal mandolin players I have demonstrated how the mandolin was easily adapted into Irish traditional music. As with any instrument, the popularity of the mandolin is dependent on a few skilled players who, with dexterity and expertise, can breathe new life into the music and develop a role for the instrument. The musicians presented in this dissertation have gained respect from their peers and contributed to the evolution of the tradition and most importantly for this research, the mandolin.

Further research on the mandolin in Irish traditional music should consider other contexts beyond commercial bands and explore the role of gender, and the use of new spaces for the transmission of traditional music. In more recent times the internet has served as a meeting point for aspiring mandolin players from all across the world who want to play Irish traditional music. Musical communities all over the world have emerged that aspire to play Irish traditional music and include the mandolin in their soundscape. For all of these, this dissertation provides a starting point to explore the developing role of the mandolin in Irish traditional music in the twenty first century.

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Appendix 1 – Irish Mandolin: Technical Terminology

As shown in the previous section developing an Irish mandolin style has come from a wide range of sources. Although there are several limitations in adapting the mandolin to Irish traditional due to instruments lack of sustain as well as the inability to effectively slur notes together. Additionally, the fact the mandolin has frets places boundaries on pitch subtleties and ornamentation variations which are possible with the fiddle, pipes and flute. Many of the ornamental patterns used on the established instruments of Irish music, especially legato rolls and the fiddler's bowed triplets cannot be duplicated on the mandolin. In their place mandolin players generally substitute single and double grace-note ornaments by using plucked triplets or trebles.

1.2.1 Tremolo

One of the most frequently associated ornaments with the mandolin is tremolo. In the 1960s many Irish mandolin players used this technique particularly in the playing of slow airs and in song accompaniment to add vibrancy and colour. It involves rapid up-down movements of the plectrum, playing non-stop through the tune or song being played. It can be fast or slow, loud or soft, and regular or irregular depending on the desired sound. In Irish traditional music tremolo works particularly well on slow tunes and waltzes. Figure 63 provides an example of how to use to the tremolo ornament with plectrum directions. In the musical example of 'My Little Son' as played by The Dubliners, it is used throughout as shown in Figure 64.

Figure 63: Tremolo Technique

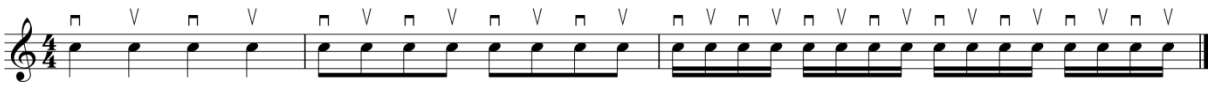
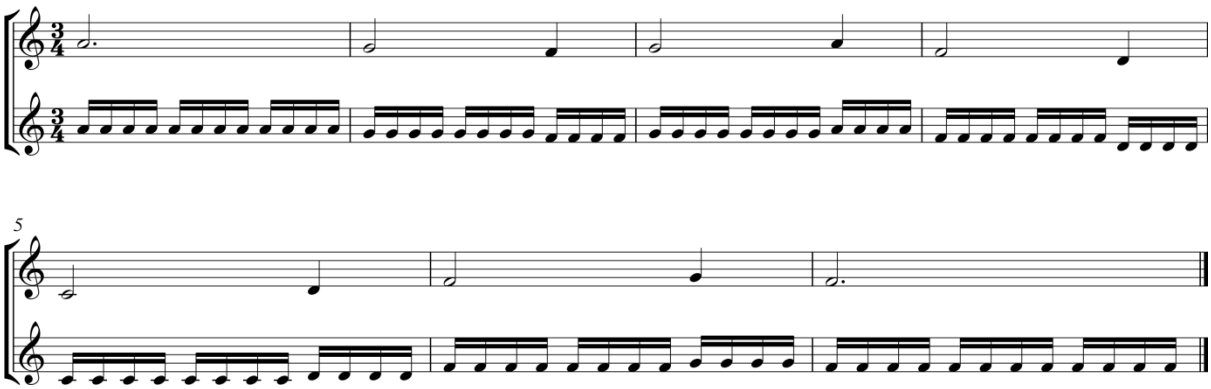


Figure 64: Tremolo Mandolin on 'My Little Son'



1.2.2 Trebles and Triplets

One of the most distinctive sounds on the mandolin is created by the use of the treble and triplet. In the literature and in discussion with musicians, these terms become interchangeable. For the purposes of this dissertation, a treble is understood to refer to one note or tone played three times in the space of a crotchet or two semi quavers played with a plectrum. The general way which trebles and triplets have been notated in Irish music publications has been to have three notes notated as having equal length in time, with a small 3 written above or below the notes symbolising the triplet. In mandolin playing, the treble and triplet has largely replaced the roll as played on the fiddle, pipes or flute, although Rossi (2012) provides instruction on the use of the roll for the mandolin and similar instruments. Trebling can be applied on all notes, including those on open strings making it a very resourceful decoration. A treble is sometimes shown by placing a mirrored S-shape lying on its side above the note to the ornamented as exemplified in Figure 65, and is rhythmically played as shown in Figure 66. A further example is shown through the playing of the popular tune 'The Humours of Tullough' in Figure 67 and 68.

Figure 65: Example without treble ornament

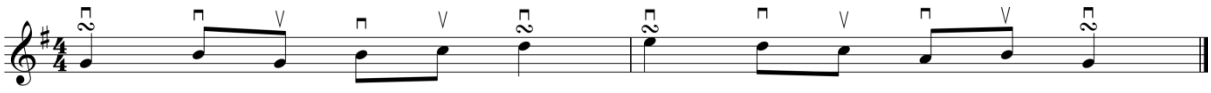


Figure 66: Example with treble ornament

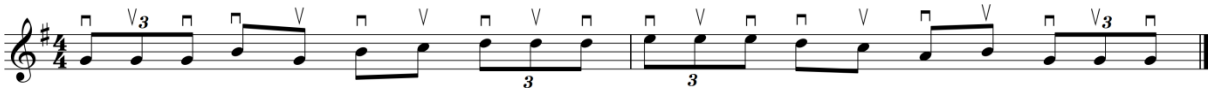


Figure 67: The Humours of Tulla without treble ornament

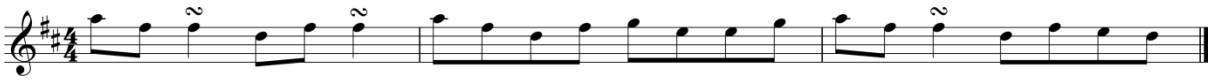
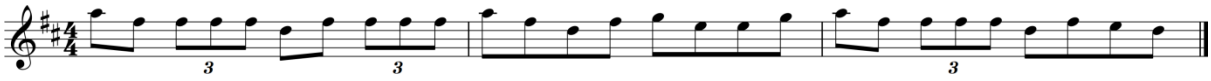


Figure 68: The Humours of Tulla with treble ornament



The triplet is rhythmically the same to the treble ornament but involves changing notes with the left hand. It is very important when playing trebles and triplets to keep the right hand, wrist and fingers relaxed. The triplet is often used, as in other instruments, in an instance where two quavers a third apart allow for the addition of a passing note, as shown in 'The Galway Hornpipe' (see Figure 72) or, when replacing a crotchet, to decorate the note with a passing note above or below the note being ornamented as demonstrated in 'The Rights of

Man' (see Figure 73). Trebles and triplets are often played in place of a crotchet note, sounding three notes in the place of one or two notes. According to Scahill 'the key to successful trebling/tripleting is relaxation in the right hand, wrist and fingers. Do not squeeze the plectrum or tense up when trying to treble. Keep the plectrum nice and light between thumb and finger and stroke it across the strings' (Scahill, 2008, p. 26).

Figure 69: Examples of different forms of triplet ornament

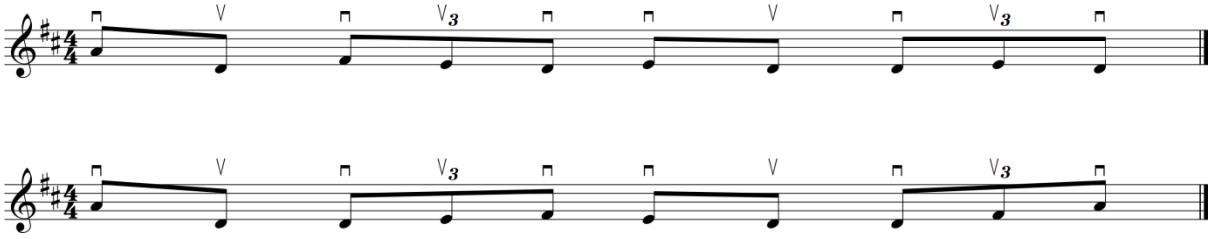


Figure 70: The Galway Hornpipe without triplet ornament

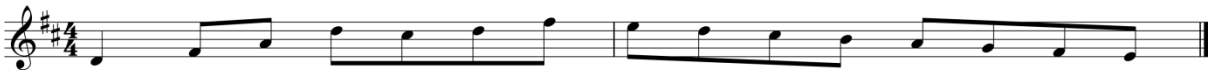


Figure 71: The Galway Hornpipe with triplet ornament

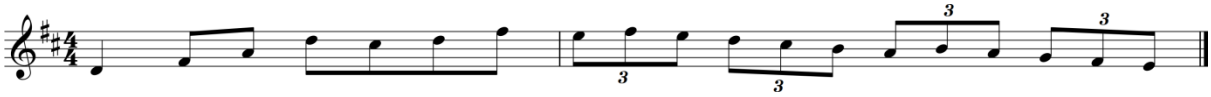


Figure 72: The Rights of Man without triplet ornament

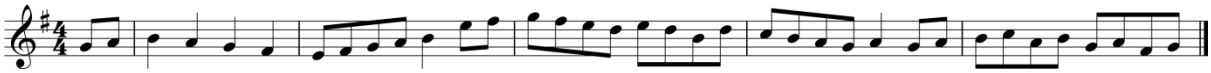
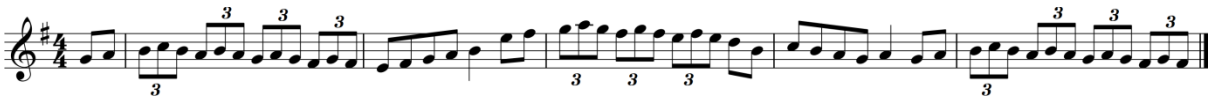


Figure 73: The Rights of Man with triplet ornament



1.2.3 Hammer-ons and Pull-offs

Hammer-ons and pull-offs are frequently used to execute many kinds of ornaments on the mandolin and is the mandolin players way of playing a slur. The higher string tension on the mandolin allows for a stronger attack with hammer-ons and pull-offs. A slur connects two or more notes of different pitches so that the first note is articulated and the others follow along without being picked. Only the first note is sounded with the plectrum. The hammer on technique is obtained by playing a note, then without re-picking that note, another note of a higher pitch on the same string is played. In Figure 74 the open G string is played followed

by playing the A note by hammering the tip of your first finger down firmly on the second fret. In the second example the same applies but instead the open D string is played followed by hammering the tip of your second finger on the F# and so on. The hammer on technique is also very useful when playing triplets as exemplified in Figure 76.

Figure 74: Hammer-on technique

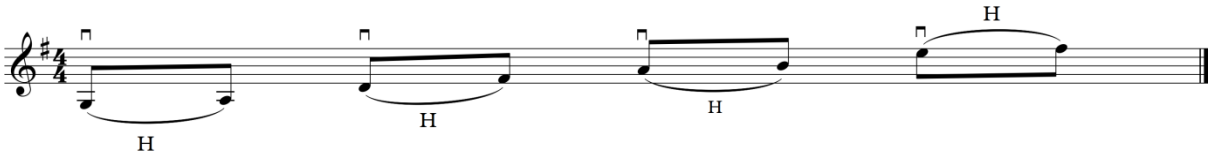


Figure 75: Hammer-on technique

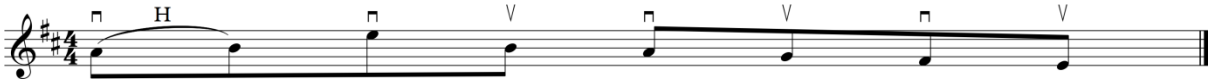
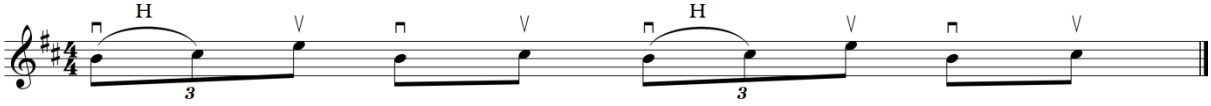


Figure 76: Hammer-on technique on triplet ornament



A pull-off is essentially a hammer-on in reverse. Once again two notes are played in quick succession. The first note is plucked, followed by a second note being sounded by pulling the left finger from the string with force. The way you can tell a pull-off apart from a hammer-on, is that the second note is lower than the first (see Figure 77). Another example is shown in Figure 78. In this instance the crushed B note is plucked and then quickly pull the A string with the finger of the left hand to make the A note.

Figure 77: Pull-off technique

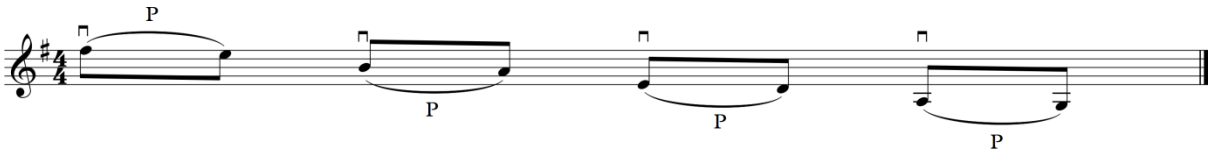
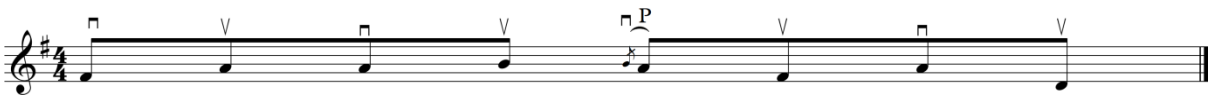


Figure 78: Pull-off technique



1.2.4 Drones and Chords

The drone in Irish traditional music is largely associated with the uilleann pipes, although examples can be observed in fiddle, accordion and concertina traditions also.[4] On the mandolin, as on the fiddle, a drone effect is created by a double stop or by strumming two or more strings at one time. In some places the drone can be higher or lower than the melody, and usually is the root note. Drone effects are most successful when the note is played on an open string. Figure 79 exemplifies the use of the open D string in the first and third bar in 'The Humours of Tulla' reel.

Figure 79: D Drone on the Humours of Tulla reel

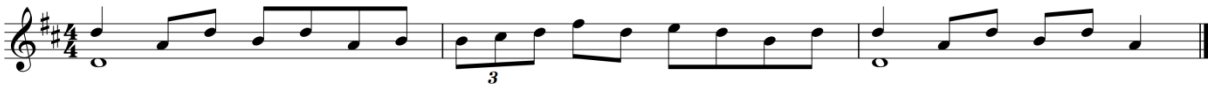


Figure 80: 2 note chords on The one that was lost

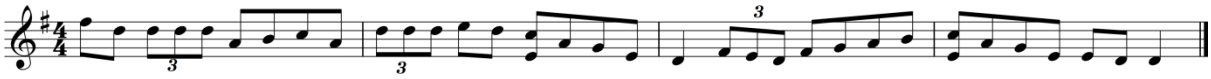
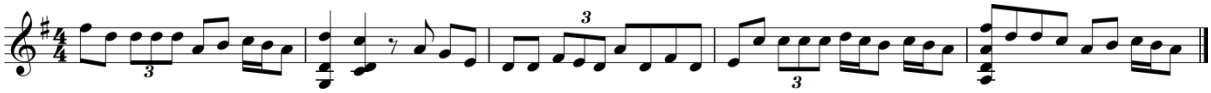


Figure 81: Dinny O'Brian's Reel chordal accompaniment



The use of chords can be a very effective way of adding interest to a tune. Chords are an excellent way of generating long notes where the resonance of a single string can be a little weak. The chords we are dealing with here will be 2 or 3 string melodic chords as opposed to full 4 string chords used as rhythmical backing. The key to playing chords is that when the strings are gently stroked and not hit hard. There is an inclination but this only serves to make the chord sound harsh and louder than the melody. The two main reasons to use chords are rhythmical emphasis and melodic harmony (Scahill, 2008, p. 51). Perhaps borrowing from other musical genres, styles and traditions, mandolin players can integrate chords into their performance style. Figures 80 and 81 demonstrate how Martin Howley applies chordal accompaniment to the tunes 'The one that was lost' and 'Dinny O' Brian's' reel.

[4] For example, in the Donegal fiddle tradition the use of drones is a key characteristic. Mac Aoidh (1994) and Cooper (2010) discuss the use of drones in the Donegal tradition.

1.2.5 Slides

Other ornamental effects that can be used are sliding into a note. Sliding into a note is used in many styles of music. Scahill (2012) notes 'Sliding up to a note is a commonly used from or ornamentation most likely adopted from bluegrass playing' (p. 30). A slide means an upward glide into the note you want to play, generally starting from whatever note lies immediately below the target note (ibid). They usually vary in intervals from a semitone to a major second. In most cases, this means the slide covers a semitone or whole tone. For example, in Figure 82 the B note is played on the A string but then the finger slides to the C sharp.

Figure 82: Example of slide technique

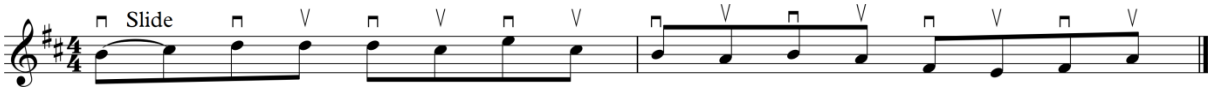


Figure 83: Slide technique on The one that was lost reel

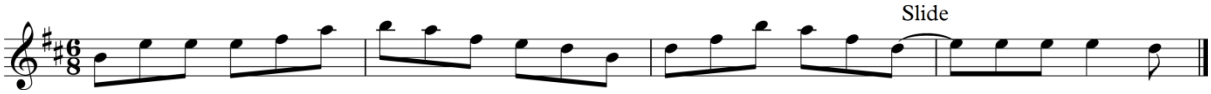


Figure 83 shows an example of Martin Howley playing the slide technique. In this example he slides from the note D on the fifth fret of the A string and slides up to the E on the seventh fret and follows this by playing the open E string.