IRISH MUSIC AND HOME-RULE POLITICS, 1800-1922

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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“I received a letter from the American Quarter Horse Association saying that I was the only member on their list who actually doesn’t own a horse.”—Jim Logg to Ernest the Sincere from Love Never Dies in Punxsutawney

To James E. Schoenfelder
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

IRISH MUSIC AND HOME-RULE POLITICS, 1800-1922

By

Aaron C. Keebaugh

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Chair: David Z. Kushner
Major: Music

For much of the nineteenth-century, the Irish question of self government played a central role in British politics. Indeed, the Catholic Emancipation movement of the early part of century, the Potato famine of the late 1840s, and the Home-Rule bills between 1880 and 1914, blocked the legislative process entirely. As a result, the Irish issue spread into public life throughout Britain, the United States, and other corners of the English speaking world. This study explores the role that Home-Rule politics played in select Irish folksong collections and Irish-themed art music between 1800 and 1922. Two figures especially loom large in the study: Charles Villiers Stanford and Victor Herbert. Both were born in Ireland, but their careers took them in different directions. Stanford settled into academic life in England, teaching at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. Herbert, after receiving his education in Germany, ventured to the United States and, by century’s end, established his name among the leading orchestral conductors and operetta composers in America. The two men rarely, if ever, returned to Ireland in their adult lives. Still, the Emerald isle continued to play a role in their creative and political activities. Drawing from personal documents, letters, and analysis of the musical scores, this study, as a work of narrative history, contextualizes selected Irish-
themed pieces by these two composers as well as the folksong collections upon which they based such music.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Subject

This dissertation explores the role that Home–Rule Politics played in the production and performance of Irish folksong collections from the late-eighteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries and Irish–themed art music from 1880 until 1922. The latter dates are not chosen arbitrarily, rather, the roughly forty–year time frame marks the high point of Irish constitutional politics and cultural revival, which will provide the necessary backdrop for this study. During the 1880s and 1890s, Irish cultural institutions such as the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association established a revival of the Irish language and sports respectively. In addition to these institutions, musical festivals, like the Feis Céoil and Oireachtas, and the Irish Literary Revival added to a general Irish cultural renaissance at the close of the nineteenth century. 1922, the year of the founding of the Irish Free State, will serve as an appropriate bookend. Furthermore, 1922 marks the period in which, for good or ill, those politicians who stood for the constitutional politics of Home Rule finally achieved their goal.

This study examines selected works from the vocal, dramatic, and symphonic repertoire that draw upon Irish folksongs and/or legends within late–nineteenth and early–twentieth–century Irish politics. The song collectors and composers discussed through the course of the study are not all of Irish birth. Several composers of British, and even American upbringing, such as Charles Villiers Stanford and Victor Herbert, among others, penned music with Irish themes during the years of the Home–Rule question. This study interprets works by these composers in light of the Irish political cauldron, especially since several of these individuals held definitive opinions on the
state of Ireland at the dawn of the twentieth century. Some of their works, then, encapsulate their political opinions in musical notation.

**Need For the Study**

This dissertation fills lacunae in the literature about Irish music of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. While scholars have paid considerable attention to the role that Irish folk music played in the Irish cultural revival of the 1890s, art music has occupied an occasional back seat in musicological studies, especially its relationship to the socio-political sphere surrounding Home-Rule politics. And since the study will also discuss works penned by non-Irish composers between the years in question, as previously mentioned, such an approach will broaden the current discourse on Irish music and nationalism, which often treats Ireland as an entity left completely on its own.

The use of Irish subject matter in art music of this era has sometimes been labeled as an exotic affair; take for example George Bernard Shaw's remarks about Charles Villiers Stanford's *Irish Symphony* of 1887. Yet this researcher suggests that the revival of interest in Irish folklore, verse, sports, and even the Gaelic language itself was brought about by the Irish question. And the same can be said of Irish art music. Some scholars have previously suggested a reductionist theory. For example, historians of Ireland such as Michael Cronin, among others, interpret the Irish cultural renaissance of the 1890s as “Cultural Nationalism,” an umbrella term used to suggest that such the revival in Irish culture filled a gap in social consciousness that was left by the demise of the second Home-Rule bill in parliament and the fall and eventual death of Charles Stuart Parnell in the early years of the decade. This study will not only bring an
examination of art music to the story, but also expand upon the intricacies of Irish politics, nationalism, and culture at the time.

Since the dissertation is concerned with politics and musical composition and production, much attention is paid to the political opinions of the composers involved in the story. The present author investigates Irish–themed works by composers such as Charles Stanford and Victor Herbert as well as their respective roles played in the development of Irish musical nationalism from 1880 through 1922. Therefore, this author draws extensively from letters, journals, and newspaper articles written by these individuals as the case may be. In sum, a significant portion of this research is rooted in composer biography.

Using the information gleaned from the primary sources, this author then crafts a mode of analysis to examine the music in order to understand how and why these composers made their creative choices, especially with regards to the folk music quoted in their music. In doing so, the researcher will take the reader well beyond a glimpse of the seemingly superficial use of Irish folklore or themes in this music. As will be seen in the course of the study, several composers go so far as to encode their music with a definitive political opinion through the use of specific themes, instruments, folk tunes, and allusions to geographical regions in Ireland where the drama of Home Rule politics were acted out on a daily basis.

This study also pays close attention to the performance and reception histories of the music discussed. Drawing upon critical reviews of the music, this author explores that idea that the performance of Irish art music in Ireland and abroad may have served a dual role as entertainment and political speech. Moreover, the dissertation combines
the musical analysis, biographical information, historical context, and critical reception into a continuous narrative.

The chapters of this study are organized chronologically. In doing so, this author is better able to offer comparisons of similar pieces by different composers. Such an approach will also facilitate a discussion of the political viewpoints of the composers examined within their appropriate historical context. In addition to the present chapter, the following one explores the development of Irish cultural, musical, and political nationalism from the beginning of the nineteenth century through the Home–Rule era. Central to this discussion is a contextualized survey of the important folksong collections and collectors of nineteenth–century Ireland. Similar to the practice in European art music of the time, musical nationalism in Ireland at the close of the nineteenth century was rooted, to a large degree, in folksong. Furthermore, examination of these select song collections serve as necessary grounds for the investigation of larger genres, such as symphonies, symphonic poems, and operas in Ireland, which often quote tunes from these sources.

The third chapter introduces the Irish music and personal political views Charles Villiers Stanford during years leading up the first Home Rule bill. Stanford’s own folksong settings and his *Irish Symphony*, indeed, loom large during the 1880s. Chapter four explores Irish–themed art music composed and performed in Britain and the United States during the 1890s. Here, Victor Herbert enters the scene as an important actor in Irish-American music and politics during the years in question. Further, as the subject matter for music of vocal and dramatic literature stems from poems and prose cultivated
by Irish writers of the time, the researcher provides the necessary historical detail into
the literature and politics surrounding the 1890s literary institutions.

Chapter five explores the impact that the third Home-Rule bill and contemporary
social and political movements, such as Unionism and the Dublin Easter Rebellion of
1916, as well the onset of the First World War, had upon the composers and their
works. The year 1922, which marks the founding of the Irish Free State, will act as an
appropriate bookend to this study. The final chapter offers the researcher’s conclusions
regarding the music, the composers, and their relationship to the contemporary political
situation. In addition, this author will offer a concise reception history of the composers’
legacies and works to the present.

Review of the Literature

Numerous tertiary and secondary sources covering music in Ireland, Britain, and
the United States are invaluable to this study. Central to any study of nationalism during
the past three decades are the abundant theoretical sources. Authors such as Ernest
Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson, as well as others, have contributed
volumes of social and cultural critique on nationalism as an ideology and tool for social
and political change. While the present study will draw upon these sources, this
dissertation is not primarily a work of critical theory. The present researcher’s task is to
cover the history of the composition and performance of Irish art music in light of the
Home–Rule question through the lenses of the primary sources. And while theoretical
frameworks can sometimes offer creative and useful ways to interpret the information,
any attempt to create a new model for analysis is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In an essay published in the Journal of the History of Ideas, Lloyd Kramer opined
that, “histories of nationalism provide a striking example of how the history of ideas
never reaches a point of uncontested closure and never finally escapes the political and cultural contexts in which all historical narratives are produced."¹ Kramer treats the historiography of nationalism as intellectual history and in doing so, discusses five basic modes of thought in twentieth–century studies of the concept: 1) nationalism is a central component of modernization; 2) nationalisms are modern religious movements, which are related to, but sometimes replace, traditional religious movements; 3) nationalism is a linguistic construction, which depends on new forms of communication, narratives, and intellectualism; 4) nationalism is a discourse for gender and ethnicity, which serves to shape the identities of the individual; 5) discourse on nationalism often splits the concepts into categories, ranging from the subjective “good/ versus bad” dichotomy to Western versus Eastern and political versus cultural.²

Yet the problem of tracing nationalism is not so simple. In his introduction to the compendium *Musical Constructions of Nationalism*, scholar Michael Murphy claims that no single doctrine or origin of nationalism exists.³ In the nineteenth century, for example, intellectuals believed that nationalism was a natural phenomenon; the world divided itself into nations. With the increase of secular state power, nineteenth–century intellectuals, politicians, and the educated populace generally looked to the nation as the main source of identity, culture, and destiny. In the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions, however, nationalism in Europe came to be seen as a consequence of its own actions and assumptions; nationalism, in short, was a natural result of historical

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² Ibid., 525–526.

developments. This narrower brand of nationalism, which was based on historical rights and economic policies, superceded the universal nationalism of the early 1800s.\(^4\) And in post–famine Ireland, cultural nationalism eventually lead to the spread of sectarian politics for the Home–Rule divide in the 1860s through the 1890s.

In order to unpack the issue of nationalism in Ireland during the late nineteenth century, the researcher draws upon several theoretical works concerning the ideology. The most significant sources for the study of nationalism included Hans Kohn’s *The Idea of Nationalism*, Edward Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson’s seminal work *Imagined Communities*, and Anthony Smith’s *Myths and Memories of the Nation*.\(^5\) Kohn and Anderson, though they were writing nearly forty years apart from one another, both treat nationalism as it relates to the history of ideas. By viewing nationalism as a distinct, tangible cultural ideology, Kohn uncovers nationalistic elements in cultural artifacts such as novels, treatises, speeches, and others. Anderson theorizes that the mass consumption of popular and educational media (newspapers, textbooks, etc.) assist in the development and spread of nationalism. Furthermore, the media promotes the construction of an imagined national community, which suggests that people within a given society or nation state will conceive of themselves as part of a

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\(^4\) Ibid., 1–15.

larger community though they have and will never meet all other individuals in the same society. Edward Gellner, on the other hand, attempts to explain nationalism in light of the rise of industrialism and politics. He argues that nationalism created industrialism, or at least made it possible, through union of the “nation” and the state and thereby operates as the vanguard of modernism. Anthony Smith emphasizes the role that ethnicity plays in defining a national culture. He defines ethnic distinctiveness as “shared ancestry myths, common historical memories, unique cultural markers, and a sense of difference, if not election.”6 As the present study will cover the multifaceted issue of nationalism as it relates to Home–Rule politics, the above mentioned sources will enable this author to dissect and understand the intricacies of late–nineteenth–century Ireland’s cultural prism.

In addition to the literature on nationalism, several secondary sources are of enormous value to this study. Peter Collins’s Nationalism and Unionism: Conflict in Ireland, 1885–1921, Robert Kee’s The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism, and Allan O’Day’s Irish Home Rule, 1867–1921 provides the necessary background and context for the study. Georg Grote’s reader–friendly Torn Between Politics and Culture: The Gaelic League, 1893–1993 and P. J. Mathews’s The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Co–operative Movement are most informative regarding the Gaelic Society. But rather than provide a full critical assessment of the historical sources consulted at this point in the study, this author will engage the historical context through the course of the narrative.

6 Quoted in Murphy and White, Musical Constructions of Nationalism, 5.
The literature on music in Ireland provides the proper context from which this study evolves. In 1905, William H. Grattan Flood published his extensive *A History of Irish Music*. Still a classic text in music historiography, Grattan Flood’s tome was the first to address the evolution of music on Irish soil. For over half a century *A History of Irish Music* remained the primary reference source on music and musical activity on the Emerald Isle. The author tells the tale of Celtic–Irish and Anglo–Irish music from the beginning, its origins in bardic lore (ca. A.D. 254) and Druid rituals, through the nineteenth century, culminating with a discussion of contemporary harp festivals and Irish musical societies. Grattan Flood’s history provides valuable information on the Granard Festival, the Belfast Harp Festival, and the Dublin Harp Society as well as brief biographical details on the significant harpists and harp makers. The author does not draw any attention to the current political climate in Ireland in his text; rather, *A History of Irish Music* is first and foremost a general survey of musical history, the author’s answer to the notable histories of the evolution of music.\(^7\)

A book such as Grattan Flood’s volume, though, can still provide useful information for the twenty–first–century Irish music scholar. The appendices, for example, include a then–current listing of principal collections of Irish music, which ranges from 1726 to 1887, Irish musical manuscripts in Trinity College, Dublin,\(^8\) and

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\(^8\) This list is organized with the same numbers used in Rev. Dr. Abbot’s, *Catalog* (1901). A more comprehensive catalog of Irish music is James Porter, *The Traditional Music of Britain and Ireland* (New York: Garland, 1994).
Dublin musical societies from 1680 through 1880. Revisiting Grattan Flood’s history also enables the present–day historian to gather contemporary insight into subjects in Irish music not present in more recent music studies, such as the Irish musical societies and lesser–known and little–studied folksong collections and collectors, such as Patrick Weston Joyce.

There has not been a definitive history on Irish music since Grattan Flood’s A History of Irish Music, Yet, since the early 1990’s, a new wave of scholarship on Irish music has emerged. Joseph Ryan’s dissertation “Nationalism and Irish Music in Ireland,” Marie McCarthy’s ethnographic study, Passing It On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture, and the scholarship of the prolific Harry White on Irish music and cultural history comprise the current definitive literature. Indeed, these scholars engage Irish traditional music within its historical context.

Harry White’s 1998 study, The Keeper’s Recital, is the first to survey the development of musical thought in Ireland. It is not, therefore, a traditional history of Irish music or of music in Ireland. With the rise of sectarian political culture towards the end of the nineteenth century, intellectual life in Ireland perhaps relied more on the printed word than through music. Irish art music, much like that in Great Britain at large, could boast no single “nationalist composer,” a more or less imaginary moniker that originated as a byproduct of Richard Wagner’s popularity throughout Western Europe in

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the 1880s. However, White asserts that Ireland’s perceived nadir in musical composition is not as much a reality as it is the result of neglect in Irish historical and musicological studies. He argues, “the preservation of the ethnic repertory of music helped to establish the currency of a Gaelic culture which otherwise struggled against the tide of linguistic decline.” White further states that, “the transformation of this repertory as the definitive intelligencer of romantic nationalism consolidated an understanding of Irish music which embedded it inexorably to verbal communication.”

Although White provides snapshots of the role of music in Irish cultural and intellectual history within a 200–year time frame, two essays from *The Keeper’s Recital* will be beneficial in this project. White’s “History and Romanticism: Bunting, Moore and the Concept of Irish Music in the Nineteenth Century” and “Antiquarianism and Politics: Davis, Petrie, Hyde and the Growth of Music in a Sectarian Culture” both provide important biographical details for many of nineteenth-century Ireland’s prominent folksong collectors. Moreover, White observes the relationship between the increasing interest in folk music as a scientific, scholarly endeavor and the burgeoning political cauldron of late–nineteenth–century Irish politics. The collection and preservation of Ireland’s musical heritage is not now, and never has been, separate from developing nationalist ideologies.

12 The history of music from the mid through late nineteenth century contains several such nationalist in the musical periphery of Western Europe: Biedrich Smetana and Antonín Dvorak in Bohemia; Nicolai Rimsky–Korsakov, Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin, Cesar Cui, and Mily Balakirev, otherwise known as “The Russian Five” or “The Mighty Handful,” in Russia; Edvard Grieg in Norway; Jean Sibelius in Finland; etc. Charles Villiers Stanford perhaps stands as Ireland’s best example, though his stature as a specifically “Irish” composer is tenuous and complicated.

13 White, *Keeper’s Recital*, ix–x.
In addition to *The Keeper’s Recital*, Harry White has spearheaded and continues to develop other projects that investigate the multifaceted role music plays in Irish history.\(^{14}\) For example, White and Irish musicologist Gerard Gillen have produced and edited the *Irish Musical Studies* series, which is currently in its eighth volume.\(^{15}\) Joseph Ryan’s essay “Nationalism and Irish Music” in volume three, entitled *Musical and Irish Cultural History*, provides a salient overview of the development of Irish musical nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In following similar narrative threads from his widely–quoted dissertation, Ryan asserts that, “nationalism, the most potent political force in the modern era, is the crucial determinant on the course of music in Ireland in the past two centuries.”\(^{16}\) Without strictly defining “nationalism,” the reader is left to surmise that the author points towards a Gellneresque notion of nationalism, which states that nationalism, as an ideology, serves to create the sovereign nation or state, not vice versa. While the research of the 1990s has unearthed new views on established figureheads and how they relate to the


development of nationalist ideologies within the history of Irish music, few studies, save for those of Harry White, relate the study of nationalism and music to the broader concepts and issues in Irish cultural history and theories of nationalism.

It is instructive at this point to examine a selection of standard British and American music history texts in order to highlight the extent of the lacunae in musicological studies of Irish music. Save for the recent attention given to the subject, such as those mentioned above, Irish music maintains a role that is, at best, peripheral. In the 1930s, Oxford University Press released its eight–volume *Oxford History of Music*. The seventh volume of the series, edited by H. C. Colles, comprises an overview of orchestral and operatic music of the nineteenth century.\(^{17}\) Of the composers covered in the present dissertation, only Charles Villiers Stanford is treated at any length. Although Stanford lived and worked for a majority of his life in Cambridge and London, he perhaps stands as the first major “Irish nationalistic composer”\(^{18}\) at the end of the century. Colles, though, examines Stanford, along with C. H. Hubert Parry, as a significant composer in the so–called English Musical Renaissance. His Irish works, such as *Shamus O’Brien* and the *Irish Symphony*, stand along side his many non–Irish works. But due to Stanford’s foundation in Irish folk–melody, of which he edited several important collections, Colles purports that the composer had an advantage over Parry as a song writer. Furthermore, Colles attests to Stanford’s distinct compositional voice:

\(^{17}\) H. C. Colles, ed., *Symphony and Drama* from *The Oxford History of Music* 2\(^{nd}\) ed. vol. 7 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

\(^{18}\) Stanford’s role in Irish nationalism is a complex issue and is examined at full length through the course of the present dissertation.
His original songs, the opera *Shamus O’Brien*, and the rhapsodies for orchestra on Irish folksongs attest the strength of the influence of his personal style. The “Irish Symphony” is part and parcel of that devotion.\(^{19}\)

Colles makes no mention of Stanford’s politics or any other composer at the time for Irish–themed works, e.g., Victor Herbert (1859-1924), Hamilton Harty (1879-1941), Michele Esposito (1855-1929), or John F. Larchet (1884-1967).

Volumes nine and ten of the *New Oxford History of Music*,\(^{20}\) build upon Colles’s example. Gerald Abrahams’s 1990 tome, entitled *Romanticism*, draws upon the scholarship of Nicholas Temperley for the surveys on music in Britain and the United States. Here Stanford’s Irish works are given a little more context. For example, Temperley mentions Julius Benedict’s *The Colleen Bawn* as the first Irish nationalistic opera, although the work contains no political overtones. The author also briefly discusses the political nature of Stanford’s successful *Shamus O’Brien*, yet fails to examine the *Irish Rhapsodies* or even the aforementioned *Irish Symphony*. The editor, Gerald Abraham, like Colles before him, though, pays some attention to Stanford’s songs and folksong arrangements. However, the author’s assessment of the Irish–born Stanford’s vocal music differs from that of Colles:

> [Stanford] composed more fluently than Parry and was less critical of the results, so that there are many mediocre songs, though the days when an aspiring serious composer might also publish ballads were now past.\(^{21}\)

In volume ten of the series, *The Modern Age (1880–1960)*, editors Martin Cooper and Gerald Abraham note the influence of Brahms’s music on that of Stanford as well as his

\(^{19}\) Colles, *Symphony and Drama*, 275.


contemporaries Parry and Alexander Mackenzie. Although the authors do not provide musical examples or analysis, most attention is given to Elgar who “really stands alone” as a British composer, due to the idea that he “discovered for himself the real fountainheads of later romanticism, Schumann, Liszt, and Wagner and applied their techniques of harmony, orchestration, and leitmotif first in the dead forms of the Victorian cantata and the dying one of the oratorio . . . .”

As in the previous volume, Ireland and Irish music are only addressed marginally via Stanford’s interest in folk music. Cooper notes that Stanford “treated folk music as ‘material’ for traditional composition, while for his pupils [Holst and Vaughan Williams] it was the principal—though not the sole—instrument of emancipation from the heritage of both Brahms and Wagner . . . .” Further, Cooper label’s Stanford’s Shamus O’Brien a conventional Irish comedy and part of a revival in Celtic mythology among British works within the late-nineteenth–century art nouveau or Jungendstil movement, the modified use of neo-Wagnerian and verismo elements in opera. Shamus stands alongside Joseph Holbrooke’s The Children of Don and Ethel Smyth’s The Boatswain’s Mate as exemplars. And just as in Colles previous multi-volume history, The New Oxford Series makes no mention of additional composers of Irish–themed art music.

In 2005, Richard Taruskin published his five–volume Oxford History of Western Music. By combining traditional historical narrative with the discoveries and strategies of current musical scholarship, Taruskin’s opus examines the history of Western music.

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23 Ibid.

within its social and political context. Volume three, for example, the tome covering the nineteenth century, offers useful and thorough analysis on the problem of musical nationalism. Great attention and detail are given to select works and their contexts, such as Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 in E minor, “From the New World” and Amy Beach’s *Gaelic Symphony*, complete with musical examples and theoretical analysis. Taruskin does not, however, provide any information or even mention British composers of the time, which is perhaps a testament to the still widely-held view that British music of the nineteenth century, outside of Great Britain, remains in marginalia. In volume five, Taruskin discusses Benjamin Britten in length and even the “British invasion” in American rock and roll of the 1960s and 70s. Yet, regarding the former, the author does not conceptualize Britten as an outgrowth of the British Musical Renaissance.

An examination of two volumes of the *Norton History of Music Series*\(^\text{25}\) also highlights the place British and Irish music holds in twentieth-century scholarship. Alfred Einstein’s *Music in the Romantic Era*, by using Chopin as a model, notes the problem of nationalism in music. For example, the author discusses the Polishness of Chopin’s mazurkas and polonaises, yet the nocturnes are about as Polish as John Field’s are Irish.\(^\text{26}\) Further, Einstein notes the importance of folksong as a source for nationalism and even regionalism in Romantic music. Though Einstein’s methods may be taken for granted today, the author suggests, albeit indirectly, that nationalism in music relies first and foremost on the music itself, not the nationality of the composer. Yet the German

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\(^{26}\) Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), 60. The biggest problem for Einstein’s book is the fact that there are no bibliographic sources listed.
scholar examines select nationalist composers by geographical region.\textsuperscript{27} For example, Sibelius and Robert Karajanas are listed as “Scandanavian” composers, while Arthur Sullivan, “the real successor to Offenbach,” is labeled an Irishmen for the sole fact of his Irish heritage.\textsuperscript{28} As for other notable British composers of the time, there is no mention whatsoever of Stanford, Parry, or even Elgar, although the author alludes to these individuals through the “awakening of a new nationalistic spirit around 1880” on British soil.\textsuperscript{29} William Austin, however, provides some commentary on some of these figures in his book \textit{Music in the Twentieth Century}.\textsuperscript{30} Stanford and Parry are mentioned for their role as teachers at the Royal College of Music. Furthermore, he states that “In England the two reformers Parry and Stanford paved the way for the great 20\textsuperscript{th}–century revival there,”\textsuperscript{31} yet he provides no analysis on what these “reformers” actually reformed. Instead, Austin discusses in length the contributions of notable early–twentieth–century British composers, such as Elgar, Delius, Arthur Somervell, Henry Walford Davies, Donald Francis Tovey, Ethel Smyth, Granville Bantock, and Josef Holbrooke, as well as Holst and Vaughan Williams. And while Austin does not pay any attention to Irish composers, such as Harty or Larchet, Victor Herbert is given short but modest appraisal:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [27] The headings for Chapter 17, entitled “Nationalism,” are listed as follows: National Elements in Pre–Romantic Music, Nationalization in Romantic Music: Bohemia, Russia, Scandanavia, Holland, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Portugal, and North America. Great Britain, noticeably, has been left out of the picture. See Einstein, \textit{Music in the Romantic Era}..
  \item [28] Sullivan claims both Irish and Italian heritage, although Einstein never mentions or even alludes to the composer as an Italian. Moreover, Einstein only discusses \textit{Ivanhoe} and \textit{Trial by Jury} in brief; there is no further mention of Sullivan in the book. Ibid., 291.
  \item [29] Ibid., 292.
  \item [31] Ibid., 51.
\end{itemize}
Elsewhere in the United States Gilchrist, Gleason, and Kelly struggled to establish standards of serious music, while Sousa, Sanky, and Herbert represented various vital kinds of popular music.\footnote{Ibid.}

The *Norton Introduction to Music History* series, published between the mid–1980s through the early years of the new millennium, builds upon the work of the previous *Norton Histories*, rounding out the story of Western art music for the young scholar and student. Given that this series was primarily intended for use in undergraduate music history courses, the volumes of the *Norton Introduction* offer short bibliographic entries for each chapter as well as anthologies of musical examples. Leon Plantinga’s *Romantic Music*\footnote{Leon Plantinga, *Romantic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth–Century Europe* (New York, London: W. W. Norton, 1984).} offers the reader a succinct, yet welcome overview in music in nineteenth–century England. While the author holds the now outdated view that England was a land of musical consumers, not producers, Plantinga discusses the musical achievements of Sullivan and Sterndale–Bennett as important mid–century examples. Stanford is “a prolific composer in all the standard genres except opera” as well as a “scholarly musician,” along with Parry.\footnote{Ibid., 400.} And Plantinga talks of the large influence that Brahms had on the music of these two composers. Stanford is also discussed briefly as a nationalistic composer in the “Celtic fringes,” due to his *Irish Symphony*. Other composers in this category include Mackenzie, for the *Scottish Piano Concerto*, and Hamish McCunn, for *The Land of Mountain and Flood* and *Highland Memories*, all of which were popular orchestral works in London. In accessing
nationalism as a whole, Plantinga states the following, highlighting a problem he sees for England:

The usual factors in the growth of cultural nationalism—status as a developing nation, struggle against a foreign oppressor, feelings of cultural inferiority—were of course lacking in England.\textsuperscript{35}

While Plangtina is perhaps correct to point out, though indirectly, England’s wealth and pride as a nation, it is worth remembering that some of the \textit{Irish Rhapsodies} of Charles Stanford and \textit{In Memoriam} by Arnold Bax, to give but two examples, had specific political messages regarding the Irish and British troubles in the early decades of the twentieth century; these are highly charged works of nationalism not only for their use of folk music (in the \textit{Irish Rhapsodies}) but for the overt references to contemporary British political issues.\textsuperscript{36} Conflict is not restricted to members of the lower classes and developing countries.

Robert P. Morgan is less apologetic on the status of music in nineteenth–century England in his book \textit{Twentieth–Century Music}.:

By the year 1900 England had endured a period of compositional decline—a sort of musical Dark Ages—lasting some two centuries. Although during the Tudor and Elizabethan periods English music had been remarkably distinguished, not a single composer of international reputation emerged between the death of Henry Purcell in 1615 and the beginning of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{37}

Handel’s domination of English musical life during the first half of the eighteenth century and Mendelssohn’s influence during much of the nineteenth are, according to Morgan,

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36} Stanford’s \textit{Fourth Irish Rhapsody} refers to his stance as a Unionist against the issue of Irish Home Rule while Bax’s little–known \textit{In Memoriam} was dedicated to Padraig (Patrick) Pearse, the leader of the Easter Rebellion who was executed in 1916.

the factors that contributed to England’s “stunted growth.” As a result, “native composers lost a healthy contact with their own tradition and looked instead to the Continent for musical inspiration and education.”38 The author asserts that Stanford and Parry brought an end to this period of stagnation, yet provides no discussion of their music for examples. And like Austin before him, Morgan pays most attention to Holst and Vaughan Williams, preceded with an overview of the accomplishments of Elgar and Delius.

Rey Longyear, in his book *Nineteenth–Century Romanticism in Music* from the Prentice Hall Series39, though it predates Plantinga’s tome by over a decade, utilizes a similar approach. Assessing the issue of nationalism, Longyear offers the now–custom analysis:

> Nationalism is a concept better described than defined. It includes a feeling of political and cultural inferiority, a seeking for identity among the folk arts of the common people and especially the “unspoiled” peasants, and a search for particular national means of expression different from the cultural norms of the dominant group.40

And although the author does not discuss Stanford as an example, Longyear notes the contributions of composers, such as Berwald, Tchaikovsky, and MacDowell, who wrote in an “international romantic style” yet who were not deliberate nationalists. The Irish–born Stanford, as well as Herbert and Harty, could fit neatly into the scholar’s viewpoint, although the question of whether or not they were “deliberate” nationalists requires some investigation. As for other English composers, Longyear provides most attention

38 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 214.
to Elgar and Delius, although he never mentions the contemporary idea of the “English Musical Renaissance” in his overview.\(^{41}\)

By 2004, Cambridge University Press published its own music history series. As with Oxford and New Oxford before, the Cambridge series adopts a thematic approach to the narrative and involves numerous specialist writers. The disclaimer, printed in each volume, reads thusly:

The Cambridge History of Music comprises a new group of reference works concerned with significant strands of musical scholarship. The individual volumes are self–contained and include histories of music examined by century as well as the history of opera, music theory and American music. Each volume is written by a team of experts under a specialist editor and represents the latest musicological research.\(^{42}\)

Unfortunately, at least to this writer, the latest musicological research championed in these volumes leaves little room for discussion of the music. In fact, the Cambridge Series serves better as a reference source for musicological criticism at the dawn of the new millennium rather than as a history of Western music, indicated by the title. Some of the chapter headings confirm this statement. For example, essays such as “The musical work and nineteenth–century history,” “music and the rise of aesthetics,” “The construction of Beethoven,” “The invention of tradition,” “and Words and music in Germany and France,” to name only a few, are geared to the specialist. And helpful as they may be to those pursuing research into critical studies and reception histories, there are no attempts at constructing, or even reconstructing a narrative.

\(^{41}\) Longyear, however, includes Frank Howes’s 1966 book of the same name in his bibliography.

The Cambridge Series provides little to no musical examples or meaningful discussion of the repertoire given. Even chapters with more traditional titles, such as “Chamber music and piano,” fail to offer the reader any context about actual chamber and piano literature. Rather, the author, Jonathan Dunsby, uses Stanford’s *Pages from an Unwritten Dairy* as a critical point of departure to examine contemporary conservative attitudes towards late-nineteenth-century chamber and piano music. As interesting as this may seem, the author does not mention a single chamber or piano work by the composer as an example, only his criticism. At the end of the chapter, Dunsby recounts the following:

Thus having begun by concentrating on the thoughts on late Romantic piano music of a very British (albeit Irish) establishment figure . . . .

The most curious aspect about this quote is the reference to Stanford as an “Irish establishment figure.” Yet the reason why Dunsby mentions Stanford’s country of birth may forever elude the reader since doing so is inconsequential to the points the author is trying to make. And this is also the only reference to Irish music in the course of this history. There is no mention of Harty or Larchet, even from the series’ chosen critical perspective.

Single-volume histories covering Western music, while they offer expansive treatment of the subject, do not shed additional light onto British music. Paul Henry Lang’s *Music in Western Civilization*[^44], the first book to examine Western art music within its historical and socio-political context, mentions nothing about Irish music of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Lang even fails to mention Victor

[^43]: Ibid., 519.
Herbert, a composer by the time of the author’s writing well–known for his operettas. Lang, however, pays some attention to Stanford. The author notes the composer’s achievements in choral music, but generally regards Stanford’s oeuvre as a side effect of the influence of Brahms’s music in England during the 1880s and 1890s. Moreover, Lang pairs Stanford with Parry as minor, yet important figureheads in the restoration of music in England. Thirty years later, Kenneth Klaus boldly echoes Lang’s analysis along with the following statement in his book on Romantic Music 45:

There were no truly great composers, however, between Purcell and some of the possible current ones. 46

Klaus, like Lang, adheres to the Brahms comparison in assessing Stanford’s place as a composer, although he does not mention a single work to support his comparisons. Other British composers receive similar treatment, which usually result in simple one–line statements. For example, Elgar and “other Englishmen” were “profoundly impressed” by Brahms and Wagner while Tovey’s music, like Stanford’s, is very Brahmsian. 47 In order to defend his historiographical decisions with regards to British music, Klaus notes the following statement in the introduction of his book:

[This book concerns] the music which forms today’s repertoire of nineteenth–century works (and which undoubtedly will furnish part of the standard repertoire for many years to come), although lesser–known composers and their works are given appropriate coverage. 48

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46 Ibid., 166.
47 Ibid., 162–166.
48 Ibid., vii. Emphasis mine.
Likewise, Carl Dahlhaus, in his *Die Musik des 19 Jahrhunderts* of 1980,\(^{49}\) pays British composers no attention. Rather, his commentary is limited to German, Italian, Czech, and Russian music. The enduring strength of Dahlhaus’s work, though, lies his ability to trace the social, cultural, and political forces that gave rise to the idea of art music during the nineteenth century, stemming from the post-war East–German style of musicology from which he came. Regarding nationalism, Dahlhaus examines the ideology within specific musical genres—such as opera and orchestral music—as well as folksong and its uses therein.

Coming away from the historiography, nationalism, as Richard Taruskin and other have pointed out, is an emotion that connects peoples from different walks of life, and its relationship to music, to echo Rey Longyear’s phrase, is best described rather than strictly defined. Ultimately, this project is a story about people and about how the music they collected and wrote reflected Irish politics during the long nineteenth century. It shows the transformative process of composers’ and collectors’ political views. The actors involved in this story did not speak with a uniform voice. Some knew each other personally, others only through music and other creative work. Others still were separated geographically, by the Irish Sea or the Atlantic Ocean. But through the politics and public discourse about Ireland they shared a common experience.

CHAPTER 2
THOSE WILD AND BEAUTIFUL STRAINS: IRISH FOLKSONG COLLECTIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The study of folklore emerged in the late eighteenth century and "from the beginning," William Wilson wrote in 1973, "[was] intimately associated with emergent romantic nationalistic movements in which zealous scholar-patriots searched the folklore record of the past not just to see how people had lived in by gone days . . . But primarily to discover "historical" models on which to reshape the present and build the future." Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), in his day, was most responsible for the creation of romantic nationalism and, indeed, the fusion of folklore with raw, progressive politics. Writing at a time when his native Germany was dominated by French culture and customs, Herder suggested a bottom-up, relativistic approach to nation building. "Every [nationality] carries within itself the standard of its own perfection, which can in no way be compared with that of others," he wrote. Rulers of nations, to him, should arise naturally from a single culture. And nothing seemed unnatural than "the wild mixtures of various breeds and nations under one sceptre." ¹

Herder's concept of nationalism emphasized society over the individual. To him, one could only achieve humanity—a person's highest ideal—if he or she were a member of a nation. And nations could only achieve humanity if they remained true to their essential character. Herder prescribed that the people of Germany, in order to regain their national character, or soul, ought to turn to folk poetry. "Poetry," he wrote, "is the expression of the weaknesses and perfections of a nationality, a mirror of its

¹ Quoted in William A. Wilson, "Herder, Folklore and Romantic Nationalism," Journal of Popular Culture 6 (Spring 1973), 822.
sentiments, the expression of the highest to which it aspired." In short, folk verses need only express the culture from which they came.²

**Edward Bunting**

Folksong collectors in Ireland during the long nineteenth century held similar views. Edward Bunting was the youngest of three musical sons born into an Ulster family. Bunting’s father, an Englishman from Derby, came to Ireland to direct the mining works in Dungannon. He married an Irishwoman, Mary O’Quinn, and decided to remain on the island and raise a family.³ George Petrie wrote in an 1847 biographical sketch that Bunting was proud of his roots from his mother’s side. She was, reportedly, of lineal descent from Patrick Gruama O’Quinn (known in the old tongue as Para), chief of the ancient Hy Niall clan from Tyrone who was killed in battle in 1642. “It was to this origin,” Petrie wrote, “that Bunting attributed his musical talents, as well as certain strong Irish predilections, for which, throughout life, he was remarkable.”⁴

Bunting’s two older brothers, Anthony and John, studied music and embarked upon careers as pianists and pedagogues. But Edward, born in February of 1773, was, according to contemporary sources and observations, something of a prodigy. At nine years old, Edward, by then without a father,⁵ moved to Drogheda where he began to

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² Quoted in ibid. 825.


⁴ Ibid., 66-67.

⁵ Petrie notes that Bunting’s father died while Edward was still an infant. Ibid., 67.
study music with Anthony, who, according to Petrie, was “an estimable gentleman and citizen in Dublin.”

In the late eighteenth century, Dublin was a flourishing city of almost 200,000 people. Linen manufacturing was then the leading business in Ireland and producers of the textile enjoyed a market system tilted in their favor. With grants from Irish Parliament and freedom from the restrictions in compensation that the English government placed upon other Irish trades, the linen industry, which averaged about £70,000 per year, soon subsumed the wool trade. Cheap in provisions and considered high in quality, Irish wool had transformed Dublin into a boom town; by 1792, wool manufacturers employed upwards of 5,000 people at factories Coombe, Pimlico, and Spitalfields.

The wool and linen trades created patronage opportunities for Dublin’s vibrant musical activity. During the eighteenth century, a sophisticated Protestant ruling class, reflecting English tastes, brought Italian art music to Irish shores. Bunting, as a young music student, came up during a kind of “golden age” in the island’s largest city that had been set in place in prior decades. Between October and December of 1725, Signor Benedetti gave sixteen concerts in Dublin. And in 1731, a new hall at the Dublin Academy of Music (founded three years prior) opened “for the practice of Italian Musick,” under Arrigoni’s direction. The Crow Street Theatre opened in 1731 and the

6 Ibid.

7 The Hugenots brought the linen trade to Great Britain after Louis XVI revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Samuel Lewis, History and Topography of Dublin City and Its County (Dublin and Cork: The Mercier Press, 1980), 79; this source was originally published in 1837 as part of A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland. Constantia Maxwell, Dublin under the Georges: 1714-1850 (London, Bombay, and Sydney: George L. Harrap and Co., 1936), 217.

8 Lewis, History and Topography of Dublin, 78.

Fishamble Street Theatre, where Handel’s *Messiah* received its premiere, opened a decade later. John Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*, the stunning new theater work that rivaled Italian opera in England, received forty performances in Dublin in 1728 alone. Music making was, in general, a gentleman’s activity: Lord Mornington—a Dublin composer, violinist, and harpsichordist—lead the orchestra at Fishamble Street, comprised of visiting professional musicians and local amateurs who were also prominent aristocrats.¹⁰

After two years of study in Dublin, the young Bunting received his first professional opportunity: in 1784, William Ware, organist at St. Anne’s Church on Donegal Street in Belfast, took a leave of absence to London; in preparation for his departure, Ware offered his duties to Bunting, who was not yet a teenager.¹¹

St. Anne’s Church replaced the Linen Hall in 1774 at the same location after the town landlord, the Fifth Earl of Donegal, provided the monetary funds for the new building. Francis Hiorne of Warwick and Roger Mulholland, the architects for the new church, constructed an edifice that boasted a mix of different architectural styles—the portico is Doric, the tower Ionic, and the cupola Corinthian. St. Anne’s Church was

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¹⁰ According to Constantia Maxwell, the Right Honorable William Brownlow played harpsichord, Lord Lucan the flute, and the Earl of Bellamont the violoncello in the ensemble. Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges*, 100.

completed in 1776. On Sunday, October 27 of that year, the Bishop of County Down and Connor consecrated the house of worship.

With a population one tenth that of Dublin’s in the 1780s, Belfast got its name from the Irish *Beal na farsad*, meaning "mouth of the ford." The city sits along the River Lagan just before the point where the water flows into the Belfast Lough. From the port, Belfast was situated only 130 miles from Glasgow and 156 miles from Liverpool. Trade between the three cities was fluent; merchants in Glasgow and Liverpool awaited shipments of farm produce and linen—the most valuable of goods—from their northern Irish counterparts.

The northern Ireland city was a cultural outpost of Dublin when Bunting arrived. The city boasted a number of shops that sold sheet music and musical instruments. There was also demand for music teachers: church organists, theater musicians, military bandmen, and tavern musicians usually fulfilled the role. “Gentleman amateurs” and visiting performers gave subscription concerts of music by Haydn, Pleyel, and Vanhal at the Assembly Rooms (erected in 1777) and elsewhere in the city.

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12 *Black’s Guide to Belfast and the North of Ireland* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1870), 330. See also the historical outline of the church’s construction on the parish’s website [http://www.belfastcathedral.org/heritage/timelines](http://www.belfastcathedral.org/heritage/timelines) (accessed 11 April 2011). Today, St. Anne’s Church is called the Belfast Cathedral.


14 *Black’s Guide to Belfast and the North of Ireland*, 323, 324.

Bunting’s older brother John was, at this time, an established pianist and teacher in Belfast, and it is reasonable to suggest that he referred his younger brother for the post at St. Anne’s. George Petrie, writing in 1847, recalled that, “it was very soon discovered at Belfast that the boy substitute was a better organist than his employer...”. Thus, Ware secured Bunting’s position at the church for “a limited number of years.” As part of his continuing duties at the church, Bunting, as an eleven-year-old boy, served as deputy teacher to Ware’s pianoforte pupils. And after a few years in this arrangement, Petrie wrote, Bunting “became a professor on his own account.”

During his years in Belfast, Bunting lived with the family of Captain John McCracken and his wife Anne Joy. Both the Joy and McCracken families were textile manufacturers who, along with the McCabe family, owned the first mechanical cotton-spinning mills in the city, which were created in 1777. John McCracken was a ship owner and his wife came from Huguenot descent. The Joy family, in addition to securing prominent positions in the textile trade, had founded Belfast’s first newspaper in 1737, The Belfast News-Letter.

Two of the couple’s children, Henry Joy and Mary Ann McCracken were close to Bunting’s age. The boy, born in 1767 and named for his uncle—a delegate to the Dungannon convention of February 1782, which demanded increased legislative freedom for Ireland—grew up to become a prominent Belfast businessman and social

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reformer. Henry Joy, Rory Cornish wrote, was “a humane and popular employer [who]
followed in the philanthropic tradition by creating a lending library for the poor, and in
1788 created, with his sister Mary Ann [who was born in 1770]. . . Belfast's first non-
denominational Sunday school.”¹⁹ The education of young Henry Joy and Mary Ann, perhaps, opened the door for their later interest in public causes. They received part of their education from David Manson, who founded a school based upon a method of teaching children "by way of amusement" and on reward rather than punishment, a method probably regarded as outlandish at the time. Moreover, Henry Joy and Mary Ann grew up reading the works of William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Thomas Paine.²⁰

The McCracken family also held strong ties to the volunteer movement of Belfast. Captain John and four of his relatives founded the 1st Belfast Volunteer force. In addition, the well-connected family sympathized with the rebellious colonies during the American Revolution. And as for politics at home, they welcomed Theobald Wolfe Tone, the Dublin lawyer and political activist, to Belfast after the founding of the Society of United Irishmen in 1791.²¹ The McCrackens, like many Ulster Protestants at the time, sympathized with revolutionary ideas, especially with regard to citizenship and land-

owning rights for Ireland’s large Catholic population. Henry Joy, who would join the


United Irishmen in 1795, for example, embraced the ideas of the French Revolution and those purported by Thomas Paine in *The Rights of Man*.\(^{22}\)

At its founding in Dublin in 1791, the Society of United Irishmen drew up a peaceable declaration, which was to establish a model for secular nationalism. The opening of the document reflects the political philosophy of Thomas Paine:

> In the present era of reform, when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe, when religious persecution is compelled to adjure her tyranny over conscience, when the rights on men are ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice, when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms, against the common sense and common interests of mankind, when all governments are acknowledged to originate from the people, and to be so far only obligatory, as they protect their rights, and promote their welfare, we think it our duty, as Irishmen, to come forward, and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance, and what we know to be its effectual remedy.\(^{23}\)

“We have no national government, we are ruled by Englishmen, and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is the interest of another country, whose instrument is corruption, and whose strength is the weakness of Ireland,” the document further articulated.

> And these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country, as mean to seduce and subdue the honesty of her representatives in the legislature. Such an extrinsic power, acting with uniform force, in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interest, can be raised with effect solely by unanimity, decision, and spirit in the people, qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally, and efficaciously, by that great measure, essential to the prosperity and freedom of Ireland, an equal representation of all the people in parliament.\(^{24}\)

\(^{22}\) Ibid.  
\(^{24}\) Ibid.
The Dublin ensemble answered with the following promise:

Impressed with these sentiments, we have agreed to form an association, to be called the Society of United Irishmen, and we do pledge ourselves to our country, and mutually to each other, that we will steadily support, and endeavour by all due means to carry into effect the following resolutions:

1st. Resolved, That the weight of English influence in the government of this country is so great, as to require a cordial union among all the people of Ireland, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties, and extension of our commerce.

2nd. That the sole constitutional mode by which this influence can be opposed is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people of parliament.

3rd. That no reform is practicable, efficacious, or just, which shall not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion.25

The United Irishmen, at least at this stage in its development, aimed for government reform through the electoral process, which in turn called attention to the rights of Catholics to vote. The document concluded:

Satisfied, as we are, that the intestine divisions among Irishmen have too often given encouragement and impunity to profligate, audacious, and corrupt administrations, in measures which, but for these divisions, they durst to have attempted, we submit our resolutions to the nation, as the basis of our political faith. We have gone to what we conceived to be the root of the evil. We have stated what we conceive to be remedy. With a parliament thus formed, everything is easy—without it, nothing can be done—and we do call on, and most earnestly exhort our countrymen in general to follow our example, and to form similar societies in every quarter of the kingdom, for the promotion of constitutional knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the rights of man throughout all sects and denominations of Irishmen. . . .26

For Edward Bunting, the political climate in Belfast during his teenage years was part of everyday life. He was acquainted with a number of United Irishmen, including Henry Joy McCracken and Patrick Lynch. And the society played an active role in the cultural life of Ireland: William Drennan, a founder and literary champion of the

25 Ibid., 69-71.

26 Ibid.
organization, penned a number of patriotic poems and folk ballads, like *The Shan van Vocht* and *The Wearing of the Green*. A revival of interest in native Irish poetry and music accompanied the political events of the 1780s and 1790s; cultured citizens of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork read literary magazines that featured the work of male and female Irish writers. The late eighteenth century, Alfred Perceval Graves wrote, “was a brief but brilliant era of Irish parliamentary independence [that] gave an impulse to literature, art, and music in Ireland which survived the passing of the Act of Union for quite a generation.”

On 11 July 1792, the Belfast Harp Festival—under sponsorship from James MacDonnell, Robert Bradshaw, Henry Joy, and Thomas Russell—convened in order to resurrect Ireland’s traditional harp music. Newspapers advertised the three-day festival as “a feat which suggests an intimate relationship between harp music and national identity.” Prior festivals took place in Granard, County Longford.

The committee of directors for the Belfast Festival hired the nineteen-year old Bunting, who was by then well known as a musician in the city, to transcribe the melodies that would be played; the harpers were the sole surviving depositories of this repertoire.

There was, perhaps, a social need for the event as well. George Petrie described that the gathering as "the aged and feeble minstrels who had given pleasure in a state

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of society now rapidly undergoing a radical change."  

The Harp Festival also coincided with a local meeting of the United Irishmen, who met to celebrate the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Politics and music were not only juxtaposed with these two events, they were intertwined. Petrie wrote that "this work was a task, for the accompaniment of which the nature of [Bunting's] mind peculiarly fitted him, and he entered upon it with enthusiasm; for his mind was deeply imbued with the political feelings so prevalent amongst the middle classes of the locality at the time."  

Furthermore, the harp festival and the meeting of the United Irishmen were joined symbolically: the harp itself became the icon of the organization.  

Bunting acted as scribe, notating tunes performed by Hempson, O'Neill, Fanning, and several others. These harpers were all that remained from a rapidly declining class of traditional musicians from all parts of Ireland. "[Bunting] was thus only just in time to preserve the melodies from oblivion, and became virtually the only source for the matters and customs of the ancient tradition."  

The musician himself wrote that the rapid decrease of the number of itinerant performers on the Irish harp, with the consequent decline of that tender and expressive instrument, gave the first idea of assembling the remaining harpers dispersed over the different provinces of Ireland.  

The young antiquarian noted nearly five decades later that Hempson "played with long crooked nails [and] was the only one who played the very old—the aboriginal

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Davis, "Sequels of colonialism," 38.
music of the country.” O’Neill, Bunting wrote, was "not so absolute a harper as Hempson." Instead, he was "a gentleman harper" and "more a man of the world, and had travelled in his calling over all parts of Ireland. . . .” O’Neill, whom Bunting mentions was a friend of Arland Kane, a musician who played before the Pretender, the Pope, and the King of Spain, "had played on Brian Boru’s harp, strung for the occasion [sic], though the streets of Limerick in the year 1760.”

Following the Harp Festival, Bunting set out to collect additional music, venturing through Ulster and Connaught in 1793. Doing so would “perfect” his planned book "for the purpose of comparing the music already procured [from the Festival], with that in the possession of harpers in other parts, and making such additions as would render the work complete.”

His work resulted in the General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland, which contained sixty-six airs. Robert Welch wrote that “Bunting’s initial collection served as a core for later researches into traditional Irish music. . . .”

The key element in Bunting’s concept of Irish music is visible in the collection’s title: ancient music was the most authentic on the small island. To Bunting, the older the tune, the more authentic it was. He determined the age of the music in two ways. First, most of the performers who convened in Belfast that July day were, in Bunting’s words, "advanced in life, and they all concurred in one opinion respecting the reputed antiquity of those airs which they called 'ancient.'” Bunting reported that the men delighted in being interrogated about the age of some of the pieces, saying, "they were more ancient

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37 Bunting, General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Vol. 1, i.
than any to which our popular traditions extended."\[^{40}\] Second, the tunes collected were inherently the same no matter from where or whom they came; if harpers from different regions played the same tune in a similar fashion, then the music must be, by definition, very old. Bunting wrote that, "it would appear that the old musicians in transmitting the music to us through so many centuries, treated it with the utmost reverence, as they seem never to have ventured to make the slightest innovation in it during descent."\[^{41}\]

On the act of collecting the tunes, Bunting wrote the following in his preface to the volume:

[I took] down the various airs played by the different harpers, and was particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies, which would seem, from inferences that will afterwards be drawn, to have been preserved pure, and handed down unalloyed, though a long succession of ages.\[^{42}\]

Further:

A principal motive to convene this assemblage of the remnant of the Irish bards, was to procure, while yet attainable, the most approved copies of tunes already in the hands of practitioners, as well as to revive and perpetuate a variety of others extremely ancient, of which there were no copies extant, and which were therefore likely soon to become extinct.\[^{43}\]

All tunes were the same, including same key, style, expression, and even "without a single variation in any essential passage."\[^{44}\] Furthermore, the older the tune, the more "perfect" it was, suggesting, as Bunting concludes, that great care was taken in the preservation of the original. The ancient harpers and composers, therefore, "must necessarily have been excellent performers, versed in the scientific part of their

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\[^{40}\] Quoted in ibid., ii.

\[^{41}\] Ibid.

\[^{42}\] Ibid., i.

\[^{43}\] Ibid.

\[^{44}\] Ibid., ii.
profession. . .”\textsuperscript{45} Also, “it is remarkable that the performers all tuned their instruments on the same principle, totally ignorant of the principle itself, and without being able to assign any reason either for their mode of tuning, or of their playing the bass.”\textsuperscript{46}

In his transcriptions of the tunes, Bunting emphasized the melody as the most important aspect of a composition. The harmonization to the tunes he collected were his own, idealized and reflecting the learned eighteenth-century style of voice leading and cadential formula for the pianoforte. Petrie, the foremost critic of Irish folksong collections in the mid-nineteenth century, wrote the following of Bunting’s method:

> It was fortunate, moreover, that there was a person so fitted for the task at hand at the time, to undertake it; for it would have been a happy chance, that if any other musician had been employed, he would not, in the prejudiced spirit of the time, have held in contempt the strange and wild strains, so unlike anything that he had been accustomed to regard as good music, often feebly performed, and barbarized by rude harmonies, and that, having accomplished his task in this spirit he would not have allowed the tunes to have shared the fate to which the minstrels were fast hastening, whose harps had given them utterance.\textsuperscript{47}

The collection also secured Bunting a place in the history of music in Ireland as “the first systematic collector of Irish folksongs,” a phrase still applied today.\textsuperscript{48}

There has been some discrepancy about the date of publication of Bunting’s volume. Brian Boydell noted that the first edition was published in London in 1797.\textsuperscript{49} George Petrie, however, offers a more complicated story. In a 1847 article about the antiquarian, he wrote that “it was not till four years after this meeting [the Belfast harp Festival] that Bunting gave his first collection of Irish Melodies to the world,” which

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{47} Petrie, “Our Portrait Gallery,” 68.


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
would imply 1796 as the date of publication, or at least a date of release. The publication of Bunting's collection was, however, put out of the market by a cheap pirated edition, printed in Dublin by a man who, Petrie wrote, "was known unaffectionately as Mud Lee." The pirated edition, it seems, was published in 1796, while the official publication came the following year. Petrie continued, "so whatever money may have been made of the work, a very small portion of it found its way into Bunting's pocket."

But whatever money Bunting made from his work—the volume was sold for ten shillings and sixpence to the public—it barley paid the expense of publication, even without the pirated edition. According to Petrie, Bunting only spoke moderately about the success of the collection. He added that, "though [the volume] may have had a tolerable sale in his own immediate locality of Belfast, and among the patriotic portion of the middle classes elsewhere in Ireland, we have strong reasons for believing that it never, to any extent, found its way into the houses of the higher orders . . . ." However, "gain in money was not the primary or influencing object which led him to produce [the collection]—indeed he never exhibited even a prudent tendency in that direction till the support of a wife and children imperatively required it; and, as at that time he found no difficulty in obtaining, by the practice of his profession, even more than sufficed for his

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51 Ibid., 70.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., 69.
wants, if not for his pleasures, it is most probable that its failure in that way was a matter of indifference to him.\textsuperscript{55}

Bunting’s volume, in more ways than one, bears the imprint of the United Irishmen. Just as the organization in its early incarnation sought to educate the population about the history of Irish oppression at the hands of the English, Bunting’s subsequent notes sometimes reflect this philosophy. The young collector, further, sought to promote music from disparate regions of the island as a national product. Leith Davis remarked in 2001 that “Bunting interprets the importance of his work as its transformation of local activity into national enterprise. He emphasizes the fact that he has traveled around the entire country collecting material.”\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, the United Irishmen provided the means for the publication of Bunting’s volume. As keeper of the Belfast Library, Thomas Russell, a member of the group, donated funds for the printing costs; without such patronage, the project would have surely been abandoned.\textsuperscript{57}

**George Thomson’s Collection**

Born in Fife in 1757 and raised in Banf in northern Scotland, George Thomson devoted much of his spare time to the publication of folksong settings in his adult life. He settled in Edinburgh at age 17, and by 1780, the 23-year-old Thompson began working as a cleric with the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Art and Manufactures in Scotland, a position he held until his retirement in 1839.\textsuperscript{58} At this time,

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 70.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Davis, “Sequels of colonialism,” 37.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Russell later lost his life due to his participation of Robert Emmet’s 1803 rebellion. Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Thomson began attending the weekly concerts of the Edinburgh Musical Society. An amateur musician himself, Thomson performed on violin in the society orchestra and sang in the choir, but he reportedly never became a full member of the society.\(^{59}\) It was also at these weekly concerts where the young Scotsman heard foreign singers, such as the notable castrato Tenducci, perform folksong arrangements, a genre that seemed to have saturated Thomson's imagination. He was particularly fond of the “classical” settings of folksong. David Johnson and Kirsteen McCue noted that “folksongs in their unadorned state, such as he must have learned in his childhood, do not seem to have appealed to him.”\(^{60}\)

In the 1780s, the Scotsman decided to recruit the best European talent to set arrangements—introductions, harmonizations, and conclusions for the tunes—for his own collection of folksongs, a publication that would surpass other well-known collections, like William Thomson’s *Orpheus Caledonius* (1725) and mid-century editions by Robert Bremner, James Oswald, and William Napier. George Thomson contracted Pleyel, Kozeluch, Haydn, and Beethoven for the project, which occupied him until the mid-1840s and cost him a great deal of his own money.\(^{61}\) William Napier had previously signed Haydn to arrange folksongs for his publishing firm after the composer made a visit to London in 1791; the project resulted in two collections, which were printed in 1792 and 1795. Thomson signed Pleyel for a similar purpose, and the Edinburgh publisher issued his *Select Collection of Scottish Airs* in 1793. Other composers were brought aboard: Thomson enlisted Kozeluch from 1797 to 1809,

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\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

\(^{61}\) Initial funding, though, came from “an Edinburgh businessman.” Ibid.
Haydn from 1799 to 1804, Weber briefly in 1825, Hummel from 1826 to 1835, H. R.
Bishop in 1841, and G. F. Graham, a fellow Scotsman, from 1838 to 1841. Enlisting the
talents of composers famous in Britain and on the continent gave “an additional interest
to the melodies, very far exceeding what they before possessed,” Thomson wrote in
an 1822 edition of the collection.  

In addition, Thomson set poems by Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas
Campbell, and a host of other lesser-known contemporaries: Mrs. Joanna Baillie, a Mrs.
Grant, and Mrs. John Hunter. He reasoned as follows:

The poetical part of the work was, to the editor, a subject of most anxious
consideration, and attended with far greater difficulty than he had ever
anticipated: for although a considerable portion of the airs had long been untied
to unexceptionable songs, yet a far greater number stood matched with songs of
such a silly, vulgar, or indelicate character, as could no longer be sung in decent
society, or among persons of good taste: and it became necessary, in order to
preserve and perpetuate those beautiful melodies, to rid them of their coarse
metrical associations, and to get them matched with others more congenial to
their nature and worthy of their beauty.

The project, to the Scotsman, represented a best-of-all-possible-worlds scenario: the
best of British folk music and poetry neatly packaged into musical settings by the best
composers of the day. The composer with whom the publisher worked the longest,

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62 George Thomson, ed. Thomson’s Collection of the Songs of Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and Other
Eminent Lyric Poets Ancient and Modern to the Select Melodies of Scotland and Ireland and Wales with
Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte by Pleyel, Haydn, Beethoven, etc. Vol. 1 (London: G
Thomson, 1822), i.

63 The 1822 publication comprised arrangements of the original symphonies and accompaniments, which
were scored for piano trio, for pianoforte alone. The edition also contained a short dissertation on the
National Melodies of Scotland.

64 The publisher collected the poetry of the others after “the lamented death of Burns.” Burns, a favorite of
Thomson, wrote “a large portion of the songs” (ii). Thomson, ed. Thomson’s Collection, ii.

65 Ibid., i.
though, was Beethoven, who set over 179 folksong arrangements between 1809 and 1820.

The Scottish publisher first wrote to Beethoven about the project in 1803, but the composer did not agree to the work until 1809. Thomson’s early negotiations with Beethoven were unsuccessful because, reportedly, the composer of The Eroica Symphony asked for too much money. Beethoven completed the first batch of folksongs—Thomson gave him Irish and Welsh tunes first and supplied the Scottish ones later—in July 1810, during the height of the Napoleonic Wars; the Irish settings were published in 1814 and 1816, the Welsh in 1809, 1811, and 1817, and the Scottish in 1818.

Unlike Edward Bunting, Thomson did not embark upon extended travels to collect his material. Instead, the publisher obtained most of his Irish melodies from Dr. J. Latham, a friend of Thomson and an amateur musician who lived in Cork. Between 1802 and 1805, Barry Copper wrote, Latham sent Thomson “a substantial supply” of Irish melodies. The Scotsman also supplemented Latham’s tunes with ones he had obtained through other means, as he recounted in the preface to the first volume of his

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66 Barry Cooper, liner notes to Beethoven’s Folksong Settings (Hamburg: Deutche Grammophone, 1997), 10-14.


68 There is some discrepancy in the number and ordering of the Irish airs between Thomson’s two published editions and modern cataloguing numbers for Beethoven’s works. The first volume of Thomson’s edition contained 29 airs: all of WoO 152 and numbers 1 through 4 of WoO 153. The second volume comprised 30 airs: WoO 153, numbers 5 through 20; WoO 154, numbers 1, 3 through 6, and 8 through 12; and WoO 157, numbers 2, 6, 8, and 11. Barry Cooper, Beethoven’s Folksong Settings: Chronology, Sources, Style (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 8-9. See also Cooper, liner notes to Beethoven’s Folksong Settings, 10-14.
Irish Airs. The two folksong enthusiasts possibly drew from Edward Bunting’s 1796 collection for some of the Irish airs. Barry Cooper observed that “several of Bunting’s melodies do indeed correspond with ones set by Beethoven, but in almost every case the differences are sufficient to indicate that Beethoven did not simply receive a version directly copied (or miscopied) from Bunting.” For example, Beethoven’s The Soldier in a Foreign Land (V/8) is similar to Bunting’s The Brown Maid, number 32 in the 1796 collection. Except for slight differences in rhythm and an inclusion of a short cadenza in Beethoven's version, the two settings are identical. Cooper further suggested that Thomson could have modified the melody before sending it to Beethoven in order to fit it to the text he wanted.

Beethoven’s part in the project was to arrange each folksong for piano trio in order to endear the published collection to audiences for chamber music. The composer, though, worked on many of the settings without having access to the texts of the tunes, a point he stressed in several letters to Thomson. In a letter dated 23 November 1809, Beethoven wrote that, “Next time please send me the words of the songs since it is absolutely necessary to give the true expression.” Thomson was apparently slow to comply: Beethoven again asked the publisher for texts in letters

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69 Thomson noted in the preface that he "was at the utmost pains to obtain [the folksongs] in the purest and best form; having carefully examined every collection extant; availed himself of the communications of such intelligent friends as had been much conversant with their native music; and visited different parts of the country, to collect on the spot what he could not obtain by means of correspondents; invariably preferring that set or copy of every melody which seemed the most simple and beautiful, whether he found it in print, or in manuscript, or got it from a voice, or an instrument." Thomson, ed. Thomson's Collection, i. See also Cooper, Beethoven’s Folksong Settings, 65-66.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

dated 10 July 1810 and 20 July 1811. However, the issue, Barry Cooper suggests, was a little more complex: Thomson did supply Beethoven with summaries of the poetic texts by which to work as well as indications as to the particular character of the melodies to be set. Furthermore, Beethoven was reportedly satisfied with Thomson’s method of carefully setting the texts to the tunes only after the arrangements had been written.

Examination of some of the folksong settings reveals that the composer of the *Eroica* and *Appassionata* was as adept at writing for accessible miniature forms as he was for larger ones. The song “The Fox’s Sleep,” based upon a poem by William Smyth, incorporates syncopated rhythmic patterns, murky bass, and a sustained tonic—D major—in the accompaniment, which underscores the expressive vocal duet. Word painting also plays a role: a recurring series of rising arpeggios in C major evokes Burn’s text—“Music on the roaring ocean, which divides my love from me”—in the song “Peggy Bawn.” “Return to Ulster,” a poem by Sir Walter Scott, is set to the air “Young Terence MacDonough” by O’Carolan. Here, in one of the most expressive of the composer’s settings, Beethoven employs a leap of a tritone—B natural to F—in the opening symphony of the triple-meter tune, which foreshadows the coming harmonic and rhythmic tension. The accompaniment part to this solo song consists of steady triplet figures, which brush against the duplet eighth notes in the F-minor melody. The

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73 Ibid., 33.

74 Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 199.

75 The song also contains a second poem, “The Dying Father to his Daughter,” which is intended to be performed for single voice. Thomson, ed. *Thomson’s Collection* Vol. 1, 42.

song’s conclusion pits a F pedal point against a shifting i-V7-with-added-sixth harmonic scheme. This simple, yet stress-laden passage seems—if not for the fact that Beethoven wrote his settings without the texts—to capture the poetry: “Can I live the dear life of delusion again, / That flow’d when these echoes first mix’d with my strain?”

Yet, the issue of playability became a point of contention and resulted in a stormy relationship between the Beethoven and Thomson. After receiving the first batch of completed settings in 1812, Thomson praised Beethoven for his skill. He wrote that the songs were “as much superior to the every day (sic) works we meet with, as the Dramas of Shakespeare transcend those of ordinary Compilers for the stage.” “They are all worthy of the greatest applause,” he also penned. Yet, the publisher saw that the composer’s settings were too demanding, even at this stage, for his target audience: unmarried teenage girls who had between three and five years of experience on the piano. Thomson asked Beethoven to simplify his piano writing, which often involved triplet eighth and sixteenth notes performed simultaneously in both hands. The composer refused.

As with Bunting’s 1796 collection, the Beethoven settings did not sell well. The reason, Thomson concluded, was that the composer’s arrangements were too difficult and elevated for the public, a position he maintained. “He (Beethoven) composes for posterity,” the publisher wrote in 1821. Yet, Thomson may have played a role in the

77 Ibid., 42.
78 Cooper, liner notes to Beethoven’s Folksong Settings, 10-14.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid. Cooper noted elsewhere, however, that Beethoven “tried hard, though not always successfully, to follow Thomson’s demands for easy piano parts.” See Cooper, Beethoven’s Folksong Settings, 202.
81 Quoted in Cooper, liner notes to Beethoven’s Folksong Settings, 10-14.
collection’s success—or lack thereof. Commenting on Thomson, Barry Cooper wrote that “his administrative skills were sometimes deficient.” The Scotsman sent Beethoven several melodies, which he decided later not to set. He also asked the composer to find and arrange Continental folksongs, but later felt they were of no use as he could not find suitable English words for them. Thomson, reportedly, had limited marketing skills and was simply not able to sell as many copies of the publications as he had hoped. The limited successes of Beethoven’s settings, nonetheless, lead Maynard Solomon to comment that “the artistic results [of the airs] are of somewhat mixed value. . . .”

Aside from contemporary Irish politics, Beethoven’s folksong settings have, since their publication, opened the long debate about the use of folk music in art music. Maynard Solomon opined that Thomson, as the brains and bucks behind the project, simply wanted to cater to conventional tastes. “[He] bowdlerized both the texts and tunes of the traditional folksong,” the scholar wrote. “As a result,” he added, “Beethoven’s settings do not fully explore the harmonic implications of the more archaic melodies, instead translating their sometimes modal language and irregular rhythmic structure into Classical-style harmonies and symmetrical rhythms.” Others, though, have examined the folksong settings for their artistic merit, their worth as adaptations of traditional repertoire. None, perhaps, have done more than Barry Cooper. “Beethoven made more effort than his contemporaries to capture something of the atmosphere of the original melodies in his harmonizations, by such means as drone basses and the occasional modal inflection, so as to retain something of their folk character,” Cooper

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82 Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 202:


84 Ibid.
wrote in his 1994 study of Beethoven’s settings.\textsuperscript{85} “The subtle ingenuities in Beethoven’s settings are combined with an apparent rustic simplicity,” he added.\textsuperscript{86} Moreover, Cooper noted that these works are more numerous than any in the other genres in which Beethoven composed, discounting the early counterpoint exercises. “And nowhere else did he transcend the bounds of convention more seriously,” Cooper opined.\textsuperscript{87}

For his part in the story, Beethoven seems to have never tired of writing folksong settings. It is also worth remembering that Thomson was the one to put an end to his collaboration with the composer because the folksong settings were not selling.\textsuperscript{88}

**Thomas Moore**

Thomas Moore was born in Dublin on 28 May 1779. His father, John Moore, a native of Kerry, operated a grocer’s shop at No. 12 Aungier Street; Moore’s family lived above the shore. Terence de Vere White notes in his 1977 biography of the poet the following:

Aungier Street in the latter half of the eighteenth century was fashionable and prosperous. It reflected the fortunes of the city which flourished in sympathy with the growing confidence of the Irish colony which increasingly – as in the United States – began to assert its parliamentary independence.\textsuperscript{89}

Moore’s mother, Anastasia Codd, was from Wexford and was the daughter of a small provision merchant.\textsuperscript{90} According to Stephen Gwynn, an earlier twentieth-century

\textsuperscript{85} Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 197.
\textsuperscript{86} Cooper, liner notes to *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 11.
\textsuperscript{87} Cooper, *Beethoven’s Folksong Settings*, 210.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. 201.
biographer of the poet, “[Moore’s] parents were evidently prosperous people, devoted to their clever boy, [their first-born child], and ambitious to secure him social promotion by giving scope to the talents which he showed from his early schooldays.”

From an early age, Thomas Moore benefited from his parent’s relatively high social status. The Moore family hosted several musicians at their home on Aungier Street, especially after they received their own pianoforte. Wesley Doyle and Joe Kelly were chief among the guests. Joe Kelly, according to Terence de Vere White, was a brother of Michael Kelly, a Dublin-born tenor who sang the chief tenor role in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* in the original performance in Vienna. Later, Kelly sang at Drury Lane.

Young Thomas Moore’s teacher at the boarding school where he attended was Samuel Whyte, a former teacher of Sheridan, author, poet, theatrical director, and teacher of elocution. He showed prodigious talent as well: by the age 11, Moore began crafting his own verses, and by 14, he contributed two poems to the *Anthologia hibernica*: an amorous verse to an acquaintance, Hannah Byrne, and a “Pastoral Ballad.” He also performed recitations and acted in private theatrical performances as a child.

In addition, Moore studied French and Italian, but learned music independently from his sister’s teacher, Billy Warren. Moore himself noted in his *Memoirs* that Warren was intimate with the family, “and was morning and night a constant visitor.” Moore apparently never received regular lessons from the tutor; rather, he learned by ear from watching his sister’s lessons. He stated that he “[endeavored] constantly to pick out

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tunes or make them—when I was alone—I became a pianoforte player (at least sufficiently so to accompany my own singing) before almost anyone was in the least aware of it.\textsuperscript{95} White notes that, as a boy, Moore acquired the ability to play a few simple tunes on the pianoforte with only his right hand. And although his piano skills dwindled, Moore discovered another musical talent. “It was soon, however, discovered that I had an agreeable voice and taste for singing; and in the sort of gay life we led (for my mother was always fond of society), this talent of mine was frequently called upon to enliven out tea parties and supporters,” the young poet remembered.\textsuperscript{96}

Moore was raised as a Catholic during a time of dramatic political change. People who practiced what was called “the popish religion” made up the majority of the peasant class in Ireland, for whom living conditions were significantly harsher than that of French peasants.\textsuperscript{97} In the early eighteenth century, the Irish Parliament passed the Penal Laws, which denied Catholics the right to vote, sit on parliament, attend school, and own land, in order to protect the interests of wealthy Protestants. Living conditions for the Catholic peasants made for a terrible sight. The Englishman Charles Bowden, while traveling through Tipperary in 1790, wrote that he was “filled with melancholy on contemplating these poor creatures who drag on a miserable existence under an accumulation of woes that it is hard to think human nature can sustain. . . .”\textsuperscript{98} “Catholic Munster certainly was no poorer, if indeed not richer, in 1848 than in 1748 . . .,” Daniel Corkery wrote in his 1925 history, \textit{The Hidden Ireland}. Irish peasants lived in cabins built of stone—with

\textsuperscript{95} Quoted in ibid.

\textsuperscript{96} Quoted in White, \textit{Tom Moore}, 9.


\textsuperscript{98} Charles Bowden, \textit{A Tour of Ireland} (London, 1791), 158. Quoted in Kee, \textit{The Green Flag}, 41.
and without mortar—but more frequently of mud and sod. Roofs were thatched with bracken, fern, and heath, making such residences hardly distinguishable from the bog land itself. These cabins usually had a single room; instead of chimneys tenants cut holes into the roof. "The smoke was often seen to rise up like a cloud from almost every inch of the roof, percolating through as the thatch grew old and thin. The soot that in time came to encrust the walls and thatch within was occasionally scraped off and used for manure," Corkery recalled.99

Hunger was a daily struggle. During the winter months, in particular, whole families survived on two, and sometimes only one, meal per day, though even then they ate potatoes and buttermilk. Farming was the only way of life. Besides raising food, farmers produced small amounts of corn, vegetables, and poultry, most of which was sold to pay the rent. Meat, if available, was only eaten at Christmas and Easter. Famine, then, was an ever-present threat. A famine in 1740 reportedly claimed 400,000 lives. "Dogs were seen to eat the dead bodies that remained unburied in the fields," Corkery wrote.100 "I have seen the labourer endeavoring to work at his spade, but fainting for want of food, and forced to quit it," one contemporary wrote in 1741. "I have seen the aged father eating grass like a beast, and in the anguish of his soul wishing for dissolution. I have seen the helpless orphan exposed on the dung-hill, and none to take him in for fear of infection; and I have seen the hungry infant sucking at the breast of the already expired parent."101

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100 Ibid., 16-17.
In addition to rent, the tithe stood as the heaviest financial burden upon Irish
Catholic peasants: ten percent of a peasants' production went, by law, to the Protestant
church, a faith to which such a tax payer did not belong.\footnote{Kee, \textit{The Green Flag}, 42.} Vincent Morley wrote the
following in his 2002 study of the eighteenth-century Irish Catholic issue:

As might reasonably be expected, the popular political verse of the early
eighteenth century indicates continuing support for the principles espoused by
the Catholic community during the seventeenth century—that is, for the 'god,
king, and country' ideology of the Confederate Catholics. The vernacular
literature expressed the hope—at times, the expectation—that the Revolution
settlement would be overthrown, thereby freeing the Catholic church from Penal
restraints, restoring the legitimate dynasty to the throne, and securing Ireland's
position as one of three equal kingdoms linked by a personal union of their
crowns. Catholicism, Jacobitism and Irish nationalism are intimately associated in
the political literature of the period.\footnote{Vincent Morley, \textit{Irish Opinion and the American Revolution, 1760-1783} (Cambridge University Press,
2002), 3. In defense of his use of the term "nationalism," Morley issued the following aside: "It would be
tendentious to describe a demand for political autonomy grounded on a sense of ethnic identity by any
term other than 'nationalism.' Those who object that its use in and eighteenth-century context is
anachronistic should note that the earliest citation of 'royalism' in the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary} dates from
only 1793; those who find the very concept of eighteenth-century nationalism problematic are referred to
for a cogent critique of marxisant theories that represent nationalism as a product of the French
revolution, democratisation, capitalism, and mass literacy." See Morley, \textit{Irish Opinion and the American
Revolution}, 3-4 fn.}

Amidst the turbulent political waters of the Irish Catholic question, Thomas
Moore's father, author Stephen Gwynn notes, "as a Catholic, had naturally a keen
interest in the great question of reform and Catholic enfranchisement. . . .\footnote{Gwynn, \textit{Thomas Moore}, 7.} The
author further tells that Moore's father took Thomas, as a child, to a dinner in honor of
Napper Tandy, who took notice of the boy. Seamus MacCall noted in his 1935
biographical study of the poet the following:

In the year 1792, when Tommy (Moore) was thirteen, Irish politics became a
further interest in his life. The fulfilment (sic) of Mrs. Moore's chief ambition for
her son was largely dependent upon political developments. For without some measure of Catholic enfranchisement there was no hope of his entering any of the professions. In addition to her personal and religious feelings, Mrs. Moore was a patriotic Irishwoman, and among the intimate acquaintances of the Moore family at that period were many who were to take prominent parts in the activities of the United Irishmen.¹⁰⁵

But even before Moore's birth, the winds of change were beginning to blow. The 1760s were a decade of "profound change" in the British Empire. British victories over France in Canada and India in 1759 and over Spain in Cuba in 1762 created, in their wake, a general sense of euphoria. Even the accession of the 22-year-old George III—the 'patriot king'—contributed to a sense of optimism in the strength and security of the British Empire. But the problems of administering such an empire quickly became apparent. "In the west," Vincent Morley wrote in 2002, "the old Anglophone and Protestant colonies no longer felt constrained by the threat of a French presence in Canada, while the administration of new Francophone and Catholic subjects presented government with novel dilemmas."¹⁰⁶ The eastern empire brought with its acquisition problematic relations between the crown and the East India Company and the fear about the corrupting influence of wealth upon British politics. The accession of George III, in particular, provided the Catholic Committee—which was recently reconstituted by John Curry and others in the capital—with an opportunity to express the condolences of the Catholic community to the new monarch; they did so on upon the death of the king's grandfather, George I.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Morley, Irish Opinion and the American Revolution, 40.
¹⁰⁷ Catholics in Britain deeply regretted the loss of George I, for they enjoyed a 'repose' that had 'entirely proceeded from his royal clemency, and the mild administration of his government in this kingdom.' London Gazette (7 February 1761); Quoted in Morley, Irish Opinion and the American Revolution, 45.
Just before Thomas Moore’s birth, the first of the Catholic Relief Acts were passed. The Act of 1778, Luke Gardiner's act, was the first to relax the Penal code, a series of laws administered by William III limiting the rights of Catholics. The new act, moreover, supported the existing political order pursued by the Catholic Committee since the 1760s. The provisions of the Act permitted Catholics to take long-term leases and inherit property on the same basis as Protestants. However, such a movement benefitted Catholics of a higher social order; it made no difference to the majority of the population. Morley stated that "it has been suggested that the origins of the catholic relief act lay in the desire of the administration to promote recruitment among Catholics—and even that its promoter, Luke Gardiner, was a stalking-horse acting on behalf of Lord North. But the evidence of a military motivation for the first measures of Catholic relief, while persuasive in the British—and more especially the

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108 The views of the Catholic Committee, though, were not founded upon solid populist belief. Fr Liam Ó hIarlaithe, a priest from west Cork, composed the following verse upon the death of George II: Sin é an Seoirse ceannais bhi inné acu i stat/ I gcoróin na Sacsan is I réim go hard,/ Gan treoir gan tapa le tréine an bháis,/ Sin fógairt feartainne is éclips./ Biaidh mórchuid scamall ar Éirinn spas/ Ag tóir, ag taistéal, tar Téitis práth./ Foirneart fearachon faobhair ar fás/ Go dtógfar sealbh do réx ceart. (There is the mighty George whom they had in splendour yesterday, in the crown of England and ruling on high, without movement or vigour through the power of death, that's an omen of storm and eclipse. There'll be a great mass of clouds over Ireland some time, chasing and voyaging over the sea for a while, the violence of armed warriors growing, until possession in taken for the rightful king.) Quoted and translated in Ibid., 46. Morley further states that "none of Ó hIarlaithe's audience can have imagined that George III was intended [to be crowned king]." But opinions among the clergy and practicing Catholics were mixed. Archbishop Lincoln, in a letter that was read in the capital's churches, reminded congregations of Christ's call to "give unto Caesar what belongeth to Caesar, and unto God what belongeth to God." The Archbishop further urged Catholics to "offer up your prayers for the spiritual happiness of his gracious Majesty King George the Third, and his royal consort, beseeching Almighty God to assist his councils, of restoring a solid, lasting, and advantageous peace, and so put a stop to the further effusion of Christian blood." Pue's Occurrences (13 March 1762). Ibid., 46-47.

109 Ibid., 187. The author humorously noted elsewhere that "the political attitudes of the Catholic élite, clerical as well as lay, had been diverging from those of the general population for more than a decade; by 1762 the emerging pro-Hanoverian stance of the former was apparent even to a blind poet in County Tipperary." Ibid., 47.
Scottish—contexts, is lacking in relation to Ireland.”\textsuperscript{110} The Relief Act of 1782 brought additional property rights to Catholic subjects:

XII. And be it enacted . . . That so much of an act passed in the seventh year of King Williams the third, intituled, \textit{An act for the better securing the government by disarming papists}, as subjects any papist, who shall after the twentieth day of January, one thousand six hundred and ninety five have or keep in his possession, or in the possession of any other person to his use or at his disposal, any horse, gelding or mare, which shall be of the value of five pounds or more, to the penalties therein mentioned; and also so much of an act passed in the eighth year of Queen Anne, intituled, \textit{An act for explaining and amending an act, intitled, An act to prevent the further growth of popery}, as enables the lord lieutenant or other chief governors of this kingdom, to seize and secure any horse, mare or gelding belonging to any papist, or reputed papist, upon any invasion likely to happen, or in case of intestine war broke out, or likely to break out, shall be, and is, and are hereby repealed. . . .\textsuperscript{111}

But without Catholic enfranchisement, Moore, nor any Catholic for that matter, had any hope of entering a profession. According to Moore biographer Seamus MacCall, many Protestants championed Catholic enfranchisement: “the Catholics themselves being still too timorous to come forward openly to their own defence.”\textsuperscript{112}

The 1793 act, passed to avert a revolution, served to rectify the situation: it gave qualified, property-owning Catholics—a minority at the time—the right to vote for members of Parliament and hold minor offices. Catholics of all types, though, were still excluded from being elected to Parliament and from holding major offices, issues that would later frame Catholic Emancipation. The act, in addition, required that Catholic subjects take the following oath:

\begin{quote}
I A.B. do hereby declare, that I do profess the Roman catholick religion. I A.B. do swear, that I do abjure, condemn, and detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle that it is lawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure any person
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 187.

\textsuperscript{111} Altholz, ed., \textit{Selected Documents in Irish History}, 61-68.

\textsuperscript{112} MacCall, \textit{Thomas Moore}, 18.
whatsoever, for or under the pretense of being a heretick; and I do delcare
solemnly before God, that I believe, that no act in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked,
can ever be justified or excused by, or under pretense or colour, that it was done
either for the good of the church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power
whatsoever. I also declare, that it is not an article of the catholick faith, neither am I
thereby required to believe or profess that the pope is infallible, or that I am bound
to obey any order in its own nature immoral, though the pope or any ecclesiastical
power should issue or direct such order, but on the contrary, I hold that it would be
sinful in me to pay any respect or obedience thereto; I further declare, that I do not
believe that any sin whatsoever, committed by me, can be forgiven at the mere will
of any pope, or of any priest, or of any person or persons whatsoever, but that
sincere sorrow for past sins, a firm and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt, and
to atone to God, are previous and dispensable requisites to establish a well-
founded expectation of forgiveness; and that any person who receives absolution
without these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby any remission of
his sins, incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament; and I do swear that I
will defend to the utmost of my power the settlement and arrangement of property
in this country, as established by the laws now in being; I do hereby disclaim,
disavow and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present church
establishment, for the purpose of substituting a catholick establishment in its stead;
and I do solemnly swear, that I will not exercise any privilege to which I am or may
become entitled, to disturb and weaken the protestant religion and protestant
government in this kingdom.

So help me God. . . 113

The following year, 1794, Thomas Moore went to study at Trinity College, Dublin,
which had been opened to Catholics the previous year. Though Catholic students were
denied emoluments, Moore’s entry as a student, dated 2 June 1794, listed him as a
Protestant. 114 Such documentation highlights the connections that the Moore family had
with members of the Protestant Ascendancy. 115 Moreover, the young poet entered as a
Protestant in order to qualify for a scholarship.

113 Altholz, ed., Selected Documents in Irish History, 61-68.

114 The entry reads, “Thomas Moore, P. Prot,” which stands for his Commoner status (pensionarius) and
that he was listed as a Protestant. Gwynn, Thomas Moore, 8.

115 MacCall reports that between his entrance examination in 1794 and the commencement of his courses
in 1795, Moore spent “a lengthy vacation at the country house of a wealthy Protestant barrister, Bereford
Burston, who had long been a champion of Catholic enfranchisement . . . .” MacCall, Thomas Moore, 20.
While a student, Moore kept to his poetic muses, making a translation of the odes of Anacreon. MacCall recounts that Moore published some of his own verses, though he offers no titles, in the *Anthologia Hibernia*, a magazine which reportedly described as “one of the most respectable attempts at periodical literature ever ventured upon in Ireland.” During his years at Trinity, Moore became friends with Robert Emmet, who was a close associate of the United Irishmen, an organization that was, by this time, trying to overthrow British rule in Ireland by forming an alliance with France. Moore described Emmet, who was two years his senior, in his *Memoirs* as

the champion and ornament of the popular side in debates [...] Emmet had a brilliant scholastic career, and he was distinguished ‘for the blamelessness of his life and the grave suavity of his manners.’

Though not a member of the United Irishmen, Moore, it appears, was active in the cause for Catholic Emancipation. Henry Grattan, for example, noted in his own *Memoirs* that the young poet participated in a formal student protest during Lord Camden’s visit to Ireland as Viceroy in 1795; Camden replaced Lord Fitzwilliam in the post. The student address for the event included the following call:

We, the students of the University of Dublin [lament] the removal of a beloved Viceroy, whose arrival we regarded as the promise of public reform, and his presence the pledge of general tranquility. [We further hope] that the harmony

116 They were, however, love poems. MacCall quotes the following selection: “When first she raised her simplest lays/ In Cupid’s never-ceasing praise,/ The god a faithful promise gave,/ That never should she feel Love’s stings,/ Never to burning passion be a slave,/ But feel the purer joy that Friendship brings.” Ibid., 19.

117 MacCall also notes that the *Anthologia* was short-lived; the journal ceased its publication after two years. Ibid., 18-19.

118 Emmet’s brother, Thomas Addis Emmet, was one of the leaders of the United Irishmen.


120 Quoted in ibid.

121 Ibid., 12.
and strength of Ireland will be founded on the solid basis of Catholic Emancipation, and the reform of those grievances, which have inflamed public indignation.\textsuperscript{122}

Ireland at this time, as one Moore biographer noted, “was rolling towards revolution; elements in the Government were using all the power of intimidation at their command to foment rebellion; it was a criminal but effective way to effect the union of the two countries; but, on the other side, conspiracy was far advanced.”\textsuperscript{123} The teenaged Moore spoke out against the threat of Union, reportedly exclaiming in a speech for “death to arrest him ere he saw the day a Union takes place.”\textsuperscript{124} “For a boy of sixteen,” Terence de Vere White wrote, “it was a very spirited performance. And it is interesting to note the reference to the threat of a Union in 1795, four years before the proposal was put before the House of Commons by [William] Pitt.”\textsuperscript{125} For Moore and other young revolutionaries, the written word proved to be a powerful weapon. Thomas Addis Emmet, Arthur O’Connor, and others of the United Irishmen established their own newspaper, the \textit{Press}, for political propaganda. The young Moore aspired to write for the publication, and penned a letter—which he did not sign, yet he published in the paper—addressing the students at Trinity about the state of the political climate at the University: they should frustrate “the good work (as we have considered it) which was going there so quietly.”\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{122} Quoted in ibid., 12-13.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{124} Quoted in ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 14.
Moore’s interest in Irish music appears to have stemmed from the political cauldron of late-eighteen-century Ireland. Edward Hudson, a conspirator who was arrested in 1798, made a collection of old Irish airs transcribed, as in Bunting’s case, from harpers, which may have introduced the poet to Irish melody. White further notes that Moore spent a great deal of time with Hudson, “sharing his principal enthusiasms—music and politics.” Indeed, the marriage of these two ideas is evident in a somewhat romanticized anecdote involving Moore and Robert Emmet. The latter interrupted the poet musician while he was playing “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old” on the pianoforte with the exclamation, “Oh, that I were at the head of twenty thousand men marching to that air.” Details, such as the aforementioned point that Moore could play the pianoforte with only his right hand, notwithstanding, White offers a defense of the tale:

Moore had a highly subjective recollection of things past. Some such incident took place and left a vivid impression. The details are irrelevant. The incident has the ring of truth; it was also one—perhaps the only—occasion when Emmet let his friends see into his mind. He never attempted to involve Moore in conspiracies, and left him at his mother’s apron-strings, appreciating that he was not intended by nature to man the barricades.

Due to warnings from his parents about his relationship with Emmet and the likelihood that he was somewhat naïve about the United Irishmen’s plot, Moore disavowed himself from revolutionary ideas. When he was called to testify before the Lord Chancellor at Trinity for his involvement in political conspiracies, the poet denied that he had played any role. Popular opinion of the United Irishmen, furthermore,

\[127\] Ibid., 15.

\[128\] Ibid.

\[129\] Emmet, who was also called to testify, did not show up for trial, an act that White quotes “proclaimed how deep had been their involvement.” Dacre Hamilton, a friend of both Moore and Emmet was also
ebbed considerably. The organization, having adopted a revolutionary stance in 1797, faced resistance, and the following year, the Leinster provisional committee of the United Irishmen was seized along with all of their records. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, chief leader of the insurgents, was arrested after a conflict with his captors. He died in prison soon afterwards as result of his wounds.\textsuperscript{130} The Dublin pamphlet \textit{Deluded United Irishmen} condemned the organization and offered a warning:

\begin{quote}
You have been driven by your deceivers to the verge of destruction—One step more and your ruin would have been inevitable.—You have seen your countrymen pour forth in arms—as eager to defend the constitution, and support the government, as your wretched leaders were to overturn it—and if you had once the madness to have shewn yourselves in open force—THAT INSTANT, you would have been the victims of a \textit{just} but \textit{dreadful vengeance}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\ldots Do not, then, go on to force those severities which the mercy of government is unwilling to inflict—but which \textit{must} and \textit{WILL} be inflicted, if you persevere in provoking them.—Surrender, at once, the arms you have concealed—and prove by this act that you see your madness, and by a peaceable and quiet conduct, are desirous to make atonement to your injured country—if you do, you will be humanely dealt with—your rulers with only to see you penitent and quiet.—If you do not—tremble at the doom which awaits you—if you will have no mercy on yourselves—you deserve none from others.—An opportunity is now offered—neglect it, and you have nothing to look for but dreadful—inevitable vengeance.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

After completing his studies at Trinity, Moore journeyed to London in 1799 to study law at Middle Temple. He made a name for himself outside of the bar as a writer and singer of his own verses. Over the next decade he supplied the libretto for Michael Kelly’s \textit{The

called, though he, like the former, was outside the circle of the revolutionaries and reported to have no knowledge of any conspiracy. Hamilton further refused to answer any questions, perhaps to avoid incriminating his friends. Whitley Stokes also testified, though he reported that all conspiracies about which he knew were “Orange ones.” Ibid.,16-17.

\textsuperscript{130} Lewis, \textit{History and Topography of Dublin}, 72.

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Deluded United Irishmen}!!! Dublin, 1798 in \textit{Eighteenth Century Collections Online} (Gale: University of Florida) (accessed 22 September 2010).
Gypsey Prince (1801) and continued to publish his poetic works, including the Epistle Odes and Other Poems (1806).

In 1807, having established himself as a preeminent figure in the literary world, Moore received a proposal from independent publisher William Power to create a collection of Irish poetry and folksongs modeled on the work of George Thomson. The poet agreed and set to work writing new verses to Irish folksongs he borrowed freely from Bunting’s collection and others. Power hired John Stevenson to set the melodies to harmony and arrange them for the pianoforte. Born in Dublin, like Moore, in 1761, Stevenson served as chorister and vicar-choral at Christ Church and St. Patrick’s cathedrals since 1800. By the time of his collaboration with the Irish poet, he had a number of works to his credit, including comic operas The Contract (1782), Love in a Blaze (1799), and The Bedouins (1801) and published collection of vocal canzonets and glee. He is remembered today almost exclusively for his work with Moore on what became known as the Irish Melodies, which were published serially beginning in 1808. Moore’s and Stevenson’s work culminated in ten volumes and a supplement by 1834, one year the composer’s (Stevenson’s) death.

In the advertisement that prefaced the first and second publications, Moore stated that Ireland’s national music was not well known, and the lack of English texts and suitable arrangements for the voice have doomed the repertoire to obscurity. “It is intended, therefore, to form a Collection of the best Original Irish Melodies, with characteristic Symphonies and Accompaniments; and with Words containing, as frequently as possible, allusions to the manners and history of the country.”

preface also notes that “Sir John Stevenson has very kindly consented to undertake the arrangement of the Airs; and the lovers of Simple National Music may rest secure, that in such tasteful hands, the native charms of the original melody will not be sacrificed to the ostentation of science.”

“Mr. Moore” is then introduced as the poet “whose lyrical talent” and “zeal” for subject make him a suitable choice to set words to the melodies. The preface then prints an extract of a letter Moore wrote to John Stevenson on the subject (dated Leicestershire, February 1807), which outlines the poet’s thinking on Irish music:

I feel very anxious that a work of this kind should be undertaken. We have too long neglected the only talent for which our English neighbors ever deigned to allow us any credit. Our National Music has never been properly collected; and while composers of the Continent have enriched their Operas and Sonatas with Melodies borrowed from Ireland – very often without even the honesty of acknowledgement – we have left these treasures, in a great degree, unclaimed and fugitive.

Despite his feelings as to the state of Irish music, Moore appended, in a footnote, that, “the writer forgot, when he made this assertion, that the public are indebted to Mr. Bunting for a very valuable collection of Irish Music. . . .” He continued:

Thus our Airs, like too many of our countrymen, have, for want of protection at home, passed into the service of foreigners. But we are come, I hope, to a better period of both Politics and Music; and how much they are connected, in Ireland at least, appears too plainly in the tone of sorrow and depression which characterizes most of our early Songs.

And on the character of Irish music, the poet added the following:

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133 Ibid.
134 Ibid., 222. Emphasis mine.
135 Ibid., 222, fn.
136 Ibid., 222-223.
The task which you propose to me, of adapting words to these airs, is by no means easy. The Poet, who would follow the various sentiments which they express, must feel and understand that rapid fluctuation of spirits, that unaccountable mixture of gloom and levity, which composes the character of my countrymen, and has deeply tinged their Music. Even in their liveliest strains we find some melancholy note intrude,—some minor Third or flat Seventh,—which throws its shade as it passes, and makes even mirth interesting. If Burns had been an Irishman (and I would willingly give up all our claims upon Ossian for him), his heart would have been proud of such music, and his genius would have made it immortal.¹³⁷

Never at a loss for words, Moore penned his further opinions regarding national music in the preface to the third series of his *Irish Melodies*:

It has been often remarked, and oftener felt, that our music is the truest of all comments upon our history. The tone of defiance, succeeded by the languor of despondency—a burst of turbulence dying away into softness—the sorrows of one moment lost in the levity of the next—and all that romantic mixture of mirth and sadness, which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament to shake off, or forget, the wrongs which lie upon it,—such are the features of our history and character, which we find strongly and faithfully reflected in our music; and there are even many airs, which it is difficult to listen to, without recalling some period or event to which their expression seems applicable.¹³⁸

. . . Though much has been said of the antiquity of our music, it is certainly that our finest and most popular airs are modern; and perhaps we may look no further than the last disgraceful century for the origin of most of those wild and melancholy strains, which were at once the offspring and solace of grief, and were applied to the mind as music was formerly to the body, “decantare loca dolentia.”

. . . But music is not the only subject upon which our taste for antiquity is rather unreasonably indulged; and, however heretical it may be to dissent from these romantic speculations, I cannot help thinking that it is possible to love our country very zealously, and to feel deeply interested in her honour and happiness, without believing that Irish was the language spoken in Paradise; that our ancestors were kind enough to take the trouble of polishing the Greeks, or the Abaris, the Hyperborean, was a native of the North of Ireland.

. . . yet I believe it is conceded in general by the learned, that, however grand and pathetic the melody of the ancients may have bee, it was reserved for the ingenuity of modern Science to transmit the “light of Song” through the

¹³⁷ Ibid., 223.

variegating prism of harmony. Indeed, the regular scale of the early Irish (in
which, as in the music of Scotland, the interval of the fourth was wanting) must
have furnished but wild and refractory subjects to the harmonist. It is only when
the invention of Guido began to be known, and the powers of the harp were
enlarged by additional strings, that our melodies took the sweet character which
interests us at present; and while the Scotch persevered in the old mutilation of
the scale, our music became gradually more amenable to the laws of harmony
and counter-point.\textsuperscript{139}

He concluded by articulating, as a contemporary antiquarian likely would, that “the most
difficult and delicate duty of a compiler is to endeavor, as much as possible, by
retrenching these inelegant superfluities, and collating the various methods of playing or
singing each air, to restore the regularity of its form, and the chaste simplicity of its
character.”\textsuperscript{140} Though not an active collector of the repertoire, Moore, like Bunting,
emphasized the role that folk music played in Irish history.

The poet took care to explain his verses to the \textit{Irish Melodies}. And he was careful
to offer an apology:

With respect to the verses which I have written for the Melodies, as they are
intended rather to be sung than read, I can answer for their sound with somewhat
more confidence than for their sense. Yet it would be affectation to deny that I
have given much attention to the task, and that it is not through want of zeal or
industry, if I unfortunately disgrace the sweet airs of my country, by poetry
altogether unworthy of their taste, their energy, and their tenderness.\textsuperscript{141}
Though the humble nature of my contributions to this work may exempt them
from the rigours of literary criticism, it was not to be expected that those touches
of my political feeling, those tones of national complaint, in which the poetry
sometimes sympathizes with the music, would be suffered to pass without
censure or alarm. It has been accordingly said, that the tendency of this
publication is mischievous, and I have chosen these airs but as a vehicle of
dangerous politics—as fair and precious vessels (to borrow an image of St.
Augustine), from which the wine of error might be administered. To those who
identify nationality with treason, and who see, in every effort for Ireland, a system
of hostility towards England,—to those, too, who, nursed in the gloom of

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 231-232.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 234.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 235.
prejudice, are alarmed by the faintest gleam of liberality that threatens to disturb their darkness—like that Demophon of old, who, when the sun shone upon him, shivered—to such men I shall not deign to offer an apology for the warmth of any political sentiment which may occur in the course of these pages. But as there are many, among the more wise and tolerant, who, with feeling enough to mourn over the wrongs of their country, and sense enough to perceive all the danger of not redressing them, may yet think that allusions in the least degree bold or inflammatory should be avoided in a publication of this popular description—I beg of these respected persons to believe, that there is no one who deprecates more sincerely than I do, any appeal to the passions of an ignorant and angry multitude; but that it is not through that gross and inflammable region of society a work of this nature could ever have been intended to circulate. It looks much higher for its audience and readers: it is found upon the piano-fortes of the rich and educated—of those who can afford to have their national zeal a little stimulated, without exciting much dread of the excesses into which it may hurry them; and of many whose nerves may be, now and then, alarmed with advantage, as much more is to be gained by their fears than could ever be expected from their justice.¹⁴²

A song such as “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old,” which supposedly moved a young Robert Emmet, stood, in the *Irish Melodies*, as little more than an ode to Ireland’s glorious past. Moore’s verse to this song, one of his most memorable, reads:

Let Erin remember the days of old,  
Ere her faithless sons betray’d her;  
When Malachi wore the collar of gold,  
Which he won from her proud invader,  
When her kings, with standard of green unfurl’d,  
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger;--  
Ere the emerald gem of the western world  
Was set in the crown of a stanger.

On Lough Neagh’s bank as the fisherman strays,  
When the clear cold eve’s declining,  
He sees the round towers of other days  
In the wave beneath him shining;  
Thus shall memory often, in dreams sublime,  
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;  
Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time  
For the long-faded glories they cover.¹⁴³


The text draws upon a number of ancient Irish historical legends. Malachi, a monarch in Ireland during the tenth century, defeated two champions of the Danish invading army. The king then took a collar of gold from one and the sword of the other as tokens of his victory. The Red Branch Knights in Moore’s poem were the military order of the Kings of Ulster, dating, legend states, to a time long before the birth of Christ. Lough Neagh, from the second verse, is a lake that dominates the landscape of Ulster. Legend suggests that the lake was once a fountain that overflowed and consumed the ancient Ulster Kingdom, forever imprisoning its gleaming towers under water. On a clear day, according to folklore, a fisherman on the lake can look down into the water and see the remnants of Ireland’s lost Atlantis, Ulster’s glorious past.

Stevenson set Moore’s text as a vocal trio to the tune “The Red Fox” from Bunting’s collection. Similar to what Beethoven had done with Thomson’s tunes, Stevenson supplied introductions and conclusions—called symphonies in the published version—for the pianoforte. The accompaniment to the vocal lines doubles the three independent parts; the composer’s handling of the piano writing in the introductory and concluding passages employ fanfare-like passages and dotted rhythms, thereby highlighting, if seemingly misplaced, the grand and spirited style of the song.
The awkward nature of some of Stevenson’s introductions drew criticism, for Moore defended his friend and colleague in another prefatory note:

Allow me to add a few words in defense of my ingenious coadjutor, Sir John Stevenson, who has been accused of having spoiled the simplicity of the airs by the chromatic richness of his symphonies, and the elaborate variety of his harmonies. We might cite the example of the admirable Haydn, who has sported through all the mazes of musical science, in his arrangement of the simplest Scottish melodies, but it appears to me, that Sir John Stevenson has brought a national feeling to this task, which it would be in vain to expect from a foreigner, however tasteful or judicious. Through many of his own compositions we trace a vein of Irish sentiment, which points him out as peculiarly suited to catch the spirit of his country’s music; and, far from agreeing with those fastidious critics who think that his symphonies have nothing kindred with the airs which they introduce, I would say that, in general, they resemble those illuminated initials of old manuscripts, which are the same character with the writing which follows, though more highly coloured and more curiously ornamented.144

In those airs, which are arranged for voices, his skill has particularly distinguished itself; and, though it cannot be denied that a single melody most naturally expresses the language of feeling and passion, yet often, when a favourite strain has been dismissed, as having lost its charm of novelty for the year, it returns, in a harmonized shape, with new claims upon our interest and attention; and to those who study the delicate artifices of composition, the construction of the inner parts of these pieces must afford, I think, considerable

144 “Letter on Music to the Marchioness Dowager of Donegal, Prefixed to the Third Number,” reprinted in ibid., 237-238.
satisfaction. Every voice has an air to itself, a flowing succession of notes, which might be heard with pleasure, independently of the rest – so artfully has the harmonist (if I may thus express it) gaveled the melody, distributing an equal portion of its sweetness to every note.\(^{145}\)

Indeed, Moore and Stevenson collaborated on a number of other projects. In 1816, the two published *Sacred Songs*. Two years later, their efforts resulted in the first of Moore’s *A Selection of Popular National Airs*. But 1818 brought a new set of problems for the poet. His deputy in Bermuda, where Moore had been stationed the previous decade, was caught in an embezzlement scandal; as a result, Moore became liable for a loss of £6000. Refusing help, he fled to Paris and visited Italy as well in his exile. When he returned to England in 1822, he had managed to reduce the debt to £740.\(^{146}\) After his years abroad, Moore returned to literary life, publishing biographies of Sheridan (1825), Byron (1830), and Fitzgerald (1831). In his later years, Moore suffered increasingly from depression, despite monetary support from his friends Byron, Canning, Peel, and Russell, and his happy marriage. The death of all five of his children by 1846 further contributed to his decline.

Harry White suggests that Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies* represent a blending of antiquarianism and romantic ideology. The author states, “Moore’s alignment of the ethnic repertory with his own poetry was the decisive episode in this process.”\(^{147}\) Bunting did not like that Moore borrowed freely from his collections, as he saw his work as the true roots of Ireland’s past. To Moore, on the other hand, Irish song expressed sorrow and immediacy of the times, foreshadowing, perhaps, the Irish potato famine

\(^{145}\) Ibid., 238.


\(^{147}\) White, *The Keeper’s Recital*, 44.
and divisive politics of the Repeal movement. Moore, in effect, made Bunting, and thus Irish music, popular.  

White summarizes as follows:

[Moore] took it as virtually given that object of Bunting’s fastidious preservation (notwithstanding the latter’s own modifications) into a source of textual expression. [And he] deliberately mediated between the musical past and the political present with a romantic zeal which for a time exhausted the concept of creative music in Ireland.  

**Bunting’s 1809 Collection**

The late 1790s were a time of duress for Bunting’s chief patrons, the McCracken family of Belfast. Henry Joy—who had played a crucial role in forging an alliance between the Catholic Defenders and the mostly Presbyterian United Irishmen of Ulster—was arrested in October of 1796 and imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol in Dublin. He accepted bail over one year later but continued his activities with the organization, especially in coordinating the uprising, with the hope of a French invasion, the following spring. But the plan was short lived: General George Nugent of the British Army learned of the planned rebellion in Ulster and foiled Henry Joy’s 1500-man attack in Antrim on June 7, forcing them to retreat. In Dublin, the rebellion the previous month failed due to the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; the Leinster directory, during the same time, was betrayed to British authorities. General Nugent also defeated the McCracken-led uprising at the battle of Ballynahinch in County Down on 12 and 13 June.

Following the failure, Henry Joy took refuge in the mountains outside Ballymena and like Wolfe Tone, hoped to secure safe passage to the United States. His sister Mary Ann arranged for her brother’s escape in Belfast, though, perhaps as a result of

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148 Ibid., 47.
149 Ibid.
bad luck, Henry Joy was recognized by an acquaintance when he reached the coast. He was arrested, returned to Belfast, faced a court martial, and sentenced to hang.

“With immense courage Mary Ann sat by her brother during his trial and walked hand in hand with him to the gallows,” A. T. Q. Stewart wrote. She later confessed, “I did not weep till then.”\(^{150}\) On 17 July 1798, Henry Joy McCracken took his final journey: to the hangman’s noose. In an act of kindness, General Nugent entrusted McCracken’s body to his sister, who buried the remains in St. George’s churchyard in Belfast.

As a result of the insurrection, Parliament passed the Acts of Union in 1800, a twin set of laws that, among other things, abolished Ireland’s home governing body and brought the island under direct control of the crown. Six articles of the bill outline the new role of Ireland within the newly-formed United Kingdom:

Whereas, in pursuance of his Majesty’s . . . Recommendation to the two Houses of Parliament in Great Britain and Ireland respectfully . . . , the two Houses of the Parliament of Great Britain and the two Houses of the Parliament of Ireland have severally agreed and resolved, that . . . It will be advisable to concur in such Measures as may best tend to unite the two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one Kingdom . . . . And whereas, in furtherance of the said Resolution, both Houses of the said two Parliaments respectfully have likewise agreed upon certain Articles for effectuating and establishing the Said Purposes, in the Tenor following:

**ARTICLE FIRST**

. . . that the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall . . . Be united into one Kingdom, by the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland . . . .

**ARTICLE SECOND**

. . . that the Succession to the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdom, and of the Dominions thereunto belonging, shall continue limited and settled . . . according to the existing Laws, and to the Terms of Union between England and Scotland.

**ARTICLE THIRD**

. . . that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament. . .

**ARTICLE FOURTH**

. . . that four Lords Spiritual of Ireland by Rotation of Sessions, and twenty-eight Lords Temporal of Ireland, elected for Life by the Peers of Ireland, shall be the

Number to sit and vote on the Part of Ireland in the House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom; and one hundred Commoners (two for each County of Ireland, two for the City of Dublin, two for the City of Cork, one for the University of Trinity College, and one for each of the thirty-one most considerable Cities, Towns, and Boroughs), be the Number to sit and vote on the Part of Ireland in the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. . . .

ARTICLE FIFTH

. . . That the Churches of England and Ireland, as now by Law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called, The United Church of England and Ireland; and that the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of the said United Church shall be, and shall remain in full force forever, as the same are now by Law established for the Church of England; and that the Continuance and Preservation of the said United Church, as the established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental Part of the Union. . . .

ARTICLE SIXTH

. . . That his Majesty's Subjects of Great Britain and Ireland shall . . . Be entitled to the same Privileges . . . As to Encouragements and Bounties on the like Articles, being the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of either Country respectifully, and generally in respect of Trade and Navigation in all Ports and Places in the United Kingdom and its Dependencies. . . . 151

After the publication of his first volume of Irish folk music, Edward Bunting set out again to collect specimens for another. The McCracken family sent Patrick Lynch to assist Bunting in his research. Lynch, born in Quinn, County Clare in 1757, was a writer, scholar and teacher. In 1796, the same year of Bunting's first collection, Lynch published an English grammar, the first volume of his Polyglot Preceptor, a series intended to included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Irish. 152 Working with a linguist proved to be effective and timely: Bunting perhaps hoped to tap into the new united national market created under the Acts of Union. When published in 1809, his Ancient Music of Ireland, Leith Davis noted, was “much more attractively fashioned to market Irish

151 Althoz, Selected Documents in Irish History, 72-74.

152 Lynch only published volume one of his planned series, though he did go on to write An Introduction to the Knowledge of the Irish Language (1815), Metrical Mnemonics (1817), which covered the rules for classical languages. He also served as secretary to the Gaelic Society.
culture. . . .” 153 The title page alone features stylized images of shamrocks and harps, stereotypes that made it suitable for a British audience. Moreover, two volumes of Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, by the same year, appeared in serial publication. To capitalize on its success, Bunting chose to incorporate English texts, including some translations from Gaelic poems, to the vocal airs for his new work. The antiquarian, wrote Petrie, was engaging in “vain rivalry” with Moore. 154 Bunting supplied the following rationale for the use of texts:

> [I] was accompanied by a person versed in the Irish tongue, who took down the original words; these words, it is true, appear from internal evidence not to be generally coeval with the music. Often when the strain is most pathetic or dignified, the sense of the poetry bears little relation to the expression of the air, yet, as local curiosities, they may not be uninteresting. 155

He added:

> The performer will please to remember, that the old melodies of a country, and its language were analogous; that there are idiomatic delicacies in both, to enter into the spirit of which, practice and strict attention to the time in each air is necessary, and that is peculiarly the case with the earliest compositions. 156

Of the collection process, Bunting boasted that "by such means the airs were secured in the native pathos; and the words of the best tunes in their proper language and character." The consumer of the published volume would, to Bunting, experience the authentic folk repertoire of the Irish peasant; to the urban musician and intellectual,


154 Petrie also recounted a rumor that Moore offered to write verses for Bunting’s new collection, a proposition that the latter “either declined or neglected to avail himself to such assistance.” “It is certain that [Bunting] deeply regretted, when it was too late,” Petrie added. Petrie, “Our Portrait Gallery,” 70.


156 Ibid., iii.
folksong—the sound of history—embodied a living art. The author wrote that the melodies
take the very form and pressure of our history; and the conflict of spirits, naturally
warm and vivacious, with the gloom which abasement and poverty would cast
upon them, is nowhere [sic] more faithfully recorded than in these bewildered melodies, where the strain often bursts into languor and complaining, as if these were some pang which they could not forget even in their mirth. 157

The new collection resulted from Bunting’s travels with Lynch between 1802 and 1803 to Connaught and Munster, where the former gathered tunes from “instruments and the voices of old people. . . .” Of their music, Bunting wrote that it comprised “a number of strains that might not otherwise have survived the singers.” 158 The Irish song catcher further noted that “the present is the first collection of its national airs; most of them so old, that their authors, and the eras in which they composed them, are unknown.” 159 Yet most of the seventy-seven airs that compose the Ancient Music of Ireland came from Denis Hempson, a blind harper from County Derry and one of two surviving musicians who attended the Belfast Harp festival of 1792. Hempson’s name, in addition, arose in Lady Morgan’s Wild Irish Girl of 1806. 160 Bunting claimed to have preserved the tunes in their original state from performance, declining to add or change a single note. The harp served as the best source for material: He reasoned that

157 Ibid., ii.
158 Ibid., i.
159 Ibid., i.
160 Lady Morgan, whose birth name was Sydney Owenson, included a biographical footnote on Hempson in volume three of her epistolary novel. The harper, spelled “Dennis Hampson” in the text, is known for his legendary abilities as a musician—a sort of contemporary Carolan—as well as by his title, “the man ‘wi the twa heads.” In general, the novel explores Irish subculture from the point of view of the English ruling class. The work later informed the early-nineteenth-century political positions on Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Union. Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale (1806), http://www.sydneyowenson.com/TheWildIrishGirl.html (accessed 7 June 2011).
“though [the melodies were] collected from distant parts, taught by different masters—harpers always played them in [the] same keys and without variation in any essential passage or note.” Thus, the stringed instrument acted as a time machine, a vehicle in which the tunes travelled untainted through the ages. The most ancient tunes, to Bunting, then, were the most perfect ones; however, he admitted to adding bass lines to the transcriptions for greater musical facility on the pianoforte.\(^{161}\)

Preservation of the melody, as in his first collection, was crucial for Bunting. But in the setting the tunes for the pianoforte, as he did previously, he creatively arranged them for an audience familiar with contemporary learned musical practices. He opined that the Irish melodies “will be heard with delight where public taste for music is pure.”\(^{162}\) Each tune in the 1809 volume uses three clefs: the treble for the vocal line, the grand staff for the pianoforte accompaniment. In addition, Bunting employs tempo and dynamic markings for expression. The harmonic accompaniment is predominantly homophonic, the rhythm of which closely follows that of the given tune. The collector even wrote short introductions for several of the songs, mirroring the common practices at the time for folksong collections. Bunting, though, fails to name his sources for the songs, nor does he classify the tunes by age.

The 1809 tome contained other major additions not found in the former publication. He supplied accounts of the ancient music of Wales and Scotland as well as a history of the bagpipes. In the concluding treatise, he compared Irish music with that of aboriginal music of native countries. And in a dissertation on the Irish harp, also printed in the

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\(^{161}\) Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* (1809), iii.

\(^{162}\) Ibid.
book, Bunting covered the techniques and terminology used in the performance of an instrument that by 1809 was in decline.\textsuperscript{163} Moreover, the collection “saved from destruction a great portion of music for which Ireland has been conspicuous for ages.”\textsuperscript{164}

Bunting opted for more of an artistic production rather than an exclusively scientific study. But he chose not to use Lynch’s words in the new volume. The polyglot, himself, was released from the project, an act that has drawn a peculiar theory, one that involves Bunting disassociating himself from the political dealings of the McCracken family and the United Irishmen. In 1803, Thomas Russell, Henry Joy’s associate in the organization, was hanged after Lynch turned king’s evidence against him.\textsuperscript{165} Bunting instead chose to include poems and translations by a host of individuals, including William Drennan, the founder and literary champion of the United Irishmen, Dean Swift, John Brown, Hector Macneill, W. R. Spencer, Arthur Dawson, and a Mary Balfour, a lady of Northern Ireland who, George Petrie wrote, made “mediocre translations of what would appear to be but mediocre words of Irish songs.”\textsuperscript{166}

Of the twenty poetic texts of the new volume, Scottish poet Thomas Campbell supplied four original works. The collector placed the verses on single pages opposite

\textsuperscript{163} To tie the harp to past Irish archeology, Bunting draws upon Tindall’s history. There, the author notes that ancient pennies, which profiled a head in a triangle, were Irish coins. Furthermore, the triangle, because of its shape, represented the harp. During the reign of Henry VIII, the crowned harp figured prominently on Irish currency, especially the groat. Ibid., 8 fn.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., ii.


\textsuperscript{166} Petrie, "Our Portrait Gallery," 71.
selected airs, giving the performer the option of reading or singing the words. Some texts concern the glories of battle and Irish national pride. Campbell’s “To The Battle, Men of Erin,” set to the air “Beside a rath,” reads as follows:

To the battle, men of Erin,
To the front of battle go,
Every breast the shamrock wearing,
Burns to meet his country's foe.
What though France thine eagle standard
Spreading terror far and nigh,
Over Europe's skies hath wander'd
On the wings of victory

Yet thy vauntings us dismay not,
Tell us when ye, hand to hand,
Ever stood the charging bay'nent
Of a right true Irish band.
Erin, when the swords are glancing,
In the dark fight loves to see,
Foremost still her plumage dancing
To the trumpet's jubilee.167

The poem bears a loose reference to republican virtue of liberty embodied in the French revolution, an idea that drove the United Irishmen during the failed rebellion of 1798. But the song can be viewed as an attempt to soften English fears about Ireland's relationship with France. In calling for Irishmen to don a shamrock and fight "his country's foe"—France—Campbell and Bunting, through the mediums of poetry and music, sell the idea that Ireland stands with Great Britain in the war against Napoleon.168 The air suits the text: Marked Vivace Brillante, “Beside a rath” is a martial tune in F major, complete with dotted rhythms, occasional triplet figures, and fanfare-like passages.


168 See Davis, “Sequels of colonialism,” 42.
Another of Campbell’s poems, set to the air “Thou blooming treasure,” tells how love of one’s homeland can lift downtrodden spirits:

There came to the beach a poor exile of Erin,
The dew on his thin robe was heavy and chill;
For his country he sigh’d, when at twilight repairing,
To wander alone by the wind-beaten hill;
But the day-star attracted his eye’s sad devotion;
For it rose o’er his own native isle of the ocean,
Where once, in the fire of his youthful emotion,
He sang the bold anthem of Erin go bragh!169

Subsequent verses of the poem present the protagonist longing for the glories of the past. The songs in Bunting's 1809 collection, Leith Davis wrote, offer a compromised version of the Irish nation. Grief and nostalgia play key roles: the aforementioned Campbell poems and Miss Balfour's translation of "Ulican Dubh Oh"—a lament that tells of a young man who is forced to leave Ireland because he is a social inferior to the woman he loves—place the Emerald isle as a source of longing. "The burden of these songs,” Davis commented, “like that of Moore's collection, is to present Ireland as a focus of nostalgia.”170

But contemporary commentators like Petrie, on one hand, were somewhat critical of Bunting’s new work. “Bunting was obliged to content himself with two indifferent songs, and permission to use two of [Campbell's] ballads, written long previous to the agreement, and which, however excellent they confessedly were, in their way, were entirely out of their place in a collection of Irish melodies,” Petrie wrote, perhaps feeling...

169 Thomas Campbell, "There came to the Beach a Poor Exile of Erin," in Bunting, A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland (1809), 65. Not all of Campbell's poems possess a flair for Irish nationalism. "Twas the Hour When Rites Unholy", an oriental narrative about the love between a Turkish woman and an English knight, for example, bears no relationship to contemporary Irish political thought.

as if the collection was not Irish enough. On the other hand, Petrie praised Bunting for his musicianship, made apparent in his editorial decisions for the collection:

This volume was not only a beautiful but truly valuable one; and though, as a whole, it was not so rich in melodies of the finest character as his first volume, it yet contained very many in no degree inferior—equally new to the public, and, moreover, arranged with such an exquisite grace, skill, and judgment, as at once placed the editor, in the opinion of the musical world, in the foremost rank of British musicians, and as the most accomplished of those of his own country.

But the efforts to make Bunting’s *Ancient Music of Ireland* of 1809 an artistic production failed to bring home the bacon. Like the 1796 volume, the new work earned only enough money in sales to pay the publication costs. The highest sales of the book, reportedly, came from the author’s Northern Irish friends, particularly the McCracken family, who, we remember, supported the work in the first place. In the end, Bunting’s 1809 collection, a work he hoped would rival Moore’s, failed to attract a wide-spread audience. Due to the inclusion of dissertations on the harp, bagpipe, and folk music of Britain, Bunting’s work was “too repulsively learned to suit the class of society that had purchased and consumed the earlier volume,” Petrie argued. Furthermore, the higher classes found “too little Irish taste to incline them to receive it.”

**Bunting’s 1840 Collection**

While not traveling for research on his 1809 volume, Edward Bunting remained active as a church musician Belfast. In 1806, he was appointed organist at the Second Presbyterian Church on Rosemary Street and at St. George’s church on High Street.

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172 Ibid.

173 Ibid.

174 Ibid. Emphasis original.
Some commentators have stated that Bunting was one of the best-known piano teachers of his day and that he was the driving force behind a number of local music festivals and events.\textsuperscript{175} He founded the Belfast Harp Society in 1808, which remained active until 1813. And in that year, the musician helped organize the Belfast Music Festival.

Bunting's musical connections extended across the Irish Sea; he made frequent trips to London while he prepared his 1809 volume for publication. There, he attended gatherings at the homes of the Longman's and Broadwoods, where he reportedly performed Irish music and was considered a favorite acquaintance of the family for the remainder of his life.\textsuperscript{176}

As one of the city's best-known musicians, Bunting secured the visit of Italian soprano Angelica Catalani to Belfast in 1809. The songstress, by 1806, made her London debut at in the King's Theatre in Portugal's \textit{Semiramide}. She became one of the most famous singers in Europe, especially for her roles in operas by Paër, Paisello, Piccini, and Mozart, performing as Susanna in the first London production of \textit{Le nozze di Figaro}. After 1821, Catalani retired from the stage, though she continued to give recitals. Petrie recounts a humorous exchange between the songbird and Bunting during her final trip to Ireland. Age, by this time, had gotten the better of both of them:

\begin{quote}
Catalani: Well, my dear Mr. Bunting, how glad I am to see you looking so strong and well.
Bunting (with a shrug): Ugh, Ugh, no madam, I'm growing fat and lazy like an old dog as I am.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{175} Boydell, “Bunting, Edward,” 605.

\textsuperscript{176} George Petrie stated that Bunting, on his last visit to London in 1839, four years before his death, was given a grand piano, which he chose from the vast Broadwood inventory. Petrie, “Our Portrait Gallery,” 71.
Catalani (looking alarmed and thoughtful): Ah, indeed, Mr. Bunting—and I too am growing fat and lazy, like an old dog as I am—no that's not the word—like an old bitch, Mr. Bunting—like an old bitch.\footnote{177}

In 1819, at the age of 46, Bunting married Mary Ann Chapman, sister of Reverend Chapman, who, before his death, had been a Fellow at Trinity College. The couple subsequently moved to Dublin, where Mary Ann, though herself of Northern-Irish birth, lived with her family for a number of years. There, Edward Bunting established himself, like he did in Belfast, as a church musician—working as organist at St. Stephen’s Church—and as a music teacher. The antiquarian was on his own perhaps for the first time and had to earn a living without direct help from wealthy patrons. "Hitherto, it should be observed, [Bunting] had for a period of more than forty years been living at little cost with the respectable family of the McCrackens at Belfast, to whose house he had been invited when he arrived there at the age of eleven, "getting and spending" as he pleased, but certainly not saving," Petrie wrote in 1847.\footnote{178}

Bunting's final collection of Irish folk music came late in his life, a time when he was “often [in] a broken state of health and the increasing weight of years.”\footnote{179} \textit{The Ancient Music of Ireland} of 1840 contained 150 airs, 120 of which were new to publication; the remaining tunes were, to the collector, superior version of tunes that were known and/or appeared in prior volumes.\footnote{180}

Bunting's aim for the 1840 volume, as in for his previous work with folk music, was to become acquainted with the past and to understand the ancestors of the Irish

\footnote{177} Ibid.
\footnote{178} Ibid., 72.
\footnote{179} Ibid.
\footnote{180} Bunting, \textit{The Ancient Music of Ireland} (1840), 6.
people. The music, the fruits of his research, are the artifacts of an idealized past, and
Ireland of a simpler and more prosperous time. The tunes

bear the impress of better days, when the native nobles of the country cultivated
music as a part of education; and amid the wreck of our national history, are,
perhaps, the most faithful evidence we have still remaining of the mental cultivation
and refinement of our ancestors.181

The act of reviving national music placed worthy Irish musicians in the same rank
as creators of literature. Bunting also sought, in arranging the tunes for pianoforte, to
present the material in a true harp style, "accompanied by a practical digest of the Irish
musical science," he added in his prefatory notes. The antiquarian further admitted to
"guard the primitive air with religious veneration." Everything else was subordinate,
"even of those to which the airs have been sung for generations back, being
embarrassed by a defective accompaniment, interferes with the purity of their
arrangement, he has in almost every instance, given the music alone."182 Moreover, the
"tunes [are] so unapproachably unique, so eminently graceful, so unlike any other music
of the nations around us . . . [there] can never with any shew of reason be attributed to
composers living in times of civil discord and daily peril, in penury and comparative
barbarism," he wrote.183

Bunting’s statements embody his criticism of Thomas Moore, at whose methods,
by now, he took particular aim. A folksong’s authenticity, no matter how elusive it would
become in folk music scholarship, was the collector’s greatest concern. He lays the
groundwork for his departure from Moore’s more progressive method as follows:

181 Ibid., 8.
182 Ibid., 6.
183 Ibid., 8.
It is thus that changes in the actual frame and structure of our melodies have never been attempted, unless on the introduction of the altered tunes for the first time amongst those who had never heard them in their original state; as in the instance of Sir John Stevenson's supposed emendations of the Irish melodies on their first introduction to that extended auditory procured for them by the excellence of Mr. Moore's accompanying poetry; and thus it is, that so long as the musical collector or antiquary confines his search to the native districts of the tunes he seeks for, he may always be certain of the absolute and unimpeachable authenticity of every note he procures.\textsuperscript{184}

He substantiated his claim with several examples. Bunting, thus, solidified his position first and foremost as a scholar of music:

> When the musical inquirer has studied this piece [referring to the air "Ballinderry"], and the highly curious Lesson and Prelude of the sixteenth century, by Scott, he will be better able to judge of the degree of importance which should be attached to the assertion "That it is certain that our finest airs are modern;" and that, "perhaps, we may look no farther than the last disgraceful century for the origin of the most of those wild and melancholy strains which were at once the offspring and solace of our grief."\textsuperscript{185}

In his 1840 volume, Bunting identified three types of Irish folksong: those he deemed very ancient; pieces never before published and written by forgotten composers (he mentions specimens of music by O'Cahan, Scott, Daly, Conallon, “all men famous in their day and still remembered with veneration by the native musicians,” he wrote); and airs of uncertain origin, “containing,” as he put it, “nothing of a date much prior to the time of Carolan.”\textsuperscript{186} The latter category, furthermore, contained “a more

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{185} The source of Bunting's quote is Thomas Moore's prefatory letter to the third volume of his *Irish Melodies*. Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{186} The composition of new music, according to Bunting, ended with Carolan’s era. With the death of Stirling, he wrote, “production of new melodies in Ireland has wholly ceased.” Of Carolan, the scholar wrote: “The public has been much too apt to regulate its estimate of Irish music by the standard of Carolan's performances. Without detracting from the eminent merits of this composer, it may, however, be safely said that there are many airs of the collection greatly superior to his. Movements with wildly luxuriant basses were those to which his genius chiefly inclined, and in these, indeed, it revelled [sic] with surprising gracefulness and freedom. But to the “deep sorrows” of the Irish lyre he rarely aspired. That inimitable vein of tender expression which winds through the very old music of Ireland, in every mood, major or minor, is too often sought for in vain in those compositions, the sweetest of which seldom use
ornamental and less nervous style . . . ” and reflect the tastes for Italian music introduced to Ireland by Geminiani and Corelli, both of whom influenced Carolan. But for Bunting, music of the most ancient variety was the most valuable and certainly more complex that what Moore and Pinkerton imagined:

[The "Ballinderry" air] bears unequivocal marks of a very high antiquity, and at the same time possesses the extraordinary peculiarity of a very nearly regular bass called the Cronan, running concurrent with the melody through the entire composition.”

The cronan to which Bunting refers is a repetitious ground-bass figure comprising four notes: in this case B-flat-D-C-B-flat in “Ballinderry,” a tune listed as “very ancient” but with the date and author unknown. The musical phrase carries the text "och, hone, och, hone." Bunting notated the tune in 6/8 time and notes that it be played "gracefully" and "moderately." The specific tempo is also given: the eighth note is equal to 152 beats per minute with the pendulum set at eight inches. In notating and presenting this particular tune for publication, Bunting, perhaps, performed some creative editing. The piano accompaniment occasionally doubles the cronan line, an orchestrational device Bunting used in a number of other tunes in this and in previous collections.

Of the oldest examples in Bunting’s 1840 volume, several are caoines, or dirges, many of which, reportedly, have roots to ancient Ulster. "Ossianic and other very old poems are sung," Bunting stated, and "neither [are] perfect recitative nor perfect above the tender solicitations of love. His pieces have none of those “tinklings of the small strings, sporting with freedom under the deep notes of the bass,” so characteristic of the style of performance among the old harpers, and which may almost be said to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.”

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187 Ibid., 9.
188 Ibid., 8-9.
189 Bunting’s source for the tune was a Doctor Crawford of Lisburn; the date, 1808.
melody, but a peculiar combination of both." These songs of extreme antiquity still, in Bunting's analysis, contained the same words even if the tune was found in different parts of the country. The words, furthermore, corresponded to poems of "an extremely early date" and were preserved in ancient manuscripts. For example, with the tune *Lament of Dierdre over the Sons of Usnach*, the lyrics correspond with those from an old national romance, *Death of the Sons of Usnach*, which was preserved in Connaught and printed in the *Transactions of the Iberno-Celtic Society*. Bunting noted that "this romance is accounted one of the oldest of the traditionary [sic] stories of the country, ranking in antiquity with that of the *Children of Lir*, and bearing every mark of having been composed in Pagan times." George Petrie, who supplied a collection of tunes to Bunting for the 1840 volume (to which he received no credit in the publication), reportedly told Bunting that, according to the *Book of Ballymote*, the words of *Sons of Usnach* were sung "by a choir or mysterious beings over the grave of a King of Ossory in the tenth century, and of which some stanzas associated with the tune are still remembered in the county of Londonderry." Yet, contradictions in Bunting's thinking are made apparent in the following statement:

The words of the popular songs of every country vary according to the several provinces and districts in which they are sung: as, for example, to the popular air of *Aileen-a-Roon*, we here find as many different sets of words as there are counties in one of our provinces. But the case is totally different with music. A strain of music, once impressed on the popular ear, never varies. It may be made the vehicle of many different sets of words, but they are adapted to it, not it to them, and it will no more alter its character on their account than a ship will change the number of its masts on account of an alteration in the nature of its leading. For taste in music is so universal, especially among country people, and in a pastoral age, and airs are so easily, indeed, in many instance, so intuitively acquired that

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190 Ossianic airs were sung in Scotland as well as in Ireland. Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840), 7.

191 Ibid., 7.
when a melody has been divulged in any district, a criterion is immediately established in almost every ear; and this criterion being the more infallible in proportion as it requires less effort in judging, we have thus, in all directions, and at all times, a tribunal of the utmost accuracy and of unequalled impartiality (for it is unconscious of the exercise of its own authority) governing the musical traditions of the people, and preserving the native airs and melodies of every country, in their integrity, from the earliest periods.\textsuperscript{192}

Indeed, the antiquarian’s own decision to republish “superior” versions of tunes that had appeared in previous editions runs directly counter to his idea that folk music never varies once it enters the collective culture of the population. Collectors who followed in Bunting’s footsteps would come to question the logic of their predecessor. But another of his ideas maintained lasting influence in the coming decades: “[One] can trace a characteristic style which prevails more or less throughout all genuine Irish music,” Bunting stated, “and constitutes the true test by which to distinguish our native melodies from those of all other countries.”\textsuperscript{193} To support his essentialist position, Bunting, however, did not define specifically such characteristics; he only loosely defined a style.

**George Petrie’s Collection**

Subsequent collectors and editors like George Petrie and Charles Stanford would, decades later, argue the same. George Petrie was born on 1 January 1790 Dublin, the eve before the founding of the United Irishmen in that city. His father James Petrie, who was of Scottish decent, worked as an artist, portrait painter and miniaturist. He wished his son to study medicine in order to become a surgeon. George, though, followed in his father’s footsteps. As a young man, he demonstrated interest and talent for landscape painting and, subsequently, developed skills as a draughtsman. In 1805,

\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 1-2; Unlike his 1809 volume of folksongs, Bunting refrains from including texts to the vocal airs for his 1840 collection: He was, reportedly, “embarrassed by defective accompaniment.” Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 7.
Petrie attended the drawing school of the Royal Dublin Society, where he won a silver medal for his art work that year. His fellow students at the school included Arthur O’Connor and Francis Danby.

Music also played a key role in his upbringing and George obtained a sound knowledge of classical music and its repertoire growing up in Dublin. As a violinist, he belonged to a number of quartet societies in the city, which were founded for the study and practice of works of the First Viennese school: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Petrie also grew to appreciate opera after attending performances of *Don Giovanni* during Dublin’s 1816-1817 season. He developed an interest in Irish folk music during this time as well. “From my very boy-days,” he would recall as an adult, “whenever I heard an air which in any degree touched my feelings, or appeared to me to be either an unpublished tune, or a better version of an air than what had been printed, I never neglected to note it down.” Indeed, the young songcatcher’s scholarship-on-the-run did not go unnoticed. Several of his early tunes appeared in Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, which began serial publication in 1808. In 1809, Petrie met Edward Bunting shortly after the publication of his second volume of *The Ancient Music of Ireland*. The elder collector provided Petrie a prominent example for his own work with the repertoire.

Folk music played a major role in Herderian romanticism that was sweeping Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century. Petrie grew up in a Britain saturated with the aesthetics and ideals of the new movement. Poets such as Gray, Burns, and Wordsworth exalted the humble folk in their work, an idea already apparent in Bunting’s and Moore’s collections. Such views profoundly affected the young Irish artist and

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antiquarian. His magnum opus, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, published years later, reflected Romantic thinking: folksong belonged to the peasant classes, the root source of any nation.¹⁹⁵

Petrie’s study of music carried over into the field of music criticism. After a brief venture to London with his two art school colleagues O’Connor and Danby, he returned to Dublin and praised George Thomson’s *Collection of Original Irish Melodies*, a volume that combined folksong, texts by various poets, and arrangements of the music for piano and strings by Beethoven. The Irishman found the settings “not strictly appropriate,” though he admitted he still found them “fascinating.”¹⁹⁶ In 1816, he penned a review of an anthology of Scottish melodies for *The Dublin University Magazine*. Nearly two decades later, he supplied an article on the life and work of Bunting for the same publication.

His interest in music and art served him for the rest of his life and he continued to work in both. In 1820, Petrie began work as a watercolorist painting illustrations for travel books. Cromwell’s *Excursions through Ireland* (1820) and Fisher’s *Ireland Illustrated* (1837) feature the artist’s handiwork. He developed skills as a scholar of antiquities and was elected to the Royal Irish Academy in 1828; he secured a number of artifacts for the organization, including the manuscript *Annals of the Four Masters* and metalwork pieces such as the Cross of Cong. Two years later, Petrie became the librarian of the Royal Hibernian Academy. In 1832, he joined with Rev. Caesar Otway in editing *The Dublin Penny Journal*, a publication that sought to bring articles on the


¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 21.
history, antiquities, and arts of Ireland to a wide audience. Petrie, having by this time secured a place as a leading polymath, authored articles on the history of musical instruments, including the Ancient Irish horn, Irish bells, and Irish trumpets. The publication swelled in popularity. By the end of 1832, weekly readership for the *Penny Journal* reached nearly 40,000.197

In 1833, the Irish antiquarian began service as head of the island’s Topographical Department of the Irish Ordnance Survey. During his work with the organization, Petrie and the staff—John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry—collected data on historical antiquities and archeological monuments, which included place-names and local legends involving the artifacts. The Department, under the guidance of Captain Thomas A. Larcom, R.E., published its first book on the county of Londonderry in 1837. Such a study introduced Irish history and literature to the reading public: patrons were thus drawn into the wild new world of localized Celtic folklore and tradition. The program saved artifacts from neglect and destruction. Petrie himself acquired a number of pieces: the aforementioned Cross of Cong and the Domnach Airgid, a silver shrine that contained an ancient vellum of the Gospels, were placed in the National Museum of Ireland. Manuscripts that were discovered by the Survey found societies to house and publish them. Stories and legends told in such texts, then, became the raw materials for writers and poets. The Ordnance survey also enjoyed wide support from Ireland’s learned classes: Trinity College professors, clergymen, poets, and artists all participated in studies conducted by the program. But the government deemed the research too costly and refused to publish any additional material. In 1842, it

discontinued funding for the project. In the meantime, Petrie continued to paint. The young artist, in fact, preferred to work in watercolor. His paintings reflected his other professional interest and usually depicted antiquarian and topographical subjects, as in the case of his *Pilgrims of Clonmacnoise* (1838) and *The Old Wind Mill at Rathgar Quarry, Dublin* (n.d.)

Figure 2-2. *The Old Wind Mill at Rathgar Quarry, Dublin* (n.d.). Graphite and watercolor on paper. Painting bequeathed to National Gallery of Ireland by Miss M. Stokes in 1900. Image available online at [http://onlinecollection.nationalgallery.ie/view/objects/asitem/People$00402043 /1?state:flow=f3238669-2b5e-4f7f-a8ae-f2f75f41908d](http://onlinecollection.nationalgallery.ie/view/objects/asitem/People$00402043 /1?state:flow=f3238669-2b5e-4f7f-a8ae-f2f75f41908d)

In 1840, Petrie offered Bunting his entire collection of Irish airs. Bunting included only seventeen of them in his final volume of folksongs. Petrie himself recalled later that the elder songcatcher refused to print too many of his tunes for fear that the public would say that the greater part of the collection was Petrie’s, not Bunting’s. At the

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younger scholar’s request, Bunting acknowledged Petrie’s contribution to the publication, although he did so grudgingly. Nonetheless, Petrie offered his support to the old man in the preparation of his final volume (he had been, in fact, pushing Bunting to print a third volume of airs since 1809). Petrie’s prodding resulted in a bit of friendly competition between the two men:

In my primary object, however—that of stimulating him to the preparation and publication of his third volume—I had the satisfaction of believing that I had been more decidedly successful. The threat, put forward in playful insincerity, but which was taken rather seriously, that if he did not bestir himself in the preparation of his work, I might probably, by the publication of my own collection, anticipate him in the printing of many of his best airs, coupled with Mrs. Bunting’s, as well as my own continual goading—and which he was accustomed to say had made his life miserable—had ultimately the desired effect of exciting into activity a temperament which, if it had ever been naturally active, had then, at all events, ceased to be from the pressure of years, and a state of health that was far from vigorous. 200

After Bunting’s death in 1840, Petrie was left alone to pursue the publication of his own materials. The opportunity came eleven years later when he helped found the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland in Dublin; he also served as its first president. A number of prominent scholars and intellectuals, in addition to Petrie, served on the society’s council, including Eugene O’Curry, Henry Hudson, and John Edward Pigot. The organization sought to collect, preserve, and publish airs in private manuscript sources as well as those that remained in the oral tradition among Ireland’s peasant classes. The society aimed to establish a sort of public-works project by establishing a depot in Dublin whereby all Irishmen were invited to submit airs. Membership to the society was open to everyone, and the low annual subscription payment of £1 entitled patrons to receive one copy of every society

200 Ibid., ix-x.
publication issued during the year. The endeavor, unfortunately, was short lived, for the Society only produced one collection: Petrie’s own *Ancient Music of Ireland* of 1855.\footnote{Ibid., iv; Fleischmann, “Aspects of George Petrie,” 202.}

Ireland’s folk repertoire, to the collectors and consumers in mid-century Britain, combined learned musicianship with issues of class and, hence, the notion of nationalism purported by German scholar Johann Gottfried Herder half a century earlier. Petrie argued that Ireland’s folksong, of which he termed “national music,” “has hitherto been the exclusive property of the peasantry—the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the country.” “The upper classes are a different race—a race who possess no national music; or, if any, one essentially different from that of Ireland,” he wrote. “They are insensible to its beauty, for it breathed not their feelings; and they resigned it to those from whom they took everything else, because it was a jewel of whose worth they were ignorant. He, therefore, who would add to the stock of Irish melody must seek it, not in the halls of the great, but in the cabins of the poor.”\footnote{Quoted in Calder, *George Petrie*, 38-39.} Petrie further articulated his opinions in a letter before finishing his *Ancient Music of Ireland*:

> It is my deliberate conviction that we possess nothing of the past so honourable to our national character, or—viewed as a branch of our archeology—of greater importance to the history of the great Celtic race of mankind, to which we chiefly belong. And I would further add that, of all the national music of the world, which I have known, there is none which exhibits so little of savagery, and so large an amount of variety and beauty together with artful construction.\footnote{Letter from George Petrie, 15 February 1855. Quoted in ibid., 11.}

Even lyrics to Irish love songs, wrote Petrie, were not divorced from such tragedy:

> [Love songs] illustrate, in no small degree, the history of the peasant mind of Ireland during the last two centuries, --in times of peace breathing of love, or
In the preface, Petrie noted the devastation that resulted from the Irish famine of 1846 to 1849. The famine, "well nigh annihilated the Irish remnant of the great Celtic family." "Of the old . . . But few survived," he wrote. The middle aged were left only if death spared them. And the orphaned youth had the misfortune of going without the soothing sounds of their mother's voices. The latter, worse yet, did not come to know "the green pastoral plains, the fruitful valleys, as well as the wild hill sides and the dreary bogs, [that] had equally ceased to be animate with human life." Though the repertoire belonged to the peasants, the published collection served as a product for the educated, elite classes in Great Britain. Petrie wrote that his collection "will afford a valuable and enduring contribution to the store of simple pleasure necessary to minds of a refined and sensitive nature. . . ."

To Petrie, Irish music had been collected in a careless and unskillful manner in the past. This included the work of Edward Bunting, of which Petrie had great respect, though he quickly pointed out the flaws of the elder bard's approach. Indeed, Bunting's methods introduced a host of methodological problems: he collected tunes from a single singer, harper, or piper, and accepted the version without comparing the specimen with a version of another performer. Checking the sources was unnecessary, as Bunting, in his 1840 collection, claimed that folksongs never change once impressed upon the ear of the listener. Performers, as custodians of culture, then, passed along these unaltered

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204 Quoted in ibid., 23.
205 Petrie, ed., Ancient Music of Ireland, xii.
206 Ibid., xx.
relics of Ireland's past. But Petrie sang a different tune: he claimed that he rarely, if ever, received two versions of the same air that were exactly similar. In cases, he testified that he had received nearly fifty different versions of a single melody. Petrie did not trust Bunting's sources. Instrumentalists, he wrote, "indulged in individual improvisation" and took "barbarous licenses" in their performances. The pure and authentic sources for folksongs, to Petrie, were singers. "Petrie is not satisfied that his own authorities are above reproach," Calder wrote of the issue, "but he has at least compared versions. He has endeavoured to collect the verses sung to the tunes, or fragments of them, because the words help to determine the true rhythm and structure of the music." Vocal airs, to him, were older and, therefore, more authentic than instrumental ones. Historical evidence, though, points to the opposite conclusion. Irish poets composed verses to pre-existing melodies through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. “Unfortunately, Petrie [adopted] a position almost as extreme as Bunting's by postulating the theory that an air begins as a thing of 'unsullied purity' and then—through the changes which occur, according as it is transmitted from singer to singer, or singer to player—becomes subject to a process of corruption, to greater or lesser degree," Fleischmann opined in 1972. Petrie, as a scientist of music, did not collect the finest airs; rather, he produced fair specimens of tunes. His goal was to present truthful representations of the music to the public. His approach to folk music was practical and he sought to make his arrangements accessible and appropriate for the traditional repertoire. Such adherence to the more scientific side of song collecting


208 Fleischmann, “Aspects of George Petrie,” 204.

209 Ibid., 203-204.
put Petrie at aesthetic odds with his predecessors, the heavyweights of Irish folksong: Moore, Thomson, and especially Bunting.

But even the enlightened and noble idea of scientific objectivity posed a problem. In preparing the publication of his 1855 volume, Petrie, with help from his eldest daughter, arranged the airs for the pianoforte, Just as Bunting had done with his own collections. Indeed, the Dubliner did not trust the harmonization of his melodies to professional musicians who were unfamiliar with the traditional repertoire; however, his musical choices stemmed from contemporary learned musical tastes. Petrie placed the folk melodies in the upper voice of the right-hand part, as was the typically the case for pianoforte writing. His harmony employed slight chromaticism to bring about tonicized cadential phrases, especially the use of secondary dominants—the V/V-V-I motion typical of late-eighteenth-century style. In doing so, he harmonized the melodies clearly in major and minor keys, employing the contemporary practice of sharpening the seventh scale in order to the fit the modal tunes to the chord progressions. He treated airs in the dorian mode in minor keys and those in mixolydian in major ones. “It must be remembered, Fleischmann wrote, “that an understanding of the modal system anywhere in Europe at this time would have been confined to a handful of scholars. . .

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\(^{210}\) Ibid., 212.
The antiquarian, though not a highly-trained professional musician, was well aware of the techniques of Classical-era writing, notably in his use of the Alberti-bass-like passages on a number of settings. The overall result of his arrangements is a simple pianism suitable for connoisseurs and amateurs of music to enjoy. Petrie made no comment regarding his musical choices in his preface, but for all of his focus upon objectivity, he, like Bunting, translated the traditional repertoire from one world to another—from an oral culture to a written one. In the end, the real myth that remains, perhaps, is the elusive quest for an authentic representation of folk music.
Collecting the songs was another matter, for, in Petrie’s world, folk music, perhaps, embodied peasant culture, a kind of collective symphony of ordinary Irish people. In the project’s initial stages, Petrie relied upon Eugene O’Curry, a fellow of the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, who sang the tunes for him to capture in musical notation. “Curry,” as the scholar called him, also supplied words to many of the airs from memory. In addition, he penned essays on the various classes of melodies and Irish folk and provided annotations on specific tunes for
his colleague’s collection. Petrie drew several airs from private song collections compiled by amateurs and colleagues. Miss Jane Ross of Newton-Limvady provided the scholar with tunes she had gathered at her local market. He published three tunes from her work, including the well-known “Londonderry Air.”

Figure 2-5. “Name unknown,” George Petrie, *Ancient Music of Ireland* (Dublin: University Press, 1855), 57.

The artist-turned-song-collector, according to his biographer William Stokes, received tunes from Thomas Davis, the poet William Allingham, the painter Frederick Burton, the sculptor Patrick MacDowell, and a host of others, including physicians, priests, and students, and librarians. He also reproduced airs from the collection of John Edward Calder, *George Petrie*, 23.

Miss Ross, according to Petrie, collected this tune from her native county of Londonderry. Petrie noted that the tune was “very Irish; for though it has been planted for more than two centuries by English and Scottish settlers, the old Irish race still forms the great majority of its peasant inhabitants; and there are few, if any, counties in which, with less foreign admixture, the ancient melodies of the country have been so extensively preserved.” Petrie, *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 57.

Pigot (1822-1871), who, in addition to serving as Honorary Secretary of the Ancient Music Society, was a member of the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s. A close of friend of Thomas Davis, one of the founders of the Irish nationalist newspaper *The Nation*, Pigot wrote poetry for Young Ireland publications. He, along with Denny Lane of Cork and Michael Doheny of Tipperary, set patriotic words to existing airs. Pigot obtained tunes from Munster and Connacht and also enlarged his collection from music manuscripts during this time. But Petrie collected many of the tunes for his volume himself from, as Fleischmann colorfully recalled, “the singing of the people, the chanting of some poor ballad singer, the song of the emigrant, or peasant girls while milking their cows or performing their daily round of household duty, from the playing of wandering musicians, or from the whistling of farmers and ploughmen.”

Petrie’s *Ancient Music of Ireland* contained 147 airs; after its publication, he immediately began preparations for a second volume. Problems between the scholar and the society which supported and funded the work, soon halted the project; due to the delay in preparations of his 1855 collection, tensions had arisen in the organization. The Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, after releasing Petrie’s magnum opus, ceased to function. The thirty-nine airs remaining the song collector had edited, arranged, and annotated were published in 1882, sixteen years after Petrie’s death, as *Music of Ireland*. Despite the setback, the final decade of George Petrie’s life remained an active one. He continued as a patron of the Royal Hibernian Academy and regularly exhibited his artwork for that organization between

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214 Calder, *George Petrie*, 41.

1826 and 1858. He was elected president of the Academy in 1857 and served in that capacity until 1859. Just as Bunting acted to him, Petrie served as a mentor for younger scholars who wished to pursue the collection and study of Irish folk music. Chief among his successors was Patrick Weston Joyce (1827-1914), an Irish cultural polymath who, among the others noted previously, had supplied airs and commentary on tune expression and social dance customs for Petrie’s 1855 project.

A native of Limerick, Joyce embarked upon a career as a teacher. In 1845, at the age of eighteen, he was employed as a teacher at the model school in Clonmel, County Tipperary, an institution where he later served as principal. In 1856, he was appointed to a team of educational professionals who were chosen to reorganize Ireland’s national school system. Joyce moved to Dublin soon after the appointment to study at Trinity College, where he earned a B.A. in 1861 and an M.A. in 1864. The young teacher went on to serve on a number of academic institutions, such as the Royal Irish Academy from 1884 to 1895, and the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland from 1865 until his death in 1914. In 1874, Joyce was appointed principal of the National Education Commission’s training college on Malborough Street in Dublin. By the end of the nineteenth century, Joyce had established himself as a leading Irish scholar, publishing over thirty books on education, literature, history, and antiquities in Ireland. Most popular were his *A Child’s History of Ireland* (1898), *A Social History of Ancient Ireland* (1903), and his three-volume *The Origin and History of Irish names and Places* (1869-1913).

Although interested in music as a child, Joyce did not pursue the serious study of the subject until he moved to Dublin in the early 1850s. There, he met George Petrie and familiarized himself with the scholar’s own manuscripts as well as the published
collections of Bunting and Moore. Through Petrie's example, Joyce embarked on his own quest to collect and transcribe music from his native Limerick. He adopted two of Petrie's "scientific" methods: 1) he wrote all the music that he could recall from personal memory, and 2) he traveled and notated the songs he thought worthy of transcription and remembrance. The results of Joyce's work and imagination were published in Petrie's *Ancient Music of Ireland*. The young collector recalled that he supplied Petrie with nearly 200 melodies—"book after book" of airs all taken from memory, he remembered. Petrie only printed twenty-three of Joyce's airs. A number of other remained in manuscript and served as the basis for Charles Stanford's turn-of-the-century edition of the *Complete Petrie Collection*. In 1872, Joyce, possibly disheartened that Petrie did not draw more from his work, published the rest of tunes in a single-volume enterprise bearing the Petrie-esque title, *Ancient Music of Ireland*. In 1866, only sixteen days after his seventy-sixth birthday, George Petrie died at his home in Dublin.

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217 Calder, *George Petrie*, 42.
CHAPTER 3
CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD AND IRISH MUSIC IN THE 1880S

Charles Villiers Stanford’s Folksong Settings

In 1906, Charles Villiers Stanford visited Leipzig, the city where he had studied music in his youth. The town had changed a great deal since the 1870s, when the Irish-born composer had last lived within its walls. "The Thomas-Schule was razed to the ground; there was nothing to show the young citizen that the home of Bach ever stood there," he wrote. "The church next door, a ramshackle edifice, full of old ghostly galleries, and many-shaped pews, was unrecognizable; restored, as vandals misterm it, in the most spick and span style of bad Gothic," the composer continued. "The quaint old underground room, with its rough frescoes of Faust and its villainous food, is a thing of the past. Very soon the only venerable relics of the town will be the booths of the merchants at the fair."¹

On the first day of his visit—one filled with "sad bewilderment”—Stanford met a resident whom he does not name in his writing. The composer, though, characterized his informant as "a man of striking personality, a poet, an architect and a music-lover with an interest for the art which had sound knowledge and judgment to back it: of a type not unlike W. E. Henry, forceful to the point of roughness, but full of an ebullient humour which took the edge off any tendency to brutality."² Stanford's commentator, who possessed a critical eye for contemporary German art and architecture and favored the glories of the continent's past achievements, the composer noted, articulated the following view of the history of European music:

² Ibid., 233.
He laid stress on the historical position of music in the various countries of Europe from the 15th century on, pointing out the fact that each nation had in turn enjoyed a period of commanding supremacy, the Netherlands, the Italians, the English, and after them the Germans; the periods of the first three named being about equal, but the Germans, thanks to Luther, having reigned for double the time allotted to the others. The English period was, in his opinion, cut short by the influence of the Puritans, who discouraged music as much as Luther encouraged it, but who, by abstaining from interference with painting, enabled the art to go on its way developing up to this day. That the music-spirit was not wholly crushed was evident by the rise of Purcell after the Restoration, but its efforts for national revival were cut short by the invasion of the great personality of George Frederic Handel, one of the first great figures of the German supremacy. Unlike the Netherland and Italian schools, the English school did not die of senile decay. It was left only in a state of suspended animation, just after its most brilliant figure, Henry Purcell, had completed his short career. That it would come again into its kingdom, my friend looked upon as certain.

The German period, and he frankly volunteered the admission, ended its prosperity and usefulness with its highest development of opera in Wagner and the climax of symphonic and absolute music in Brahms. It then exhausted itself and had nothing more to say. The nation must be content, he said, to go to sleep and to wait for its next resurrection of energy, which would come when it had once more absorbed a good and persistent diet of the folk-song which was its backbone.  

"The hope for Germany," Stanford reported, "was that she should be content to go rest and to wake up with a simple mind. She ought not to complain, having had a double portion of the usual period of supremacy allotted to any nation." The composer believed that the root of quality music was folksong; a nation's art music grew organically from its culture and tradition. "The kernel of my friend's discourse was as sound in principle as it was invaluable and stimulating in practise [sic], the vital necessity of folk-song to a nation and of founding its creative output upon a basis of full knowledge of the characteristics and atmosphere of their style," the composer wrote. He further stated:

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3 Ibid., 234-235.
4 Ibid., 235.
There is no diet so life-giving and so life-preserving as the natural out-pouring of the songs of the soil. They have the sanctity of age coupled with the buoyancy of youth. As far as any art-work can be, they are in their nature immortal. Their claim to immortality is founded on their spontaneity of utterance and their inherent sincerity. There is no flummery or sophistication about them. They do not scruple to be coarse, and are not ashamed to be refined, when the sentiment or the environment demands. How well and truly they represent the spirit and tendencies of a nation is obvious even to the least tutored ear.\(^5\)

Stanford’s argument hinged upon essentialism: folk music reflected the basic characteristics of the people (a stereotype) from which it came. The English, for example, "take a kind of pride in concealing their feelings and emotions, and this is reflected in their folk-song." Of such folk music, he lists the music of the Church and "fine old hymn-tunes" of the Elizabethan era as key exemplars. Celtic folk music, he said, is full of "fire and agony." Moreover, such styles are audible in the music of a nation's most prominent composers: Sterndale Bennett reflects the manner of English folksong and Purcell, curiously, the Irish. "Henry Purcell must have been of Irish extraction, as his name and innumerable characteristics in his style go far to prove," Stanford assessed.\(^6\)

Beethoven exemplified, to Stanford, the influence of Irish folk music upon art music on the continent. The former, having been exposed to the folk music of the British isles while he set over 100 songs for George Thomson's publications, employed an Irish-style jig as the basis for several themes in his Seventh Symphony, observations that were all too clear to Stanford:

But shortly after he made the arrangements, or indeed perhaps concurrently with his work upon them,

\(^5\) Ibid., 237.
\(^6\) Ibid., 242.
he wrote his Seventh Symphony in A. Not many critics have noticed the strongly Irish characteristics in it. The theme of the first movement is essentially Irish even to its final three notes.

. . . The whole movement is in jig rhythm. The last movement is still closer to the Irish and contains a quotation from a well-known tune. It is a reel pure and simple, though gigantic in structure. The first theme is a 2/4 version of the final phrase of 'Kitty of Coleraine.'

The composer further employed the same tune in his Ninth Symphony, Stanford said. "At all events Beethoven could not be charged with another injustice to Ireland," he added. "Kitty of Coleraine little dreamed that she would be numbered among the immortal nine."7

Stanford contacted Alfred Perceval Graves when he was asked by Boosey to work on a collection of Irish songs in the early 1880s. The composer asked the poet to supply lyrics for the tunes; Graves jumped on the idea at once and, thus, Songs of Old Ireland began its production. The two men had worked together previously on two original Irish songs: Irish Eyes and From the Rose to the Appleblossom, but, as Graves noted, "the partnership began with the Sings of Old Ireland."8 The two men, in fact, were childhood friends, and their relationship made for successful professional collaboration which ended with Stanford’s death in 1924. The composer and the poet also shared a love for the folk repertoire. Graves’s father had been a close friend of George Petrie, and through him, young Alfred became interested in Irish folksong.

Harry Plunket Greene, in his 1935 biography of Stanford, summarized the Irish folksong collaboration between Stanford and Graves as "one of the most important things in British music." He continued:

7 Ibid., 244-245.
There will always be controversy as to whether folk-music should be taken out of its country home and dressed up for company in alien surroundings. It is true that all such transplantations have a certain anachronistic reproach to face, especially when, as so often in this collaboration, the English poem was not a faithful follower of the Irish original, a fancy of the librettist approved by his partner; or, again, a vocal version of a jig or reel or other instrumental tune which had no verbal origin. The answer is that, though unquestionably opposed to purism and what one might call the rights of folk-music, such appropriations might, by bringing that music into the currency of things performed, open a new field of beauty to the musician and even be or actual service to the cause of its nationality. If such a policy was justifiable, no finer men could have been chosen to do the work than these two.\(^9\)

Greene also noted that "to [Graves] the tune was as holy as to his colleague; the poem had to fit the music—a matter of honour which neither transgressed."\(^10\) He further opined, without an air of objectivity, that no country can compete with Ireland in the quantity and quality of it folk-music. The various collections of airs in song form which Stanford, and after him his pupil Charles Wood (of Armagh), produced in company with Alfred Graves are a wonderful record of beauty. Open them where you will, you will catch a glimpse of the spirit which has made Ireland the most romantic country in the world.\(^11\)

*Songs of Old Ireland* of 1882 contains fifty songs, a few dozen of which Graves had sent to Stanford immediately after the project commenced. Most of the tunes from *Songs of Old Ireland* came from George Petrie; some were taken from Bunting's collection. On the dedication page, Stanford included the following: "To Johannes Brahms, I dedicate with respect and gratitude these melodies of my native country."\(^12\)

The composer's short prefatory notes draw parallels between Irish song and peasant

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\(^9\) Ibid., 160.

\(^10\) Ibid., 169.

\(^11\) Ibid., 162.

life. Though not a collector of folksongs, the composer, in arranging these melodies, followed nonetheless in the footsteps of Bunting and Petrie:

The Fifty Irish Melodies comprised in this collection may be described as new to English ears. They have been chosen to represent as far as possible the various characteristics of the people, from which they have sprung. Thus, glimpses into the lives of the Irish peasant, fishermen, and mechanic are given through the Lullabies, the Love Songs, the Lays of Sport and Occupation, and the Lamentations for the Dead; while the romantic Historical subjects of the remote past have not been neglected. The airs are in the main selected from the Petrie Collection. For a few other airs are indebted to Mr. Bunting's and Dr. Joyce's Collections. The words, where not entirely new, are founded upon Celtic or Anglo-Irish originals, and actual obligation being in each instance acknowledged.\(^\text{13}\)

The short paragraph illustrates a composer with a romanticized, and even nostalgic, view of the land of his birth. In the collection, Stanford, on one hand, aligned himself with the practices of past song catchers. Like Bunting and Petrie, who adapted the songs for the pianoforte, the composer wrote musical lines that enhance, not obscure, the vocal melody. On the other hand, Stanford's ideas reflect the romanticism of Thomas Moore, notably in using original lyrics for the selected tunes.

The unknown song from Petrie's *Ancient Music of Ireland*, known presently as "The Londonderry Air," is, in this publication, retexted as "Emer's Farewell to Cucullain." The tune, which Petrie described in his volume as "very Irish," is made even more so with Grave's poem. Cucullain, one of the most famous figures from Irish legend, fought against all of Queen Meave of Connacht's warriors at the battle of the Ford.

\begin{quote}
O might a maid confess her secret longing
To one who dearly loves but may not speak!
Alas! I had not hidden to thy wronging
A bleeding heart beneath a smiling cheek;
I had not stemmed my bitter tears from staring,
And thou hadst learned my bosom's dear distress,
And half the pain, the cruel pain of parting,
\end{quote}

\(^{13}\) Ibid., iii.
Had passed, Cucullain, in thy found caress.

But go! Connacia's hostile trumpets call thee,
Thy chariot mount and ride the ridge of war,
And prove whatever feat of arms befall thee,
The hope and pride of Emer of Lismore;
Ah, then return, my hero, girt with glory,
To knit my virgin heart so near to thine,
That all who seek thy name in Erin's story
Shall find its loving letters linked with mine.\textsuperscript{14}

With the piano part, which consists of several simultaneous moving lines, crescendos,
and phrase markings, Stanford transforms Petrie's folksong into a Schubertian art song.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 3-4.
"Father O'Flynn," one of the longest in the collection, is set to a jig in B-flat major.

The vocal melody drives the tune; the piano part punctuates the texture with diatonic chords and brief eighth-note runs. Graves's poem reads:

Of priests we can offer charmin' variety,
Far renown'd for learnin' and piety,
Still I'd advance ye widout impropriety
Father O'Flynn as the flow'r of them all.

Chorus
Here's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,
Slainté and slainté, and slainté again;
Pow'rfullest preacher, and tinderest teacher,
And kindliest creature in ould Donegal.

Don't talk of your Provost and Fellows at Trinity,
Famous for ever at Greek and Latinity,
Dad, and the divils and all at Divinity!
Father O'Flynn'd make hares of them all!
Come, I venture to give ye my word,
Never the likes of his logic was heard,
Down from Mythology into Thayology,
Troth! Conchology if he'd the call.

Chorus

Och! Father O'Flynn, you've the wonderful way wid you,
All ould sinners are wishful to pray wid you,
All the young childer are wild for to play wid you,
You've such a way wid you, Father, avick!
Still, for all you've so gentle a soul,
Gad, you've your flock in the grandest control;
Checking the crazy ones, coaxing onaisy ones,
Lifting the lazy ones on with the sick.

Chorus

And tho' quite avoidin' all foolish frivolity,
Still at all seasons of innocent jollity,
Where was the playboy could claim an equality
At comicality, Father, wid you?
Once the Bishop look'd grave at your jest,
Till this remark set him off wid the rest:
"Is it lave gaiety all to the laity?"
Cannot the Clergy be Irishmen too?"

Chorus

In addition to Graves’s use of the Irish dialect, the poem establishes Father O’Flynn, the wild yet wise priest, as a folk hero. The poet recounted that Stanford had initially rejected the tune, having felt that it did not fit with the more serious nature of the rest of the songs in the collection. The composer agreed to include the song after Graves protested, saying that the song was “humerous not comic.”15 “Father O’Flynn” stood the test of time; the two men brought the character as well as the tune itself onto the operatic stage with Shamus O’Brien over a decade and a half later.


15 Greene, Charles Villiers Stanford, 170.
Graves even pays respects to Irish rebels in several of the songs. "The Flight of Earls" recalls the fate of O'Neill and O'Donnell, noblemen in Tyrone and Tyrconnell, who fled Ireland after their rebellion against England:

To other shores across the sea
We speed with swelling sail;
Yet still there lingers on our lee
A phantom Innisfail.
Oh fear not, fear not, gentle ghost,
Your sons shall turn untrue!
Though fain to flay your lovely coast,
They leave their hearts with you.

As slowly into distance dim
Your shadow sinks and dies,
So o'er the ocean's utmost rim
Another realm shall rise:
New hills shall swell, new vales expand,
New rivers winding flow,
But could we for a foster land
Your mother love forego?

Shall mighty Espan's martial praise
Our patriot pulses still,
And o'er your mem'ry's fervent rays
For ever cast a chill?
Oh no! we live for your relief,
Till home from alien earth,
We share the smile that gilds your grief,
The tear that gems your mirth.

Stanford's accompaniment, for the first two verses, features simple, legato arpeggios and a stepwise bass line. He changes the style significantly for the third, reflecting the line "Shall mighty Espan's martial praise Our patriot pulses still. . . ." Here, the composer employs fanfare-like dotted rhythms and rolled chords in the accompaniment, providing a march-like quality to the tune. The smooth, arpeggio style of the opening verses returns at the song's close.
Graves's text to "Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill" depicts the poisoning of the protagonist, a popular Irish general, before Oliver Cromwell began his military campaign in Ireland. The singer pays homage to the hero O'Neill, already dead by the song's opening, in the following dirge; the final verse proclaims that the Irish race, without its noble leader, is doomed to die under Cromwell's crushing forces:

Oh! Black break the morrow in tempest and gloom,
When we hear to our sorrow O'Neill to the tomb.
Whilst with wailing and weeping the long, long train
Comes woefully sweeping o'er Uladh's dark plain.

'Twas not reaving their cattle, you fell, Owen Roe,
Or in red, raging battle, your face to the foe.
But the black make of treason they sent, O'Neill,
To pierce you with poison since you scoffed at their steel.

Oh! Leader God gifted, oh! arm stern of stroke,
That well-nigh had lifted from our shoulders the yoke,
Your death-bell is ringing our doom, our doom,
For with you we are bringing our hopes to the tomb.

The tune itself is an Irish lament, notable for its slow, stately melody in a minor key—here D minor. To Edward Bunting, laments such as this one represented some of the oldest songs in Ireland's history. And Stanford probably held the same view. Here as in the other examples, the composer, adept at evocative piano writing, uses the accompaniment to portray, vividly, Grave's poem. With rolled chords placed prominently on the beat and the thirty-second-note filigree at the tune's climax, emphasized with a rallantando, Stanford mimics the strum of an Irish harp.

Graves's and Stanford's 1882 publication offered consumers musical renderings of Irish folk melodies, having more in common with George Thomson's editions of folk music rather than the scholarly works of Bunting, Petrie, and Joyce. The composer's greatest contribution to Irish folk music was, undoubtedly, his own musicianship. As an
accomplished song writer, Stanford brought word painting and tasteful piano writing into the more scholarly world of folksong. The tune "Mary's Bells," for instance, uses parallel first-inversion chords for much of the tune, symbolizing the bells of the song's title. Strong, monotonous accents in the piano's lower register in "The Smith Song" protrudes the musical texture. And Stanford's treatment of sixteenth notes in perpetual motion for the "Spinning-Wheel song" owes much to Schubert's Gretchen am Spinnrade. The expressive melody to "The Foggy Dew" provided an opportunity for the composer to play on two closely-related keys, F major and D minor. Stanford fluctuates between both keys, which spring naturally from the modal melodic line. He opened the first verse in D minor and shifts easily to F major at the first cadence. In the second verse, almost reversing this process, he opens in F major. The inner voices of the accompaniment, moreover, coalesce to create a steady flow and hymn-like effect. Stanford's folk-song settings are simple, economical, and most of all sentimental.

**Stanford's Irish Symphony**

By the late 1880s, Charles Stanford, only in his 30s, enjoyed a reputation as one of the Britain's most promising composers. He returned to Cambridge in 1877 on a triumphant note after studying with Friedrich Kiel in Berlin. A number of successful works flowed from his pen, earning him more commissions and increasing notoriety: His Piano Suite Op. 2 and Toccata Op. 3 were published the year of his return, and, only the year before, he won second prize in the Alexandra Palace competition for his First Symphony. In 1883, Stanford joined the staff of the new Royal College of Music as professor of composition and conductor of the orchestra.

To add to his academic accolades, Stanford received an honorary doctorate in music from Oxford in 1883. Four years later, the composer joined the faculty at
Cambridge University. Indeed, the promise of his career exceeded that of his contemporaries, Hubert Parry, Alexander MacKenzie, and Frederick Corder. “It is perhaps worth remembering that all eyes were on Stanford at this time as the bright new talent,” Jeremy Dibble wrote in 1995. Though he experienced difficulties with Savanarola, his second opera, the composer “was seen as possessing musical talent of the greatest potential in Britain and hopes were pinned on him from all quarters.”16

Harry Plunket Greene met Stanford for the first time in 1888 at a party at Arthur Coleridge’s house. The composer, according to his later biographer, began playing through the tunes in his Songs of Old Ireland on the piano as Greene admitted that he had never heard them. Stanford was a tall man, standing at nearly 6 ft. 1in, and was “dark, in spite of his tawny hair,” Greene described, “and dour—so dark and dour that many people were afraid to face him and never learned to know the mind behind that formidable exterior nor its equipment of old-world manners.” “Stanford was a typical Irishman of the old days,” the author continued. He made his home in England and was a staunch Unionist, but all those years of residence could never change his Irish vision or dim the colour of his brogue. He was a die-hard Conservative and rooted in the customs and traditions of his childhood.

. . . Yet he was the greatest innovator in English music since Purcell.17

By mid decade, the Irish question had again reared its head in British politics. At Cambridge, the composer became involved in a series of correspondences with Edmund Garrett, former president of the Cambridge Union; the letters were printed in the Cambridge Review in June of 1887, one month after the premiere of Stanford's Irish


17 Greene, Charles Villiers Stanford, 84-85, 15-16.
*Symphony*. Garrett proposed the invitation of a member of the Irish Nationalist Party as a guest speaker to the organization. The composer wrote to Garnett, and the readership of *the Cambridge Review*, "I . . . firmly believe that the whole arrangement was made in order to provide a political platform for one of the Irish Party, and that the addition of an invitation to a Unionist was made in order to lend an air of apparent fairness to the plan."¹⁸

To Stanford, members of the Irish Party, under the leadership of Charles Stuart Parnell, were usurpers and troublemakers merely stirring the emotions of Ireland's Catholic majority. Under Parnell, the Nationalists supported acts of civil disobedience; poor tenants in Ireland's rural communities were encouraged to withhold payment of rents to their landlords. For members of the wealthy, more conservative Anglo-Irish ascendancy, of which Stanford was a member, popular opinion held that the Irish Nationalists supported the Phoenix Park murders of 1882. The incident hit close to the composer's home. He recalled the following two decades later:

> During the troublous years in the early eighties which came to a climax in the Phoenix Park murders, I had paid a few visits to Ireland. The developments which followed this crime came very near home to me, from an incident which closely affected my mother. She lived in Fitzwilliam Square, and had let her stables to a most respectable cab-proprietor who was wont to keep his cab at a stand in the corner of the square, for which the whole length of Fitzwilliam Street was visible. Mr. Justice Lawson, who with Forster and others was the most threatened man in Dublin, lived on the East side of the street, and used to start on foot every morning at 10:30 or so to walk to the Four Courts. One morning the cab-driver saw a doubtful-looking person pacing up and down opposite Lawson's house, and guessed that he was up to mischief. He proved to have good reason for his suspicions. Shortly afterwards Lawson came out, and as he started toward Merrion Square the man shadowed him. But the cabman left his cab to chance, and followed them picking up policemen as he went. Just as Lawson was passing Kildare Street Club, the assassin rushed at him with a knife, and was just seized in time by his two pursuers. The knife

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turned out to be one of the same make and pattern as those used in Phoenix Park, and helped to convict the murderers.19

On 6 May 1882, Lord Frederick Cavendish, the newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Thomas Henry Burke, Permanent Undersecretary, were stabbed to death in the park by members of the Republican-leaning Irish National Invincibles. Stanford recounted anecdotes from the murderers’ subsequent trial:

I had many talks about this crisis with Lord Justice Murphy, who was then Crown Prosecutor. He gave me a most terribly dramatic account of one day in preliminary inquiry at the Police Court. The dock itself was filled with a row of the accused, in the centre of which stood Carey and at the end Brady. At the far end from Brady stood was the witness-box, which was a chair, placed upon the Counsel's table below the dock. Every day the prisoners laughed and chaffed, knowing as well as Murphy did that the evidence so far available was not sufficiently conclusive. The moment came on the morning when in the midst of their usual hilariousness the row of conspirators became aware that Carey was not there. There was a sudden silence which could be felt. Murphy, who was sitting close to the witness-chair, saw Brady quietly changing places with each of his neighbors in turn and working his way silently to his end of the dock. When he arrived opposite the witness-chair, Murphy rose and asked the Magistrate for a special reason to have the witness-chair removed to the other end of the table. Brady at once leaned over and said to him: "You were right to do that, Sir; I was going to break his neck over the edge of the dock." And he would have done it too," said Murphy, "for a more magnificent specimen of muscular humanity I never saw, nor a finer fellow with a more open honest face; only a prey to morbid fanaticism and distorted patriotism." He told me that he ascertained that Brady, when driving away from the scene of the murder, kept saying: "I am sorry I had to kill that other gentleman," meaning Lord Frederick Cavendish.20

When Gladstone’s Liberal government allied itself with the Nationalists in establishing Home-Rule for Ireland, Stanford seems to have turned away from the party he had initially supported.21 The composer was not alone in his feelings. Gladstone,

19 Charles Villiers Stanford, Pages from an Unwritten Diary (London: Edward Arnold, 1914), 254-255.
20 Ibid., 255-256.
21 Rodmell noted that “Stanford's political affiliations during his early years are unknown but he certainly signed a public affirmation of support for Professor James Stuart, who stood in the Liberal interest in the Cambridge University bi-election in 1882.” Rodmell, Charles Villiers Stanford, 131 fn.
opponents felt, acted out of opportunity, and Home-Rule for Ireland appeared to be a way to retain power for the Liberal party at Westminster. But he, as a devout Christian, felt it the moral duty of parliament to let Ireland shoulder its own burden of government. Since first coming to office as Prime Minister in 1868, Gladstone achieved a number of bills meant to ease life for people in Ireland’s rural community. The Land Act, which recognized the rights of tenants and introduced the fixing of rents, passed in 1881. With the Home-Rule bill of the mid 1880s, the Prime Minister hoped to appeal to the hearts and imaginations of the British people, rallying them behind a single cause for the future of Ireland. The bill itself, modeled on the American Federal system, established an Irish legislative body to “make laws for the peace, order and government of Ireland,” but supreme executive power remained with the Queen in England. The Irish legislators, also, were restricted from passing laws that interfered with the succession of the Crown, the branches of the military, the establishment of religion in government institutions, and existing trade laws, among others. But fears about a Catholic challenge to established power in Britain and anti-Irish sentiment crystallized in the face of Gladstone’s plan; the House of Commons resolutely defeated the Home-Rule bill in 1886.

The following year opened the door of opportunity for Stanford. His Symphony No. 3 in F minor, “The Irish,” fused the folk repertoire with the high art of orchestral music and became his most successful work in the medium. The composer opens his Irish Symphony of 1887 with a soft unison statement in F minor in the strings. It is answered with chords in the clarinets, bassoons, and horns before the strings return

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23 See Ibid., 92-117.
with a restatement of the melody—the first theme of the movement’s sonata form. Stanford makes economical use of the theme's first three notes—C-D-flat-F—and their harmonic derivatives to link phrases and as a memorable fanfare passage throughout the movement. Although one writer has commented that the opening’s “Phrygian yearnings establish an “ancient” and Celtic sound,” there is nothing inherently Irish about this passage in the work. \(^{24}\) A solo cello introduces the second theme, a flowing and expressive cantabile melody, in the instrument’s tenor register. In contrapuntal treatment of the themes, the composer takes care to carefully double the parts, even the accompaniment voices, for clarity; his orchestration owes more to the textures of Mendelssohn’s style than to Brahms’s. Stanford, moreover, need not be faulted for wielding “the Teutonic knife” since his lean and learned orchestral style certainly fell in line with contemporary tastes. \(^{25}\)

Stanford opens the second movement, a scherzo and trio, with a hop jig in D minor. The first violins introduce the spritely melody over pizzicato accompaniment in the lower strings; the flutes subsequently join the violins with the melody in the second phrase. After a brief transition, the clarinets, bassoons, first and second horns, and trombones introduce a secondary theme—a bold, homophonic, march-like statement in the relative major—over a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass. The trio opens with a new theme—a stately chorale-like melody also in D major—in the clarinets, bassoons, and third and fourth horns. After developing the theme in transition passages, Stanford


\(^{25}\) Ibid.
closes the trio with soft chords in the woodwinds and strings over light triplet figures in the timpani. The hop jig returns to close the movement.

Stanford based the third movement upon three principle themes. The first, introduced by the clarinets in thirds after the introduction, is an expressive melody that, with the flatted seventh and cantabile style, embodies the sound of Irish folk music. The tranquil second theme, initiated in a solo oboe line then answered with a solo flute, like the first theme, contains a folk-like quality. Here, the single-octave range and the flowing triplet and turn figures are equally suitable for singing as for instrumental performance. Stanford drew from a preexisting folksong, "The Lament of the Sons of Usnach," for the third theme, which he actually introduces as an accompaniment to the second theme. The full orchestra sounds the short "Usnach" in full fortissimo several times in the course of the movement.

The composer’s source for the tune remains unclear. He claimed in his 1914 memoirs that the tune originated in George Petrie’s manuscripts of Irish folksongs. The collector did not include the lament in his 1855 collection. Stanford did, in fact, print the tune in his three-volume edition of Petrie’s collection (1902-1905), which was based upon the bard’s vast manuscript material. The melody, however, bears no resemblance to the version the composer used in his *Irish Symphony*.

![Figure 3-4. “The Lamentation of Deirdre for the Sons of Usnach,” Charles Villiers Stanford, The Complete Collection of Irish Melodies as Noted by George Petrie (London and New York: Boosey and Co., 1902, 1905), 259.](image)

The composer, instead, may have drawn from Edward Bunting’s version of the tune. In his 1840 *Ancient Music of Ireland*, Bunting included a setting of the Lament that, like Stanford’s theme in the symphony, involves the steady dotted rhythm on the third beat of each measure. Stanford likely based his motive upon the inner voice present in the bass line and altered it slightly by adding the dotted-eighth-sixteenth-note combination to the final beat.

![Figure 3-5. “The Lamentation of Deirdre for the Sons of Usnach,” Edward Bunting, The Ancient Music of Ireland (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), 88a.](image)
The motive from the symphony also bears likeness to a caoine, entitled “The Irish Cry,” from Bunting’s collection.

![Image of the Irish Cry music notation]

Figure 3-6. “The Irish Cry,” Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), 88b.

Noteworthy, too, is the legend behind the song, of which Bunting claimed was probably the oldest in his 1840 collection. Deirdre, according to the story Bunting’s notes, was the granddaughter of Dall, court poet to Conor Mac Nessa, King of Ulster. King Conor raised the young girl in strict seclusion, educating her to become his future bride. But Deirdre does not love the King. Wandering the countryside on day, she meets Naisi, one of the sons of Usnach, a powerful warrior clan from Ulster legend. Naisi, sitting beneath a tree playing his harp, engages in the following dialogue with the young woman:

"Gentle is the damsel who passeth by," said Naisi. Then the maiden, looking up, replied, "Damsels may well be gentle where there are no youths." Then Naisi knew it was Deirdre, and great dread fell upon it. "The king of the province is betrothed to thee, oh damsel," he said. "I love him not," she replied: "he is an aged man, I would rather love a youth like thee. "Say not so, oh damsel," said Naisi; "the king is a better spouse than the king's servant." "Thou sayest so," said Deirdre, "that thou mayest avoid me." Then plucking a rose from a briar, she flung it towards him, and said, "Now art thou ever disgraced, if thou rejectest me."²⁶

Naisi, though initially warned by his brothers about spending time with the king's desired bride, steals away with her under the protection of the clan of Usnach. They settled in Scotland, legend states, along Loch Etive. King Conor pursues them with the aid of

²⁶ Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840), 84.
Fergus, a powerful member of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster. He captures clan Usnach and orders them put to death. Deirdre’s lament, the tune Bunting printed in his final volume, originated as a funeral song the maiden supposedly composed while singing over the dead men's grave.

The lions of the hill are gone,
And I am left alone—alone;
Dig the grave both wide and deep,
For I am sick, and fain would sleep.

. . . Lay upon the low grave floor,
'Neath each head, the blue claymore;
Many a time the noble three
Reddened these blue blades for me.

The penultimate verse of the sixteen-stanza song curses the Red Branch Knights and King Conor:

Woe to Eman, roof and wall!
Woe to Red Branch, hearth and hall!
Tenfold woe and black dishonour
To the foul and false Clan Conor.27

With her final words, Deirdre, like Isolde falling on her beloved Tristan in Wagner's music drama, plunges into the grave to lie with the sons of Usnach.

In addition to the thematic material in the Irish Symphony, the harp plays a significant role: the composer opens the movement with arpeggio patterns in the instrument, perhaps a reference to the harp of Erin he stated in the Latin inscription printed on the cover page of the published score (IPSE FAVE CLEMENS PATRIÆ PATRIAMQUE CANENTI, PHOEBE, CORONATA QUI CANIS IPSE LYRA28); the harp

27 Ibid., 87-88.

28 In English, the phrase reads, “Look with favour and mercy on the country and on the country’s bard, Phoebus, who yourself sing with crowned lyre.” In Greek mythology, Phoebus stands for “radiant one” and is often used with association to the sun. The Romans used it as an epithet for Apollo, hailing the god
arpeggios recur occasionally, serving mainly as accompaniment, but returning as a solo
at the end of the movement. The tragic story of the sons of Usnach with its own
prominent use of the harp would not have been lost on the composer. The legend's
Ulster origins, despite his Unionist leanings in the following decades of the
contemporary Irish issue, is likely coincidental; Stanford's *Irish Symphony*, to its
composer, is Irish for its own sake.

The final movement employs two folksongs as primary thematic material;
Stanford selected both examples from Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. The first theme,
a quotation of "Remember the glories of Brian the Brave," a march-like tune in F minor,
opens in the strings; the woodwinds immediately answer with the second phrase of the
tune. After a short transition, the full orchestra intones the melody in a full-bodied
fortissimo. The second theme, an original one, is a rich cantabile melody in A-flat major.
Here, the strings, bassoons, and first horn perform the upward-winding melody over a
light pizzicato bass. Mirroring the presentation of the first theme, the oboes, clarinets,
and second horns answer with the second phrase.

In the following transition, Stanford introduces a short statement of "Let Erin
Remember the Days of Old" in the French horns. Marked forte, the horns sound the
theme in a step-wise procession of A-flat major, B-flat minor, and C minor before
returning to A-flat. The subsequent transition mimics the movement's introduction,
whereby the strings sound fragments of "Brain the Brave" in pizzicato. Instead of
restating the exposition, Stanford embarks upon a development of the second theme.
Here, the clarinets and bassoons, in parallel thirds, wind the theme through C-sharp

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as Phoebus Apollo. Stanford’s use of the name in the motto not only asks for divine favor to be bestowed
on Ireland, but links the island, poetically, with the great past civilizations in world history.
minor over a tonic vamp in the violas and cellos. The composer slightly alters the rhythm as well: the quarter-note and eighth-note figures of the original statement give way to flowing quarter-note triplets in this incarnation. This gives way to a repeat of the same phrase in E minor, now taken over by the flutes and oboes. In what would otherwise seem to be a standard development section, Stanford introduces a full statement of "Let Erin Remember." The presentation is hymn-like: three trumpets sound the A-major theme softly under a thin texture—octave E's spread between the flutes and upper strings. Between phrases, the harp introduces glissandi for effect.

The cellos and violas announce fragments of "Brian the Brave" as "Let Erin Remember" draws to a close. A short transition ensues: "Brian the Brave," truncated, moves from the bottom of the orchestra through the upper voices, gathering strength—marked poco a poco crescendo—along the way. The woodwinds, horns, and first trumpet, as if to recall the sound of a military band, state the theme strongly in B-flat major. The strings join the ensemble in a restatement of the phrase, but in the parallel minor. The full orchestra enters in fortissimo, similar to the earlier point in the movement, sounding the full folksong in F minor.

The strings introduce the second theme in D-flat major, but this time the rhythm consists of the flowing triplet figures found in the previous development passage. Mirroring the movement's exposition, the woodwinds answer with the second phrase. The transition includes a return of the short quotation of "Let Erin Remember." After brief motivic treatment of "Brian the Brave," Stanford presents, arguably, the most moving episode in the entire symphony: "Let Erin remember the days of old," the one
theme in the movement that does not received extensive developmental treatment, is sounded in the full brass section.


The strings and winds interrupt the phrase briefly with a statement of "Brian the Brave." During the folksong's final strain, the full orchestra joins the brass to bring the tune, the movement, and, thus, the symphony to a triumphant conclusion.

Hans Richter conducted the premiere of the symphony at St. James's Hall on 27 May 1887, only one month after Stanford completed the work. The performance earned a favorable review from The Times, though the article was not printed until July when the Philharmonic Society's season drew to a close. "Mr. Stanford's new symphony, played under Herr Richter's leadership, is the third English work of that class which the great conductor has introduced to a London audience in the course of one month, and,
like its predecessors, may be accepted as another and conclusive proof, if proof were needed, that our native school is progressing with rapid strides and in various directions," the writer stated. Stanford, with his latest symphony, successfully elevated Irish national music onto the European stage, much as Dvořák and Liszt had done with the folk music of their native countries. Irish music, it was believed at the time, belonged to the oldest class of music in Europe and elsewhere. "There are a good many Irish melodies actually embodied in his music," the reviewer added, "and in addition to this he introduces the peculiar tonalities and scales which are in many respects akin to Greek modes and offer welcome material to ethnological students bent upon demonstrating the affinity between Celtic and Eastern races."²⁹

Stanford's Third Symphony enjoyed tremendous success in London under Richter. As a result, its popularity secured publication of the symphony with Novello the same year, an act that, Jeremy Dibble noted, "provides a vivid indication of the confidence the publisher had in the success of the work both in Britain and on the continent. . . ."

Indeed, Stanford's symphony on Irish themes earned additional performance throughout England and abroad, including the United States and Germany. With the help of Joachim the score found its way into the hands of Hans von Bülow, who had recently been appointed conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic.³⁰ Stanford recalled the following regarding his Third Symphony:

The performance of this symphony led to my making my first acquaintance with one of the most remarkable men, if not the most remarkable man, in the world of contemporary music, Hans van Bülow. Joachim suggested my sending him a score.

²⁹ "Mr. Stanford's New Symphony," The Times (1 July 1887), 4.
He answered in a characteristic letter, which his polyglot pen wrote in French. He had just accepted the conductorship of the Berlin Philharmonic.\textsuperscript{31} In January of 1888, Stanford, having heard no further word from Bülow, received news that the \textit{Irish Symphony} was to be given a performance in Hamburg in a few days. "I packed my bag and headed straight for the Elbe, arriving late at night before the rehearsal," the composer recalled in his memoir. The Hamburg production on 26 January, Bülow informed Stanford, was a trial run for Berlin a few days later, for which the conductor had lobbied hard to include the work on the program.\textsuperscript{32}

"The Irish Symphony and Brahms's E minor Symphony (No. 4) were written simultaneously," Stanford recalled in his memoir, responding, years later, to criticism that one if the themes in the third movement of \textit{The Irish}, the aforementioned "Lament for the Sons of Usnach," is similar to that of the second movement in the Brahms work.\textsuperscript{33} In fact, Brahms's symphony and Stanford's work were not written at the same time. In a letter to Stanford on 7 February 1886, over one year before the Irish composer began his Third Symphony, Joseph Joachim drew attention Brahms's opus:

\begin{quote}
You should have heard the Brahms new Symphony [No. 4 in E minor. Manuscript. First performance in Berlin]. It went splendidly, the band was heart and soul in it. But also what a work! One continuous passionate strain; the \textit{andante} divinely sweet and yet original. I am quite in love with it.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

Hans van Bülow, sticking up for the young composer, wrote to Wolff, an agent in Berlin, that "Brahms No. 4 E minor, haunts it [the \textit{Irish Symphony}] a tiny bit—but the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{31}{Stanford, \textit{Pages from an Unwritten Diary}, 260-261.}
\footnote{32}{Ibid., 261-262.}
\footnote{33}{Ibid., 262.}
\footnote{34}{Letter from Joseph Joachim to Charles Stanford, February 7, 1886. Greene, \textit{Charles Villiers Stanford}, 71.}
\end{footnotes}
reminiscence in the Adagio is pointed out by the composer in the prefatory note as a National melody.—O.E. [Otto Eichberg] ought to have his attention called to this."35

"Such was the thoughtful care of the conductor for a young composer," Stanford recalled in 1914. Otto Eichbert of the Berlin Press, among others, suggested that Stanford's use of the melody was a direct quote or even a plagiarism of Brahms. Dibble offered his own thoughts in a 1995 article:

Certainly Brahms's symphony, which had been first performed in Meiningen in October 1885 and later premiered in London by Richter in May 1886, was known before Stanford's work was heard which might suggest a possible plagiarism, but together with Stanford's explanation, the actual context of the material in his movement, the central climactic point of the development, seems to militate against such a charge.36

On 3 November 1888, Willem Kes led the work for the opening concert of the new Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. In England, Alexander MacKenzie conducted the Irish for a Philharmonic concert in June 1893, the success of which ignited interest around the country. One voice of detraction belonged to George Bernard Shaw, music critic for The World. Dublin-born and living in England like Stanford, Shaw professed a love for the music of Richard Wagner and the politics of Karl Marx.37 His

35 Letter from Hans van Bulow to Wolff, October, 1887. Quoted in Stanford, Pages from an Unwritten Diary, 262.


37 George Bernard Shaw began his career in journalism in London at the Star in 1889, where the founding editor, T. P. O'Connor engaged him to write articles on politics. O'Connor, Shaw observed, "survived until 1936; but his mind never advanced beyond the year 1865, though his Fenian sympathies and his hearty detestation of the English nation disguised that defect from him. But Shaw's political articles ignited controversy; an avid reader of Karl Marx's Das Capital, Shaw preached socialism years before Lenin's revolution in far away Russia. "I found out early in my career that a Conservative paper may steal a horse when a Radical paper dare not look over a hedge, and that the rich, though very determined that the poor shall read nothing unconventional, are equally determined to be preached at themselves. In short, I found that only for the classes would I be allowed, and indeed tacitly required, to write on revolutionary assumptions," he wrote. See Stanley Weintraub, ed., Shaw: An Autobiography 1856-1898 (London, Sydney, and Toronto: Max Reinhardt, 1970), 175, 200-201.
worship and admiration for the composer of *The Ring Cycle* served, at times, as the basis for his critical reviews. "It seems hardly credible now," he wrote in 1896 for *The Saturday Review*, "that I once exhausted myself, in the columns of The World, in apparently hopeless attempts to shame the de Reszkes out of their perpetual Faust and Mephistopheles, Romeo and Laurent, and in poohpoohed declarations that there were such works in existence as Die Walküre and Tristan." As for Stanford's *Irish Symphony* performed in 1893, the critic, writing under his penname "Corno di Bassetto," wrote that "When Professor Stanford is a genteel, cultured, classic, pious Mixolydian, he is dull beyond belief." Shaw believed that the composer, in this work, seemed to be caught in an internal struggle with himself, between his Celtic past and his current, assimilated position as a professor of music. "Although in it ("Irish" Symphony) you see the Irish professor trifling in a world of ideas, in a marked contrast to the English professor conscientiously wrestling in a vacuum, yet over and above this national difference, . . . you find certain traces of a talent for composition, which is precisely what the ordinary professor, with all his grammatical and historical accomplishments, utterly lacks." But as backhanded as such comments may have been for Stanford, Shaw seemed, by that time, to have warmed up to the symphony. In a May 1888 review for *Pall Magazine*, the writer stated that "as for Mr. Stanford's Irish Symphony, it is only an additional proof that the symphony, as a musical form, is stone dead."

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38 Ibid., 181.


40 Lawrence, *Bernard Shaw I*, 514-515.
As success breeds success, despite Shaw's criticism, the symphony helped to establish Stanford's reputation as one of Great Britain's leading musical voices in the following decades. His name spread to the United States. The New York Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Walter Damrosch, performed the symphony at Carnegie Hall in November of 1907. *New York Times* critic Richard Aldrich offered lukewarm, though positive commentary:

> Of this music Stanford's is the most interesting and a welcome addition to program lists that are apt to become stereotyped. It still retains its freshness and spirit—not that it is very old in years, but music is the least immortal of artistic productions, and some modern symphonies have wrinkled with age in fifteen years. It is not great music nor wholly original in style, but it is charming, of sustained interest and made with such dexterity and skill in the manipulation of its material.\(^{41}\)

Stanford's symphony, perhaps, reached the height of its success when Mahler directed the work for a New York Philharmonic concert in 1910, months before the composer/conductor's death.

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Politics and Nostalgia in Victor Herbert’s *Irish Rhapsody*

On April 20, 1892 at the Lenox Lyceum in New York City, Víctor Herbert conducted his *Irish Rhapsody* for the Feis Ceoil Agus Seanachus, the city’s annual Irish music festival. New York’s Gaelic Society, which sponsored the festivities, sprung up in 1886 as a socio-political haven for Irish-American immigrants. Though focused primarily on the preservation of Irish language and culture, much like its Dublin counterpart, the organization saw itself as a mouthpiece for a new Ireland.

Following the famine of 1845 and 1849, Ireland’s robust population went into sharp decline. One million people, fully one-eighth of the island’s population, died due to starvation and illness. "It was in this unpromising soil, salted with tears and rancor, that modern Irish nationalism took root," historian Thomas Brown wrote.¹ For those who survived the famine, emigration became the new way of life. Between 1846 and 1891, three million Irish came to the United States alone. Munster, Connacht, Leinster, and Ulster were stripped of their populations. American life offered hope to Irish immigrants. Those who traveled across the Atlantic settled in large cities—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco—in hopes of making a better living than what they had experienced at home. Some found work as laborers, peopling canals, harbors, and railroads and branched out into the rural frontiers of the United States. The Irish provided pools of cheap, accessible labor for factories in Lowell, MA and Troy, NY as well as mines in Scranton, PA. But many other immigrants were

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prisoners of poverty, their once steady diet of potatoes was not suitable nor good preparation for life outside of the cities.

By 1890, the United States was home to five million people of Irish birth or origin, about two-hundred thousand more than in Ireland itself. New York City housed more Irish people than in Dublin. Indeed, America had become the new Ireland. But the American dream soon gave way to the American reality. Living conditions in American cities proved to be little different than in Ireland's rural hills. Rents were too high and working wages barely covered the cost of living. Irish immigrants lived together in tight, filthy urban slums, such as Fort Hill in Boston and Five Points in New York. There, they clashed, often violently, with communities of German and Italian immigrants.

In the United States, Fenian exiles, especially, "would share or rather contest the leadership of the Irish-American community in the 1880s with many others." A number of Irish American's migrated to the American Midwest. Long John Finerty, originally from Galway, was appointed city editor of the Chicago Republican. In 1876, he worked as a war correspondent with General George Crook's expedition against the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne. From 1883 to 1885, Finerty served in the United States Congress, there establishing a reputation as a "comic nationalist." The newspaperman founded the Chicago Citizen, which he edited until his death in 1908. Finerty, aiding in the revitalization of Irish nationalism in the city, presided over the United Irish Societies of Chicago’s annual picnics at Ogden Grove.


3 Brown, Irish-American Nationalism, xv.
Other Chicago Irish-Americans active in politics included Alexander Sullivan, Born in Canada in 1847, Sullivan was appointed clerk of the Board of Public Works in Chicago in 1873. Three years later, he shot and killed a school principal in the city in a quarrel over school patronage policies. The jury acquitted Sullivan, accepting his plea of self-defense. In the 1880s, Sullivan's reputation grew; he was the leading American Irish supporter of the Republican Party to the public at large, but he had connections, as well, to the underworld as head of the "Triangle," a terrorist cell which aimed to direct campaigns of dynamite attacks in Britain. In 1889, though, Sullivan fell from public grace after he was implicated in the murder of a Chicago physician, who was his longtime rival. Charges also emerged that he embezzled funds from Irish nationalist organizations and betrayed the dynamiters sent forth from the "Triangle." The Chicago public remembered him as a bully and briber of juries.\(^4\)

In New York, John Devoy stood as the chief in Irish-American leadership. A newsman like John Finerty, Devoy edited the *New York Herald* and founded two papers, *The Irish Nation* (1881-1885), and *Gaelic American* (1903-1951). Devoy spearheaded the task of enlisting British soldiers of Irish origins for the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, or IRB, an analogue of the Irish-American Fenian Brotherhood. Among the New York Irish community, he was later considered the "Lenin of Irish-American nationalism."\(^5\)

Among Devoy's Fenian recruits was John Boyle O'Reilly, who had served in the British army. After arriving in Philadelphia in November of 1869, he moved to Boston and established himself a lecturer, poet, and staff member for the Boston *Pilot*. By the

\(^4\) Ibid., xv-xvi.

\(^5\) Ibid., xvi.
end of the 1870s, O'Reilly, along with Archbishop John Williams, served as editor and co-owner of the paper. His position at the *Pilot* placed him in a visible public position. He became "Boston's favorite Irishman," writing dedicatory poetic verses for the Plymouth Monument and serving as a mediator between two quarreling factions in the city, the Irish and Puritans. Reportedly, O'Reilly suffered from excess stress as a result of his efforts in diplomacy. His suicide in 1890, from an overdose of sleeping pills, may have resulted from such pressures.  

At the helm of Irish-American newspaper publishing in the East Coast stood Patrick Ford, who, though born in Galway in 1837, had settled in Boston at the age of seven. Ford co-owned and edited the *Irish World* in the 1870s, one of the most highly-read and successful newspapers in the United States. Ford, though, incorporated propagandist elements in the paper, often making use of sensational headlines and drawings. During the years of the Home-Rule debate in Ireland, the *Irish World* ran pictures of Erin, the symbol of Ireland, crouching over an unstrung harp, and weeping under the lash of John Bull. Clearly, Irish-Americans such as Ford believed Ireland to be the perpetual whipping boy of England. The paper also published articles on labor matters and the value and morality of land rents. Ford has been described as a bridge between two contrary worlds, that of universal humanitarianism and Irish terrorism.  

Not all Irish-Americans spoke with one voice. New York City housed a significant number of Ulstermen, called Scotch-Irish among native New Yorkers, who, as Protestants, feared mass Catholicism. And as fear of an unpopular religion easily

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6 Ibid., xiv.

7 Ibid., xv.
breeds political unrest, these Ulster supporters demonstrated publicly, flaunting the banner of William of Orange before Catholic Irish in the streets of the city.

Into this world stepped Victor Herbert. Living in New York City since late 1886, he had so far enjoyed a career as principal cellist for the Metropolitan Opera orchestra. His wife, Therese Förster, more famous than he was at the time, was the leading songbird for the company, performing the chief role in a German translation of Verdi’s *Aida*. Before moving to America, the Herberts had similar arrangements in Stuttgart: Therese was a soprano in the court opera, and Victor performed as an orchestral cellist.

By the early 1880s, Victor Herbert had established a name for himself as a virtuoso. Fresh out of the Stuttgart Conservatory, the musician served in the orchestra of wealthy Russian Baron Paul von Derwies and as a soloist in the Viennese orchestra of Eduard Strauss, who succeeded his brother, Johann, as leader. Before moving to the New World, Herbert was already an established composer of instrumental works, such as the *Suite for cello and orchestra* (1884) and the first *Cello Concerto* (1884).

Despite his German education, Herbert was not a native of the land of music and beer. He was born in Dublin in 1859 to Edward Herbert, an artist from County Kerry, and Fanny Lover, daughter of the famed Irish novelist and performer Samuel Lover. After Edward died in the early 1860s, Fanny and young Victor moved to England to live with Lover. In 1866, Fanny married Carl Schmid, a German physician, and the family moved to Stuttgart, Schmid’s hometown.

And so Victor Herbert, who had spent only the first two years of his life in Ireland, stood in front of the orchestra at the Lenox Lyceum that April night and offered the audience his first serious composition that dealt with Irish themes. In the ensuing
decades, the composer would become the leader of Irish American politics, serving as president of several visible organizations like the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and the Friends of Irish Freedom. Amidst his success as both a composer of operettas and an Irish-American figurehead, he never returned to Ireland.

It is instructive, then, to take a closer look at Herbert’s *Irish Rhapsody*, for it highlights a path that he would traverse the rest of his public career. In constructing the piece, the composer mainly drew tunes from Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*. Published in ten volumes between 1808 and 1834, Moore’s *Melodies* featured original poetry set to a myriad of folksongs, most of which came from Edward Bunting’s 1796 and 1809 editions. By the middle of the century, Moore’s settings had taken on a life of their own. The tunes were popular as parlor songs, performed by Moore himself in London and by Samuel Lover, Herbert’s grandfather, during his tours of England and the United States. Thomas Moore was regarded as a national bard by the last decades of the century, and new editions of *The Irish Melodies* were made available for a new generation of consumers.  

Dedicated to the Gaelic Society of New York, Herbert’s score is built around two themes that serve as mottoes, or even leitmotivs. The first is an Irish jig in origin and was published in Moore’s *Irish Melodies* as “We may roam through this world.” It is illuminating to review the text, which reads as follows:

*We may roam thro’ this world, like a child at a feast,  
Who but sips of a sweet, and then flies to the rest;  
And, when pleasure begins to grow dull in the east,  
We may order our wings and be off to the west;  
But if hearts that feel, and eyes that smile,  
Are the dearest gifts that heaven supplies,*

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We never need leave our own green isle,
For sensitive hearts, and for sun-bright eyes.
Then remember, whenever your goblet is crown’d,
Thro’ this world, whether eastward or westward you roam,
When a cup to the smile of dear woman goes round,
Oh! Remember the smile that adorns her at home.

The meaning to this first stanza is obvious: wherever the Irishman goes, his love of his homeland will go with him. The nationalist spirit is akin to the Christian Gospel. Here though, the powerful idea that links all believers under a single banner is the love of and memory of one’s homeland. The poem also speaks to Moore’s and Herbert’s personal experiences. Though separated by over half a century, the two were both Irish emigrants: Moore spent the greatest part of his career across the channel in England, while Herbert’s career flourished in the United States. The rest of the poem continues:

In England the garden of beauty is kept
By a drag on of prudery placed within call;
But so oft this unamiable dragon has slept,
That the garden’s but carelessly watch’d after all.
Oh! They want the wild sweet-briery fence,
Which round the flowers of Erin dwells;
Which warns the touch, while winning the sense,
Nor charms us least when it most repels.
Then remember, whenever your goblet is crown’d,
Thro’ this world, whether eastward or westward you roam,
When a cup to the smile of dear woman goes round,
Oh! Remember the smile that adorns her at home.

In France, when the heart of a woman sets sail,
On the ocean of wedlock its fortunes to try,
Love seldom goes far in a vessel so frail,
But just pilots her off, and then bids her good-bye.
While the daughters of Erin keep the boy,
Ever smiling beside his faithful oar,
Though billows of woe, and beams of joy,
The same as he look’d when he left the shore,
Then remember, whenever your goblet is crown’d,
Thro’ this world, whether eastward or westward you roam,
When a cup to the smile of dear woman goes round,
Oh! Remember the smile that adorns her at home.\(^9\)

The second motto of the *Irish Rhapsody*, a slow, yearning Gaelic ballad titled “Tame mo Cullaugh,” follows only a few measures after the opening jig. The translation of the original title, “Don’t wake me if I’m sleeping,” bears little resemblance to Thomas Moore’s much more nationalistic one of “Erin, oh Erin!” The poet’s text reads as follows:

Like the bright lamp, that shone in Kildare’s holy fane,  
And burn’d thro’ long ages of darkness and storm,  
Is the heart that sorrows have frown’d on in vain,  
Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm.  
Erin, oh Erin, thus bright thro’ the tears  
Of a long night of bondage, thy spirit appears.

The nations have fallen, and thou still art young,  
Thy sun is but rising, when other are set;  
And tho’ slavery’s cloud o’er thy morning hath hung  
The full moon of freedom shall beam round thee yet.  
Erin, oh Erin, tho’ long in the shade,  
Thy star will shine out when the proudest shall fade.

Unchill’d by the rain, and unwak’d by the wind,  
The lily lies sleeping thro’ winter’s cold hour,  
Till Spring’s light touch her fetters unbind,  
And daylight and liberty bless the young flower,  
Thus Erin, oh Erin, *thy* winter is past,  
And the hope that liv’d thro’ it shall blossom at last.\(^10\)

Here, Erin, a Hiberian-English derivative of the Gaelic term for Ireland (Eire and Eireann), is a metaphor for post-Union Ireland, a nation that has yet to come unto its own. Even the opening line compares the spirit of the nation to what the poet notes as the inextinguishable fire of St. Bridget at Kildare.

After a few short measures of the “Erin motto,” the music breaks into a cadenza for solo harp, an instrument with strong Irish symbolism. Following the harp cadenza,

\(^9\) Moore, *Moore’s Irish Melodies*, 31-34.

\(^10\) Ibid., 43-44.
Herbert scores Moore’s best-known song, “Believe me if all these endearing young charms,” for strings. Bearing no overt reference to Irish nationalism, Moore’s text, set to a tuneful and memorable 6/8 ballad, tells of the narrator’s unquenchable love, even if the beloved would leave:

Believe me if all these endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be ador’d, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofan’d by a tear.
That the fervor and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear.
No. the heart that has truly lov’d never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sun-flower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turn’d when he rose.\(^1\)

Herbert likely chose to include this tune because of its popularity as a parlor song. But the unnamed beloved in the text, can, metaphorically, refer to Ireland. The narrator, if read from the emigrant’s point of view, will never forget his homeland, even as memory fades with the passage of time.

After a shift of meter, heralded by drone figures in the bassoons, Herbert sets his only non-Moore tune of the piece, the “Rocky Road.” A hop jig in 9/8 time, the tune opens with a solo oboe over the droning lower winds, recreating the sound of the bagpipe, before the full orchestra takes control. In nineteenth-century orchestral music, the oboe was frequently used to evoke pastoral settings. Beethoven employed the

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 36-37.
instrument in his *Pastoral Symphony*, Grieg in his incidental music to *Peer Gynt*, and Rossini and Berlioz used the instrument’s cousin, the English horn, in the overture to *William Tell* and *Symphonie fantastique* respectively.

Herbert drew from one of three possible sources for “Rocky Road.” In 1841, *The Citizen*, a monthly magazine published in Dublin, produced two versions of the tune. The first, cast in 3/4 meter with dotted rhythms, appeared in volume three, which came out serially between January and July. The second, the likely candidate for Herbert’s version, is set in 9/8 and bears the closest relationship to the one in the composer’s *Irish Rhapsody*. The tune appeared in volume four during the last half of 1841. Published by George Petrie in his *Ancient Music of Ireland* in 1855, the third tune is also in 9/8 meter and has a slightly different melodic contour than the previous two examples. Steady eighth-note passages seem to obscure the strong third beat of each measure, a characteristic particular to the hop jig genre.

Throughout the piece, Herbert splits the theme tunes into small fragments, then develops them by transposing and layering the motives upon one another. At the close of “Rocky Road,” Herbert introduces a new motive, which foreshadows the next tune, a march bearing the Moore title of “To Ladies Eyes.” Here, even more so than in the aforementioned “Believe me,” there is no basis in Irish nationalism. Rather, the text compares the alluring gaze of beautiful woman to the stars in the heavens. Further, the narrator, making light of finding the right woman out of so many choices, turns to the drink. The first of the three-stanza poem reads as thus:

To Ladies’ eyes around, boy,
We can’t refuse, we can’t refuse,
Tho’ bright eyes so abound, boy,
‘Tis hard to choose, ‘tis hard to choose.
For thick as stars that lighten
Yon airy bow’rs, yon air’y bow’rs,
The countless eyes that brighten
This earth of ours, this earth of ours.
But fill the cup – where’er, boy,
Our choice may fall, our choice may fall,
We’re sure to find Love there, boy,
So drink them all! So drink them all!\(^{12}\)

Moore wrote his text to fit a Gaelic air entitled “Fague a Ballagh” (Clear the way) for his 1818 volume of the *Irish Melodies*.\(^{13}\) Yet the tune was retexted in 1845 by James Duffy in his collection *The Spirit of a Nation: Ballads and Songs by the Writers of “The Nation.”* A proponent of the Young Ireland movement, which sought militant action to overturn the Act of Union, James Duffy drew upon a text by Charles Gavan Duffy and renamed the tune “Dalcais War Song.” The opening line reads, “Dalcassia’s warrior bards now the chase forego.”\(^{14}\)

In the next section, Herbert combines two triple-meter ballads. The first, set for solo cello, bears the Thomas Moore title of “Come O’er the Sea.”

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\begin{align*}
\text{Come o’er the sea,} \\
\text{Maiden, with me} \\
\text{Mine thro’ sunshine, storm and snows;} \\
\text{Seasons may roll} \\
\text{But the true soul} \\
\text{Burns the same, where’er it goes.}\end{align*}\]

\(^{15}\)

The melancholy melody echoes the sentiment of Moore’s text. Here the maiden can stand as a metaphor for Erin, the spirit of the Irish nation, to whom the heart of the

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 143.


\(^{14}\) Ibid., tune number 6362.

\(^{15}\) Moore, *Moore’s Irish Melodies*, 113-114.
expatriate, Herbert in this case, stays true wherever he may travel. Further, it may be no
accident that Herbert sets this melody for the solo cello, the instrument the composer
played as a soloist and orchestral musician.

The second tune bears the Moore’s title of “Rich and rare were the gems she
wore.” The four-stanza poem tells the story of a young maiden taking a voyage to test of
the virtue of the laws and leadership of King Brien. In Moore’s historical notes, which he
takes from Warner’s *History of Ireland*, the young woman “undertook a journey . . . from
one end of the kingdom to the other, with a wand only in her hand, at the top of which
was a ring of exceeding great value; and such an impression had the laws and
government of this monarch (Brien) made on the minds of all the people, that no
attempt was made upon her honour, nor was she robbed of her clothes or jewels.”16 The
text recalls the glory and moral vitality of the Sons of Erin:

Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;
But oh! Her beauty was far beyond
Her sparkling gems, or snow-white wand

“Lady! Dost thou not fear to stary,
“So lone and lovely through this bleak way?
“Are Erin’s sons so good or so cold,
“As not to be tempted by woman or gold?”

“Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm,
“No son of Erin will offer me harm:-
“For though they love woman and golden store,
“Sir Knight! They love honour and virtue more!”

On she went, and her maiden smile
In safety lighted her round the green isle;
And blest for ever is she who relied
Upon Erin’s honour, and Erin’s pride.”17

16 Ibid., 253.
17 Ibid., 19-20.
Similar to the recapitulation in the first movement of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*, a short oboe cadenza enters to break the texture, here quoting mottos from “Rich and Rare” as well as the next, and last, Moore tune of the piece. The poet’s text, titled “Tho’ Dark are our Sorrows,” is set to a jig known in the traditional-music repertoire as “St. Patrick’s Day.” Herbert sets the tune in A major and employs a simple texture: a solo clarinet melody over a pizzicato bass line. The music eventually swells to encompass full strings and winds.

Moore’s words were written in honor of the then Prince of Wales, George Augustus Frederick, who would ascend to the throne of England in 1820. The poet states in his notes that the tune was a birthday present for the Prince and given at a party thrown by Major Bryan, a friend of Moore and M.P. from county Kilkenny.\(^{18}\) Moore, though given the benefit of education at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was listed as a Protestant, was raised a Catholic.\(^{19}\) He stood for Catholic Emancipation in the early nineteenth century, leading up to Daniel O’Connell’s populist movement. George Augustus, a social conservative, stood against Catholic Emancipation. The enigmatic text, in light of this issue, seems to conflate Irish nationalism with contemporary Unionism, if only briefly:

Tho’ dark are our sorrows, to-day we’ll forget them,
And smile through our tears, like a sunbeam in showers;
There never were hearts, if our rulers would let them,


\(^{19}\) In 1794, Moore went to study at Trinity College, Dublin, which had been opened to Catholics the previous year; however, Catholic students were denied emoluments (scholarships, fellowships, and other monetary awards or prizes)\(^{19}\) Moore’s entry as a student, dated 2 June 1794, reads, “Thomas Moore, P. Prot,” standing for his Commoner status (pensionarius) and that he was listed as a Protestant. Perhaps Moore entered himself as a Protestant in order to qualify for a scholarship. Gwynn, *Thomas Moore*, 8.; MacCall suggests that certain friends and family members suggested the idea to him. However, MacCall reports that Moore entered a Catholic after all. MacCall, *Thomas Moore*, 20
More form’d to be grateful and blest than ours.
But just when the chain
Has ceas’d to pain,
And hope has enwreath’d it round with flowers,
There comes a new link
Our spirits to sink –
Oh! The joy that we taste, like the light of the poles,
Is a flash amid darkness, too brilliant to stay;
But, though ’twere the last little spark in our souls,
We must light it up now, on our Prince’s Day.

Contempt on the minion, who calls you disloyal!
Tho’ fierce to your foe, to friends you are true;
And the tribute most high to a head that is royal,
Is love from a heart that loves liberty too.
While cowards, who blight
Your fame, your right,
Would shrink from the blaze of the battle array,
The Standard of Green
In front would be seen, --
Oh, my life on your faith! Were you summon’d
This minute,
You’d cast every bitter remembrance away,
And show what the arm of old Erin has in it,
When rous’d by the foe, on her Prince’s Day.

He loves the Green Isle, and his love is recorded
In hearts, which have suffer’d too much to forget;
And hope shall be crown’d, and attachment rewarded,
And Erin’s gay jubilee shine out yet.
The gem may be broke
But many a stroke,
But nothing can cloud its native ray;
Each fragment will cast
A light, to the last, --
And thus, Erin, my country tho’ broken thou art,
There’s a luster within thee, that ne’er will decay;
A spirit, which beams through each suffering part,
And now smiles at all on the Prince’s Day. 20

Though it appears paradoxical, Herbert’s use of the tune may reflect a statement
on the state of the Union at the time. An ardent Home Ruler, like many in New York Irish

20 Moore, Moore’s Irish Melodies, 66-67.
America, the composer longed to throw the English yoke off his country of birth. The final stanza in Moore’s text in particular reflects the inextinguishable light of the Emerald Isle’s spirit. It is worth noting that Herbert does not employ the full tune. Instead, in a period of harmonic and melodic uncertainty, the composer loops the opening motive of “Tho’ Dark are our Sorrows” before breaking into a return of the opening jig, “We may roam through this world,” reconnecting the knowing listener with the expatriate dilemma.

The *Irish Rhapsody* concludes with a combination of the two principal mottos: “We may roam” and “Erin, oh Erin.” Retaining its jig character, the former, scored for the strings and upper winds, continuously loops over a slower, yet deliberate presentation of the latter in the brass, a contrapuntal display similar to the conclusion of Brahms’s *Academic Festival Overture*. Finally, as if to end with a strong nationalist statement, both tunes are presented in full. Taken together, the two themes offer formidable apotheosis to the unquenchable Irish spirit of the Irish American composer.

There is only one known review of the work. Just days after the premiere, James Gibbons Huneker, writing in the *Musical Courier*, called Herbert’s rhapsody “one of the best works yet from the pen of the Irish composer/ cellist.” He further opined that, “it is destined to become a favorite in concert repertories, both because of its characteristic themes and deft treatment.” To add icing on the proverbial cake, Huneker opened the brief review by heralding the composer as “The Irish Wagner.”

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21 James Gibbons Huneker, “The Irish Wagner,” *The Musical Courier* (April 27, 1892), 7. The Wagner reference is more likely due to Herbert’s association with Anton Seidl, a German emigrant conductor of the Metropolitan Opera known for his interpretation and promotion of Wagner’s works in the United States. Herbert was given the assistant directorship of the Brighton Beach concerts by Seidl. There are little, if any, Wagnerian aspects in the *Irish Rhapsody*. 

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Spring [of 1892] saw, or heard, the production of another piece of Herbert’s, which, to its own detriment, became too popular. This was the *Irish Rhapsody*. . .

Waters further notes that, following Huneker’s praising of the work in *The Musical Courier*, the *Rhapsody* “became so popular that it was played to death, and separated from the composer’s serious music.” Further, “it was so brilliant and facile, so associated with Irish festivities, and so adaptable to various ensembles that it killed itself as an independent concert number. This was unfortunate, for it was skillfully wrought and deserved the kind words that Huneker attached to it.”

And Waters was right. Herbert often programmed the rhapsody on concerts of his own orchestra, which he took on national tours in the early twentieth century, where it was listed as a “serious work.” He also conducted the piece at subsequent Irish festivals. Frederick Stock briefly conducted the *Irish Rhapsody* and other Herbert works with the Chicago Symphony in late 1917 and 1918, but the work fell into oblivion.

Though popular in its day, it appears as though the *Irish Rhapsody* was the victim of its own nostalgia. It was never to escape its association with strong Irish identity and the Irish political nationalism willed by its composer.

**Stanford’s *Shamus O’Brien***

On 24 May 1910, Charles Villiers Stanford’s most successful opera, *Shamus O’Brien*, graced the stage at Her Majesty’s Theatre in London. Thomas Beecham, by then the famed conductor of the London Philharmonic Society, produced the opera and

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the Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn directed the orchestra. This was the last time that *Shamus O’Brien* would be performed during its composer’s lifetime. Two years later, amidst the turmoil of the Third Home Rule Bill and conflict between Irish Nationalism and Unionism in British politics, Stanford officially shelved his opera.

Though he was Irish by birth, he was British by choice, furthered by the fact that had been living in Cambridge serving as a professor there and at the Royal College of Music in London since the 1880s. From the comfort of his own home, Stanford essayed in *Shamus O’Brien* a nostalgic Ireland from his imagination: an Ireland he, perhaps, wished existed.

Before *Shamus O’Brien* became popular in musical theatre in Britain and abroad during the 1890s, it was best–known as a poem, written by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873). Born in Dublin, Le Fanu studied classics at Trinity College Dublin from 1832 to 1836 where he was active in student debates, politics, and the College Historical Society, an organization he later served as treasurer and president. While still a student, Le Fanu began writing short works of fiction and small poems, some of which drew upon Irish history and legend, like “Legend of the Glaive,” “Phaudrig Crohoore,” and “Shamus O’Brien.” Le Fanu published his views on the use Irish themes in an essay entitled “Scraps of Hibernian Ballads,” which appeared in the collection *The Purcell Papers* (1838–1840). The author held a disdain for the comic element in Irish poetry, the stage–Irish “paddy” stereotype that prevailed in nineteenth–century British society. Rather, Le Fanu argued that Irish poetry should be serious and he stood against the notion that Ireland contained no serious subjects.  

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following the limerick tradition, the author wrote several of his poems for oral recitation; such is the case with “Shamus O’Brien.”

Despite Le Fanu’s liberating interest in Irish subject matter, he held conservative political views. Like Stanford, Le Fanu was born into an Anglo–Irish Protestant family. Le Fanu’s Irish ancestors were emigrant French Huguenots who fought for William of Orange at the battle of the Boyne. Like most of the educated Dubliners at Trinity College, the poet was not above referring to the Irish peasantry as “pisantry” to his friends and family. The debates held by the Historical Society at Trinity College broadened and solidified the budding author’s political views beyond “conventional Toryism.”

Le Fanu grew to favor a tax on absentee landlords, for instance, a perspective shared by some members of the Anglo–Irish gentry who felt they were carrying a financial burden that should be borne by resident aristocrats.

In light of his student activities and political views, his 1838–39 ballad “Shamus O’Brien” draws from an idealized personal and national past. A work of historical fiction, “Shamus” is set in Aherlow shortly after the failed rebellion of 1798. Much like the Ireland of the 1890s and early decades of the twentieth century, the Ireland of 1798 was awash with internal religious and political conflict. Many Protestants and the Anglo–Irish of Ulster wished to remain loyal to Britain. On the other side, the United Irishman, a revolutionary idealist group consisting of Protestant dissenters and a large number of Catholic tenants and farmers, aimed to abolish the kingdom of Ireland in favor of a

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26 The phrase is contained in a letter from Le Fanu to his mother. See Melada, *Sheridan Le Fanu*, 7.


republic founded on French principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. After the French failed several times to send fleets of troops, arms, and supplies, and Wolfe Tone’s capture at Donegal in October of 1798, the British successfully squashed the seemingly ill–planned rebellion. But the author may not have been merely drawing upon national history. His mother, Emma Le Fanu (née Emma Lucretia Dobbin) respected the United Irish insurrection. In fact she personally knew several Irish radicals. The poet’s brother William Le Fanu recounted how their mother stole the dagger of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the most important leader of the rebellion, after his arrest in 1798.29 Furthermore, Emma Le Fanu knew the Shears brothers, who were executed in 1799 for taking part in the rebellion.30 Drawing from such experiences, Le Fanu constructs an appropriate folk hero out of Shamus O’Brien, a tough–as–nails rebel who bests the British attempt to capture and hang him.

In the ballad, Shamus, an Irishmen who fought for the United Irishmen, is captured by British forces in Aherlow Glen and placed in prison to await his execution. And when he stands in front of the judges and jury to answer for his crimes, Shamus provides the following statement, and the Irish romantic folk hero is born:

My lord, if you ask me, if in my life time
I thought any treason, or did any crime
That should call to my cheek, as I stand alone here
The hot blush of shame, or the coldness of fear,
Though I stood by the grave to receive my death blow,
Before God and the world I would answer you, no;
But if you would ask me, as I think it like,
If in The Rebellion I carried a pike,
An’ fought for ould Ireland from the first to the close,

29 William Le Fanu tells that she stole the dagger from Mayor Swann, the man who arrested Fitzgerald. Also, Fitzgerald used the dagger to defend himself during the arrest. See William R. Le Fanu, Seventy Years of Irish Life (New York, London: Macmillan and Co., 1893). Melada, Sheridan Le Fanu, 4.

30 Melada, Sheridan Le Fanu, 4.
An, shed the heart's blood of her bitterest foes,
I answer you, yes an' I tell you again,
Though I stand here to perish, it's my glory that then
In her cause I was willing my veins should run dhry,
An' that now for her sake I am ready to die.\textsuperscript{31}

In addition to using a catchy four–beat–per–line rhythmic scheme, Le Fanu wrote the poem in a Hibernian–English dialect. The ballad concludes with Shamus's escape from the gallows, where he is assisted by a priest who was giving him a final blessing. In the end, the romantic hero who promises to die for Ireland runs for the hills and, in doing so, makes fools of his British counters.

Le Fanu aired his poem in 1839 at a meeting of the Historical Society. In addition to its use of national memory, “Shamus O'Brien" contained many elements of contemporary German romanticism: a midnight adventure, capture, and patriotism in the face of danger. Moreover, the poem contains primary aspects of Irish and Victorian balladry: rough “speech from the dock" and sentimental conclusion whereby the hero escapes.\textsuperscript{32} And through Le Fanu’s portrayal of Shamus O’Brien, the Irish appeal to us as the underdog in the drama.\textsuperscript{33} It may also seem unusual that Le Fanu authored a seemingly anti–British text given his political leanings. Yet his performance of “Shamus" produced a sensation at the mostly conservative Historical Society. In a letter to his mother in April of 1839, Le Fanu explains Historical Society president Thomas Wallis's reaction to the poem:[Wallis exclaimed] “Shake hands!” and “Le Fanu, say what you


\textsuperscript{32} McCormack, Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland, 52.

\textsuperscript{33} Melada, Sheridan Le Fanu, 105.
like. You must have something of the real right feeling in you, or you could never have written that.\textsuperscript{34}

The success of Le Fanu’s “Shamus” was not restricted to the premiere. Samuel Lover (1797–1868), a Dublin–Born artistic polymath (writer, painter, and composer) popularized the ballad in recitals throughout Ireland and even in America from 1846 to 1848. In the decades before the devastating Irish potato famine, Lover made somewhat of a splash in Dublin’s artistic and literary circles. He served as a secretary of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1830, published \textit{Legends and Stories of Ireland}, a collection of prose and verse, a year later, and the opera \textit{Grana Uile, or The Island Queen}, of which Lover supplied the libretto, premiered in Dublin in February 1832. \textit{Grana Uile} subsequently received its first performance in London five years later at the Adelphi Theatre where it ran for over 100 evenings. Lover followed with librettos to an array of theatrical works, such as the burlettas \textit{The Beau Ideal} (1835), \textit{The Olympic Pic–Nic} (1835), the comic dramas \textit{Rory O’More} (1837), and \textit{Snap Apple Night, or Kick–up in Kerry} (1839). These works, like \textit{Grana Uile}, feature a great deal of spoken dialogue and musical arrangements of popular and traditional melodies, much like that of the eighteenth–century English ballad opera. Lover tried his hand at the musical score for a few of his theatrical works. Some of his most famous arrangements include \textit{The Girl I left Behind Me, The Low–Backed Car, and Molly Bawn} from his 1841 operetta \textit{Il Paddy Whack in Italia}.\textsuperscript{35} In addition, the Irish polymath published his \textit{Songs and Ballads} in 1839. Lover’s recitations of “Shamus O’Brien” in London during the mid 1840s were so

\textsuperscript{34} Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu to Emma Le Fanu, (postmarked April 1839, undated). Quoted in McCormack, \textit{Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland}, 52. Emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{35} Lover contributed four songs and a trio to this production, which premiered at London’s Lyceum Theatre on 22 April.
popular that the performances advertised him as the author. And in America, the ballad perhaps reached the height of its popularity. \(^{36}\) In a letter to Le Fanu’s brother William in September 1846, Lover provides the following appraisal and apology:

My dear Le Fanu,

In reading your brother’s poem while I crossed the Atlantic, I became more and more impressed with its great beauty and dramatic effect—so much so that I determined to test its effect in public, and have done so here, on my first appearance [In New York City]\(^{37}\), with the greatest success. Now I have no doubt there will be great praises of the poem, and people will suppose, most likely, that the composition is mine, and as you know (I take for granted) that I would not wish to wear a borrowed feather, I should be glad to give your brother’s name as the author, should he not object to have it known; but as his writings are often of so different tone, I would not speak without permission to do so. It is true that in my programme my name is attached to other pieces, and no name appended to the recitation; so far, you will see, I have done all I could to avoid “appropriating,” the spirit of which I might have caught here, with Irish aptitude; but I would like to have the means of telling all whom it may concern the name of the author, to whose head and heart it does so much honour. Pray, my dear Le Fanu, inquire, and answer me here by next packet, or as soon as convenient. My success here has been quite triumphant.

Yours very truly,

Samuel Lover\(^{38}\)

Though Lover retired from creative and public life after 1864, nearly 20 years after his return to England, his popularity was likely a driving force that initially drew Charles Stanford to the ballad for his opera. Further, Stanford met Le Fanu in 1859. There were a number of versions of the Shamus story, apart from Le Fanu’s, filling stages and dime novels in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1891, Fred

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Maeder’s play, *Shamus O’Brien, the bould boy of Glingall*, delighted audiences at Harris’ Bijou Theater in Washington D.C. in February of 1891, two months before its author’s untimely death. Frederick George Maeder was born in New York City on September 11, 1840, the second son of James Gaspard Maeder, a professor of music and composer. As a boy, Fred Maeder was educated at Trinity School, where his interest in drama developed. In 1858, after leaving school and abandoning plans for a career in business, Maeder appeared in a production of *Hamlet* in Portland, ME, where he performed the role of Bernardo. In the winter of 1860-1861, just before the American Civil war erupted across the South, the young actor joined the John E. Owens Company at the Variety’s Theatre in New Orleans. During the 1860s, he established a reputation for dramatizing novels, including Dickens’s *Great Expectations* and Hugo’s *Les Misérables*. In addition, Maeder dramatized *Buffalo Bill* for W. F. Cody and a theatrical overview of *The American War*, which he performed throughout Europe. The actor authored the Irish play *Maun Cré* and *The Canuck*.39

Maeder’s adaptation of *Shamus*, which he penned in the mid 1880s, featured short musical numbers, dancing, as well as instrumental interludes performed by an Irish bagpiper. Charles Verner acted the title role, which became one of his more popular parts.40 “He does not depend on his handsome face and manly figure to carry him through a performance,” an unnamed review for *The Washington Post* stated. “His finished acting shows capability for greater work than is afforded in an Irish melodrama.


His singing is as sweet as ever, and his dancing as graceful." Maeder’s adaptation of the Le Fanu poem included original characters to fill out the story. Nellie O’Reilly is one of Shamus’s confidants; the villain is given the unusual name Shadrach O’Finn.

The character of Shamus, the rough-and-tumble Irish hero, even found its way to the dime novels of a New England writer. Albert Aiken was born in Boston in 1846 into a family of actors. His younger brother was George L. Aiken, his cousin George L. Fox, the famous clown. During his short life, Aiken balanced his career as an actor with that of an author. His play The Witches of New York was produced on May 23, 1869. The following August, The Ace of Spades premiered. Additional works appeared in 1870, including The Red Mazeppa; or, The Madman of the Plains and The Heart of Gold, which featured Aiken himself in a role for a Brooklyn production on August 28, 1871.

Aiken also published narrative fiction apart from his plays. Under the pun-worthy pen name Agile Penne, he published The Witches of New York serially in the Saturday Journal, beginning Christmas Eve 1870. Agile Penne, Aiken wrote in the Correspondents' Column in the Saturday Journal, was, at the time, 30 years old and from Boston. During the Civil War, he added, Penne served as captain in the First Arkansas Regiment.


42 The title for the first installment was Orphan Nell, the Orange Girl. In June 1872, the story was expanded under the title Royal Keene, the California Detective; or The Witches of New York in the Saturday Journal. "Aiken, Albert W," http://www.ulib.niu.edu/badndp/aiken_albert.html (accessed 27 June 2010).

43 The first two points apply to Aiken himself in the early 1870s, but the last fact has not, as in the following source, been confirmed: Ibid.
In the mid 1870s, Aiken authored *The Molly Maguires* for *The Fireside Companion*, a tale of secret societies set in the coal mine towns of Pennsylvania. The story was produced as a play on July 3, 1876 with Aiken acting the role of Harry Andenreich.

Earlier that decade, in 1873, Aiken married Mary A. T. Crawford, the eldest daughter of Thomas P. Crawford of Brooklyn, New York. He had six children with Mary, two of whom, following in their father's footsteps, became actors: Paul L. Aiken and Louise Wyatt.

After a brief retirement in 1881 to concentrate on writing for *Beadle's Weekly*, Aiken returned to the stage in 1885, performing with his own company. He ran a theater in Brooklyn known as Aiken's Museum. The actor and author published stories under his own name, but he used a number of pseudonyms in addition to Agile Penne: Capt. Frank P. Armstrong, Major Lewis W. Carson, Col. Delle Sara, Lieut. Alfred B. Thorne, Adelaide Davenport, and A Celebrated Actress, among others. Aiken's stories filled the pages of weekly journals as well as pocket dime novels, mediums that were cheap and accessible for much of the reading public.

Aiken's *Shamus O'Brien; the Bould Boy of Glingal; or, Irish Hearts and Irish Homes* appeared in the *Dime Library* No. 106, 3-5 under the pen name Col. Delle Sara. His story offers the reader a rougher, earthy, and more powerful version of the Shamus myth. Here, the lead character not only outwits the British, but, through Samson-like brute strength, is able to defeat an entire regiment single handedly.

In Aiken's *Shamus O'Brien*, the British and their sympathizers, especially landlords, are portrayed as ruthless and wicked. MacDarrow, a process-server in
Aiken's story, is terribly efficient in delivering eviction notices to tenants behind in their rent:

If you will have the kindness, the politeness, and the civility to step out of me way and l'ave me fix me little notice to the fore-front of that dure, [he tells the peasants] I'll be as good as me word, afther all! I said that I would be afther puttin' my notice on that dure, and that neither man nor divil should stop me. The lady has gone bail for the five pounds but I will put me notice on the dure all the same. Oh! I am a man of my word! Jist bear it in mind all of you! Fall back there an' give me room!\textsuperscript{44}

The peasants obey, though one refuses: a woman with a thick Irish brogue:

She was a very large woman, and evidently muscurally built. She was dressed very poor, with an old shawl bound round her shoulders. A dirty cap with an enormous frill ornamented her head, and from under the cap great chunks of coarse red hair strayed out. Her skin was tanned, until it looked like leather, and altogether she was about as ugly, and formidable-looking a female as human eyes had ever rested upon.\textsuperscript{45}

After a fierce exchange of insults, the process-server attacked. The woman, on her guard, "parried the blow dexterously, at the same time with a peculiar thrust beating down his guard and then the process-server got a blow between the eyes that knocked him down as if he had been shot."\textsuperscript{46} The fight drew attention from law enforcement. The woman, an upstart, must be brought to justice:

The constables could bear it no longer; although it seemed really ridiculous to think that the strong and cunning MacDarrow couldn't hold his own against a woman, yet it was very evident that he couldn't, and that he was getting a most unmerciful beating; so the whole six, flourishing their sticks, came rushing up to the assistance of their leader.

The peasantry grasped their blackthorns and prepared to join in the row, for they were not disposed to stand tamely by and see the woman who had thrashed the process-server go gloriously, succumb to overwhelming force; but their assistance was not needed, for, as the six came rushing to the attack, the

\textsuperscript{44} Albert Aiken, \textit{Shamus O'Brien; the Bould Boy of Glingall}, in ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
woman, who had evidently kept her eyes about her, with a well-directed blow stretched the process-server out flat as a pancake, stunned and senseless, thus completely disposing of him; then she faced the constables, and in less time than it takes to tell the story, she stretched one after the other on the ground, as fast as they came up.

The strokes were delivered with marvelous quickness, and the lookers-on fairly held their breath with wonder as they gazed upon the surprising exhibition of human skill.

And as fast as the constables rose to their feet the woman floored them again; no two ever got upon their feet at the same time.47

It is later revealed that the woman is Shamus O’Brien in disguise. His encounter with MacDarrow and the constables proved to be doubly humiliating for powers in control. Wanted for his role in the 1798 rebellion, Shamus continuously outwits his pursuers. Here he poses, quite unbelievably to the reader, as a large, ugly woman. The authorities are not only too stupid to realize the disguise, they are, to Irish sympathizers, too weak to defeat such an Amazon. The wit and strength of Shamus, the hero of the ordinary peasant, proves too great for British-backed authority.

The opera Shamus O’Brien, itself, was “a long time in gestation.”48 Indeed, Stanford did not begin seriously thinking about setting the poem until 1891, when he approached playwright William Gorman Wills for a libretto. Wills, however, died in December of that year, and Stanford turned to Irish–American playwright George Jessop to adapt the ballad.49

By the early 1890s, Stanford had secured his reputation as one of the most important figures on the British music scene. In addition to his teaching duties, he

47 Ibid.
48 Rodmell, Charles Villiers Stanford, 184.
49 Ibid, 184.
served as conductor of the Bach Choir and the Leeds Philharmonic Society. Stanford received international acclaim with his Symphony No. 3 in F minor, “Irish” of 1887, which aired in Berlin and Amsterdam. In addition, the Irishman had penned a dozen works for piano, organ and chamber ensembles, as well as numerous songs and works for the stage, including the grand opera *Savonarola* (1884), *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (1884), and incidental music to the play *Oedipus tyrannus* (1887). Stanford completed the music for *Shamus O’Brien* in 1895.

Just as the 1798 folk hero of “Shamus O’Brien” found an audience during the devastating years of the Irish potato famine, it resonated with the next generation in Ireland. The 1870s, 1880s and 1890s were an especially tense time in the history of Irish–British relations. Charles Stuart Parnell lead his campaign for Irish Home Rule, which resulted in British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone’s unsuccessful bid for the Home Rule Bill in 1886 and in 1893. The potato crop failed again in 1877 and 1878 due to an agricultural depression, resulting in an increase in eviction, disease, and death for the poorest of Ireland’s peasantry. Thus, Michael Davitt’s Fenian-spurred Land League, although initially allied with Parnell, aimed to free Ireland from British control through violent means if necessary. In light of popular anti–British, or, more specifically Anti–English sentiment, the rebel Shamus O’Brien stood as a hero for the noble Irish masses.

Jessop’s rendition of the ballad of Shamus O’Brien is cast in two acts and involves several comic twists typical of the English ballad opera tradition, an unusual choice given that Le Fanu insisted on serious subjects for his Irish verse. For example, Shamus, a wanted man for his role in the 1798 rebellion like in the original poem,
disguises himself as a British soldier and leads the British forces into the countryside where he promptly loses them. But there is also betrayal. Shamus is turned over to the British by his former friend Michael Murphy, the frustrated former suitor of Shamus’s wife Norah. Like the poem, the opera concludes with Shamus’s triumphant escape, which is aided by a priest named Father O’Flynn. While trying to stop Shamus’s escape, Michael Murphy is accidentally shot by the soldiers. Noteworthy is Jessop’s use of the Hibernian–English dialect, just as that found in Le Fanu’s ballad. But the addition of the back–stabbing character of Michael Murphy softens the Irish–British conflict so clear in the original.

According to one Stanford biographer, “Shamus includes some of [the composer’s] finest music and is the most interesting example of his “Irish” style,” a judgment resulting from the success of his popular Irish–themed works, like the aforementioned Irish Symphony and his Six Irish Fantasies, Op. 54 for violin and piano (1893). Although Stanford does not employ recitatives or arias akin to those found in the Italian and French Grand operatic traditions, the composer combines simple, homophonic SATB choruses with instrumental interludes and airs drawn from Irish folk music. The former enables a clear enunciation of Jessop’s somewhat awkward verse.

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50 However, the 1896 piano arrangement of the opera score offers a clean version of the text.

51 Rodmell, Charles Villiers Stanford, 185.
The first chorus of the opera reads as thus:

If Romulus an’ Remus  
Had lived along o’ Shamus,  
They’d be like two puppy jackals wid a lion;  
Spake up, now, can ye blame us  
If the boys of Ballyhamis  
Shout “Faugh a Ballaugh,” Shamus the O’Brien\textsuperscript{52}

The overture, which was often extracted from the opera to head orchestral concerts in England and abroad, is cast in the style of an Irish jig, recalling the scherzo movement of the 1887 symphony. In addition, Stanford uses two character motives in the drama. The Irish folksong “The Top of the Cork Road,” which was also known as the tune “Father O’Flynn” after the composer published an arrangement of it to text by Alfred Graves in 1882, serves as a musical motto for the priest, Father O’Flynn. Stanford employs the English marching song “The Glory of the West” to symbolize the English/British soldiers.\textsuperscript{53} Other airs in the score are imbued with the feeling and sound of Irish traditional music. Kitty O’Toole, a secondary character in the drama who has a love affair with Captain Trevor, the head of the British soldiers, performs the air “Where is the man who is coming to marry me?,” in which Stanford utilizes the flatted seventh scale degree in the melody and Irish bagpipes to sustain a drone. Two other numbers, “I’ve sharpened the sword for the sake of ould Erin” and “Pass the Jug around” draw from two songs published in Thomas Moore’s Moore’s Irish Melodies: “Cruachan ne feine” and “Bob and Joan” respectfully.\textsuperscript{54}


\textsuperscript{53} Rodmell, Charles Villiers Stanford, 185.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
The last half of the nineteenth century saw an awakening of interest in Irish folksong. In 1855, the antiquarian George Petrie published his *Ancient Music of Ireland.* And nearly 20 years later, Limerick–born Patrick Weston Joyce published his collection under the same title. Stanford himself contributed to the folksong revival. He published *Irish Songs and Ballads* to texts by Alfred Graves in 1893 and later edited and published the three–volume *Complete Collection of Irish Music as noted by George Petrie* from 1902 to 1905, among others. The composer even argued for the place of folk music in education. In a lecture to the managers of the London Board Schools in 1889, he stated the following:

One of the most powerful methods [of education] is, without doubt, to be found in the influence of art . . . I apprehend, then, that in music you have at your disposal the most powerful living agency for the refinement of the masses. And what should be the kind of music taught? Without doubt, national music, folk music—the music from which the earliest times has grown up amongst the people.55

Stanford’s view of national music falls under a pan–British umbrella comprising English, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish.56 Irish music, he states, stands in the periphery:

If I may once more take the example of my own country, Ireland, it is a sad fact that Christy Minstrel songs are driving the superb Irish folk music out of sight and out of mind. In the neighborhood of the towns the ‘darkie’ invasion has been fearfully successful. It is now only in the harvest–field, and in remote districts where the melodies sacred to burnt cork are still an unknown luxury, that the genuine ring of the Irish style is preserved. Such disaster as this it is for the schools to revent.57

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56 Ibid.

57 Ibid, 52.
And in order to ward off the ‘negro menace” in music, Stanford perhaps hoped to elevate the Irish folk repertoire through the international, if not, universal mediums of published collections, chamber, symphonic music, and opera.

_Shamus O’Brien_ opened in March 1896 at the Opera Comique Theatre in London, receiving favorable reviews in the pages of the _London Times_ and _Musical Times_. The cast comprised American baritone Denis O’Sullivan as Shamus, the (perhaps original) Irish tenor Joseph O’Mara as Mike Murphy, Charles Magrath as Father O’Flynn, and former Royal College of Music student Louise Kirkly Lunn as Shamus’s wife, Nora. Henry Wood conducted the opera and the work ran for 82 performances. In the fall 1896, _Shamus O'Brien_, under the production of Granville Bantock, toured through the British Isles. Early the following year, the opera enjoyed a 50–night run on Broadway in New York City, and afterwards returned to Britain for a brief fall tour. _Shamus_ was then shelved for nearly a decade until Stanford resurrected it for a performance in Breslau (1907).

Yet it seems ironic that the subject was taken up again by an Anglo–Irish supporter of the Act of Union. With _Shamus O’Brien_, Stanford and Jessop offered late–nineteenth–century audiences a revision of the eighteenth–century personae of the “stage–Irish,” the thick, rugged, and even clumsy “paddy” character. And by transforming Le Fanu’s serious ballad into a comic drama, Stanford likely ensured a lasting appeal for _Shamus_ with audiences accustomed to the popular Savoy operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, Alfred Collier, and Sidney Jones. Yet _Shamus_’s popularity also resulted in the subject matter’s resonance with contemporary Irish troubles. The Home Rule issue, which plagued British politics for nearly two decades, and Parnell’s abrupt
fall from grace as the “uncrowned King of Ireland” were met with a kind of Irish cultural renaissance. The Irish Literary Society in London and Dublin, the musical festival Feis Ceoil, and the Gaelic League sought to shed light on and institutionalize Irish culture during the 1890s. But when the waves of the Third Home Rule Bill became strong enough for Ulster Unionists, like Edward Carson and James Craig, to issue threats of violence if the bill passed through Parliament in 1914, Stanford, a British sympathizer and signer of the Covenant, pulled his opera after its 1910 performance in order to avoid being guilty by association.

In the end, the political realities of his day won out over the imagined triumphs of the fictional Shamus O’Brien. Stanford, like Sheridan Le Fanu and Samuel Lover before, drew inspiration from Ireland’s past, in this case the 1798 rebellion. The fact that all three were Anglo–Irish sympathizers for the British cause did not matter nor did it dictate the kind of subject matter they chose to portray. Stanford, for one, never ventured into Ireland’s backlands, like the Aherlow Glens, the setting for Shamus O’Brien. Rather, like Le Fanu and Lover, Stanford came from a well–to–do Dublin family and, for much of his successful life, identified as a British citizen, reaping the benefits of a university education. The tale of Shamus O’Brien’s heroic escape from his British captors, however captivating to his imagination, was, to the composer, simply a good story. And Shamus’s somewhat Fenian call to “worship [Ireland] and die for the Green” would have indeed been a difficult concept for Stanford to fully accept.
CHAPTER 5
CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD, VICTOR HERBERT, AND THE IRISH QUESTION

Charles Stanford and Unionism

Sometime after the publication of George Petrie's posthumous collection of folksongs in 1882, Petrie's daughter approached Stanford to edit the remaining songs in her father's manuscripts. Stanford's friend Harry Plunket Greene reported that she viewed the composer as "the proper custodian of the treasure," a daunting assortment of over fifteen hundred songs. She also allowed Stanford the freedom to edit the manuscripts "in any way which his wisdom and patriotism thought right."¹ The composer was familiar with Petrie's collection, having drawn from the 1855 collection for a number of his prior work, including the Songs of Old Ireland. And if Greene's statement is true, then it is likely that Petrie's daughter did not approach the composer until well after he had established himself as an international figure in music—probably the mid 1890s. Indeed, her willingness to entrust the manuscripts to Stanford reflected, perhaps, a combination of two possibilities: she had a limited knowledge of music, and, above all, he had secured a considerable reputation as a composer and conductor in Britain and abroad.

The composer set out to simplify the new Petrie collection by eliminating duplicate melodies. With the help of Greene and Cecil Forsyth, Stanford discovered over 500 such tunes, thereby reducing the number from 2,148 to 1,582. Dibble recounts, however, that he made mistakes by failing to eliminate other duplicates, which opened him to criticism. Quizzically, Dibble said, Stanford also excluded "Londonderry

¹ Quoted in Dibble, Charles Villiers Stanford, 369.
Air," a popular tune Petrie published in his 1855 volume and that the composer himself used in his *First Irish Rhapsody.*

Stanford took great care to present the songs in Petrie's manuscript collection as accurately as possible. The work was "presented to the public exactly in the form which it took from Petrie's hand," the composer stated in his short preface to the volume. "A few errors there are, but I have left Petrie's work untouched . . .," he added. "This volume contained arrangements of the airs for pianoforte, written in a style wholly unsuitable to their character, and the airs themselves evidently (from comparison with the original MSS) suffered from manipulation by an ignorant hand." Stanford, in taking the purist's perspective regarding folk music, avoided publishing Petrie's songs with piano accompaniment or texts. Only the melodies are present; some, though, include dynamic and tempo markings. After completing the publication, which Boosey and company released in three volumes between 1902 and 1905, Stanford offered the collection to the Royal Irish Academy. Warm reception, much to Stanford's chagrin, was lacking. He recalled:

I offered them to the Irish Academy but the Sec. wrote me such a curt epistle in which he did not even trouble to spell my name right, and apparently did not know from Adam who I was, that I put them back on my bookshelves where they remain.

Dublin has invariably shown me such a cold shoulder, that I have no particular desire to be forthcoming in it!!

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2 Ibid.


4 The company published volumes 1 and 2 in 1902, volume 3 followed in 1905.

Seventy years later, Aloys Fleischmann, at a conference of the Royal Irish Academy, offered an assessment of Stanford’s edition. Perhaps unbeknownst to the composer, Petrie’s manuscripts contained a number of non-Irish tunes, such as melodies from English ballad operas, airs composed by Henry Hudson, and the curious "The Death of General Wolfe," an air given to Petrie by Rev. James Mease. Despite errors such as misprints, duplicate tunes, and faulty key signatures, Stanford's edition of Petrie's Irish melodies is "probably the richest single volume of folk music ever published of an astonishing variety and range. . . .”

Some of the tunes from Petrie’s unpublished manuscripts found their way into another Graves-Stanford production, Songs of Erin of 1900. In addition to their collaboration on Songs of Old Ireland, Graves and Stanford published a second book of thirty folksongs, Irish Songs and Ballads of 1893. Reflecting, above all, the practice established by Thomas Moore eight decades prior, Irish Songs and Ballads combined Irish traditional melodies with original poetry in the English language. The two continued in this fashion with Songs of Erin. Here, Graves's name is listed first on the title page, just as in the two previous collections. The dedication page reads, "to her most gracious majesty Queen Victoria." The lines below continue with the following:

This volume of Irish Songs is (by permission) dedicated by Her Majesty's loyal and devoted subject and servant Charles Villiers Stanford. November 1900.  

The lyrics to the songs in Songs of Erin are mainly original, though some were adapted from early and medieval Gaelic poetry, while others were based on Hiberno-English

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folksongs. Graves took care to write the poems in meters which are characteristic of Irish poetry; many poems were set to music here for the first time.\(^8\)

One peculiar song in *Songs of Erin* is “The Death of General Wolfe,” based on the tune of the same name, according to Graves and Stanford, from County Donegal. Graves’s text recalls the apotheosis of James Wolfe, commander of the British expedition in Quebec, Canada in the mid-eighteenth century. Wolfe, born an Englishman to a father of Irish origin, died in 1759 from wounds he received fighting the French Army in the battle of the Plains of Abraham. In 1770, Anglo-American artist Benjamin West immortalized the General in his historical painting *The Death of General Wolfe*, where the fallen commander is portrayed as a fallen Christ-like figure who gave his life for a British cause.


\(^8\) Ibid.
The text of the folksong reads:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power
And all that beauty, all that wealth ere gave
Await alike the inevitable hour--
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."
Thus great Wolfe sighed,
While on muffled oar
We darkling crossed St. Laurence' Whispering tide
For the foeman's unguarded shore.

Then, one by one, far up the fearful steep
We toiled and toiled through all the live long night;
Till on the Frenchman startled out of sleep
We flashed in long drawn phalanx from the height.
Enraged Montcalm
Bade his host advance--
And on the frowning heights of Abraham
Closed the champions of England and France.

Oh, fierce we fought until a fatal ball
Found Wolfe's brave bosom through the battle smoke.
Then charged the Scots with fiery slogan call
And backward reeled the French and broke.
"See! Sir, they run!"
"Who?" he faintly cried.
"The French." "Now God be praised, our arms have won!"
And contented he turned and died.9

Stanford's arrangement embellishes the original song from Petrie's manuscripts.
Marked Tempo di Marcia, the composer maintained the tune's original key of A major.
The piano accompaniment, though sparse for the first verse, increases in motion for the
second and third. By the closing phrase, the piano performs cascading eighth-note
figures; short fanfare-like passages capture the heroic death of Wolfe.

9 Ibid., 218.

Additional songs in the collection reflect British sympathies. Grave’s text to “Away to the wars,” is an understated call to battle and duty for Britain:

When the route is proclaimed thro’ the old barack yard,  
To part from our sweethearts it surely is hard!  
But smother the sighs, boys, and swallow the tear,  
And comfort the darlings with words of good cheer.  
While the bugles they blow so gaily oh!  
And away to the battle we marching go.

Then it's "Right about face," and we're clearing the street,  
"Good luck" and "God bless you!" from all that we meet,  
While all of the lazy ones bounce from their beds,  
And up, go their windies and out go their heads.  
While the bugles they blow so gaily oh!  
And away to the battle we marching go.

Now it’s "Halt, Royal Irish!" now "Dress by the left!"  
And on to the Quay through the crowd we have cleft;  
Here’s cheers for Old Ireland, with twenty cheers more,  
And off with our ship from the Emerald shore.  
While the bugles they blow so gaily oh!  
And away to the battle we marching go.10

Stanford’s setting of the melody embodies the style of nineteenth-century popular song; the tune, a jig in A-flat major originally titled “When you go to Battle,” is paired with harmonic accompaniment of simple block chords with jig-like phrases at cadences.

Other songs reflect more general romantic aesthetics. “The Songs Erin Sings” recalls the Herderian volksgeist notion that music springs from its natural surroundings. Graves appended an old Irish phrase after the title of his poem for the song: “Music shall outlive all the songs of the birds.” The following verses proclaim the transcendent effect of nature:

I've heard the lark's cry thrill the sky o'er the meadows of Lusk,  
And the first joyous gush of the thrush from Adare's April wood,  
At thy lone music's spell, Philomel, magic stricken I've stood,

10 Ibid., 68.
When in Espan afar star on star trembled out of the dusk.

While Dunkerron's blue dove murmured love 'neath her nest I have sighed,
And by many Culdaff with a laugh mocked the cuckoo's refrain,
Derrycarn's dusky bird I have heard piping joy hard by pain
And the swan's last lament sobbing sent over Moyle's mystic tide.

Yet as bright shadows pass from the glass of the darkening lake,
As the rose's rapt sigh must die, when the zephyr is stilled;
In oblivion grey sleeps each lay that those birds ever trilled,
But the songs Erin sings from her strings shall immortally wake.\(^{11}\)

Stanford sets Gaves's text to a ballad in triple meter. Marked Larghetto moderato, the accompaniment in this song is more involved than the previous examples, owing perhaps to the fact this tune is not based upon an Irish air. The vocal writing is simple though expressive, consisting of syllabic treatment of the text. Eighth-note figures occasionally provide the line with a gentle flow.

And a song such as Graves's “Like a Ghost I am gone” reflects an Irishman's sorrowful farewell to his home land:

In the wan, mistful morning to Ocean's wild gales
Afar from her scorning I lose my black sails;
For my kiss was scarce cold on her cheek when she turned
And my love for the gold of a renegade spurned.

Under cloud chill and pallid, while hollow winds moan,
Lies alas! Our green-valleyed, purple-peaked Innishowen;
For as if my sad case she were sharing to-day,
All her glory and grace she hides weeping away.

Farewell, Lake of Shadow! Buncrana, farewell
To you thymy sea meadows, your fern-fluttering dell!
Adieu, Donegal! o'er the waters death wan,
Under Heaven's heavy pall, like a ghost I am gone.\(^{12}\)

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 224.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 228.
Stanford opened this ballad, which is based upon the folksong “I Will Raise My Sail Black, Mistfully in the Morning,” in D minor with sheer pianissimo chords in the piano’s middle register. When the vocal line enters, the harmony envelops the falling melody, bringing the phrase to a cadence in the relative major key. The composer maintains this modal shift—D minor to F major—for much of the song. In the third verse, Stanford employs his characteristic word painting. Here, the piano introduces cascading eighth-note figures, thereby providing a mental image of the ocean waves crashing upon the small vessel of the poem’s protagonist.

![Figure 5-4. "Like a Ghost I am Gone," Alfred Perceval Graves and Charles Villiers Stanford, Songs of Erin: A Collection of Fifty Irish Folk Songs (London: Boosey and Co., 1901), 229.](image)

1902 brought Stanford notoriety with his knighthood as well as his most successful Irish work since his Third Symphony, his Irish Rhapsody No. 1, Op. 78 in D minor. Dedicated to Hans Richter, who was serving as conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester at the time, Stanford’s single-movement Irish Rhapsody, the first of six such works, premiered at the Norwich Festival on 23 October. A London performance followed in the spring at a Philharmonic Society concert at Queen’s Hall on 12 March.
1903. The composer rooted the piece in Irish folk legend, specifically, the love story between Cucullain and Emer, characters who appeared previously in the poetry of Graves and William Butler Yeats. In addition, Stanford based his rhapsody upon Irish folksongs: the first, a battle song in triple meter entitled “Leatherbags Donnell,” opens and closes the work; the second, central to the piece, is an orchestral setting of “The Londonderry Air,” a tune previously published as “Emer’s Farewell to Cucullain” to Graves’s text in his *Songs of Old Ireland* of 1882. The rhapsody’s four-part form—Allegro molto-Adagio-Allegro-Coda—is similar to the final movement of the *Irish Symphony*, whereby the folksongs supply the thematic source for the work’s continuous development. Like Beethoven and his contemporary Anton Bruckner, Stanford varies his themes immediately after they are presented as well as in the transitional passages of the piece.

Six months prior to the premiere of the first rhapsody, Stanford began working on his second, *Irish Rhapsody No. 2, Op. 84 “The Lament for the Son of Ossian” in F minor*, which he completed in February 1903. And like the first work, the second *Irish Rhapsody* draws from folksongs for its thematic material; in effect, the work is decidedly non-political. Two of the three tunes came from Petrie’s collection, “Lament for Owen Roe O’Neill” and “Awake, Fianna.” The third, “Lay his Sword by his Side,” comes from Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies*. Stanford incorporates a loose program for the work; the music evokes the death and burial of Oscar, son of Ossian. The composer attached the following inscription, taken from Ossian, in the score to the piece:
Strike the harp, and raise the song: be near, with all your wings, ye winds. Bear the mournful sound away to Fingal's airy hall. Bear it to Fingal's hall, that he may hear the voice of his son: the voice of him that praised the mighty.\(^\text{13}\)

The work received only a handful of performances. The premiere in Amsterdam in May of 1903 and a rendering at Bournemouth the following October reflect the *Second Rhapsody*'s greatest success. It disappeared from concert halls until Frederick Cowen conducted the piece at a Philharmonic Society concert at Queen’s Hall on 15 March 1906. As a result of its lack-luster performance history, Stanford’s *Irish Rhapsody No. 2* was never published. Lewis Foreman opined that “the work’s tragic manner may have made it less approachable than its popular predecessor.”\(^\text{14}\)

By decade’s end, Stanford became increasingly embittered with the country of his birth. The Ireland of his youth had given way to the politics of partition, a result of the third Home-Rule bill, which was introduced in February of 1911. Little changed since the 1886 and 1893 bills that failed in parliament, the third Home-Rule bill was positioned to succeed due to previous passage of the Parliament Act, which stripped the House of Lords of much of their veto power. Unionist resistance increased dramatically. Stanford opinions grew stronger; he supported the Unionist leadership of James Craig and Edward Carson, and, in addition to shelving *Shamus O’Brien* out of his fears of being on the wrong side of the issue, delved into the public discourse. According to E. J. Moeran, who became a pupil of Stanford’s in 1913, the composer signed the Unionist article of armed resistance if the Home-Rule bill should pass: the Ulster Covenant of 1912, made

\(^{13}\) Quoted in Lewis Foreman, liner notes to *Stanford: Six Irish Rhapsodies, Piano Concerto No. 2, Down among the Dead Men* (Colchester, Essex, England: Chandos, 2003, 8.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 7.
available for sympathizers throughout the United Kingdom. The Covenant also coincided with the founding of the Ulster Volunteer Force the same year.\textsuperscript{15}

In a 1998 chapter published in the historical survey of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Jeremy Dibble cites the source for this story: a letter from Moeran to Aloys Fleischmann, dated 10 February 1937, that claims Stanford signed the covenant. Dibble concludes that "Moeran . . . with his own Irish roots, would undoubtedly have witnessed his teachers support for Ulster."\textsuperscript{16} If Stanford indeed signed the covenant, a record of the signature should still exist. Searching for it, though, proved otherwise. The Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) houses the archives of the Ulster Unionist Council. The office’s website states that the archive "contains just under half a million original signatures and addresses of the men who, on 28 September 1912, signed the Ulster Covenant, and of the women who signed the parallel Declaration. In total, the Covenant was signed by 237,368 men, and the Declaration by 234,046 women."\textsuperscript{17} Further, the Public Records Office has recently digitized, it claims, all the signatures, "in recognition that the on-line database should make a significant contribution to both genealogical research and cultural tourism."\textsuperscript{18} Stanford’s signature, curiously, is absent from the records. Indeed, there are other Stanfords listed, but most


\textsuperscript{16} Dibble, "The Composer in the Academy (1)," 581.

\textsuperscript{17} Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, \url{http://www.proni.gov.uk/index/search_the_archives/ulster_covenant.htm} (accessed 14 March 2009).

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
were registered with addresses in Belfast. There were also a number of signatories from London, but no record of the Irish-born composer appeared in the database.

On March 17, 2009, the present author wrote an email to the Public Records Office to inquire about Stanford's signature in the Ulster Covenant. Nearly three months later, Anne Craig, a Public Records Office employee, issued the following reply:

I have searched the covenant online using all the different variants [sic] for Charles Villiers Stanford and can find no record of him signing the covenant. The original volumes are currently closed to the public. I am sorry on this occasion I am unable to help you.\(^\text{19}\)

But the lack of a signature on the covenant does not mean that the composer did not hold strong feelings for the cause of Carson and Craig. Stanford's letters printed in the *Times* are, for example, some of the best examples of his support for Unionism. Arguing against the Third Home–Rule Bill, Stanford attempts to speak for the Irish as a whole. In early April 1914, he wrote:

We are losing sight of ground principles and facts in the play of party rapiers. What is wanted is [sic] not exclusions, or temporizations, or Referendums, but the dropping of the Home Rule Bill. It was a bone of contention flung into a rapidly recuperating country by a Government[,] which could not stand alone without the support of the so-called Nationalist Party. In order to ensure that party's support they entered into a compact to pass the Bill by fair means or foul. Faust was in the grip of Mephistopheles. He is afraid to ask the moments to tarry, because that wish means his instant destruction. There is no denial of this compact; if it did not exist, the position of the Government in being able to deny it (on oath) would be so materially strengthened that they would have no hesitation in denying it.

The fact is that Ireland does not want Home Rule. The place–hunters want it, but not the people. The farmers who had purchased their land dread it; therefore the place–hunters forced the delay of the Land Purchase Act. The tradesmen dread it. . . . The priests are sitting on the stile, afraid to desert the place–hunters, who may make or mar them if they win. The dreamers and the schemers are the only

\(^{19}\) Email correspondence between the author and Anne Craig, Enquiries Unit, PRONI, Belfast (June 8, 2009). If Stanford signed anything of such political nature, he probably signed the British Covenant of 1914, which, like the 1912 original, was made available for London Unionist sympathizers. Moeran's reminiscence in the cited letter of 1937 is likely faulty with regard to this specific instance.
Irish supporters of the Bill. If it were dropped tomorrow, there would be a sigh of relief from the Giant's Causeway to Valentia. The true icing of Ireland was voiced this week by an Irish railway porter from Limerick, a Nationalist, and a Roman Catholic, who said to me:—“What are they doing with us at all? Why can’t they leave us alone?”

Two days later, Erskine Childers, novelist and Irish Nationalist who would later be executed for his role in the 1916 Dublin Uprising, printed the following response:

Home Rulers will welcome Sir Charles Villiers Stanford’s delightfully old-fashioned restatement of [the] issue of today, a statement which all of us who have lived much in Ireland have been accustomed to Unionists since our earliest childhood—namely, that nobody in Ireland but “place-hunters” wants Home Rule, and that the “big statesmen” with the “courage” to drop the whole policy (why does it require courage?) will be adored throughout the length and breadth of a grateful Ireland. Has Sir Charles Stanford read a weekly paper called the Irish Volunteer?

Indeed, Childers’s remarks may be taken as a case–in–point. Though Stanford held that his view represented the whole, or at least the majority of Irish political thought, the composer’s opinions were undeniably shaped by his surroundings.

1913 brought not only the premiere of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring to Parisian audiences, but also Stanford’s Irish masterwork, the Fourth Irish Rhapsody. Here, the composer laid bare his Unionist sympathies. The composer resurrected the ghost of Thomas Moore with the subtitle, “The Fisherman of Lough Neagh and What he Saw,” a reference to the second stanza to the poem “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old.” Whereas Moore, an individual with complicated Unionist sympathies in his own day,

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20 Charles Villiers Stanford, “The Origins of Home Rule: Why the Compact Was Made,” The Times (9 April 1914), 110, column B.

21 Erskine Childers, “The Partition of Ireland,” The Times (11 April 1914), 10, column D.

22 Stanford also composed his Irish Rhapsody No. 3 Op. 137 in D major in 1913. The work’s themes, as in the other rhapsodies, derive from folk songs; here, Stanford employed “The Fairy Queen,” an air attributed to the eighteenth-century blind harper and composer Carolan, and a jig entitled the “Black Rogue” from Petrie’s collection. The work never received performance in the composer's lifetime and remains unpublished.
stated that his *Irish Melodies* were free from political feelings, Stanford reversed the position. To the composer of *Shamus O'Brien*, the glorious Ulster implied in Moore’s poem reflected an Ireland long past, one that “can never be regained [and is] almost Mahleresque in its end-of-century angst.” Stanford’s use of the poem recalls his use of the tune in the final movement of his *Irish Symphony* of 1887. He also included it in his own edition of Moore’s tunes, entitled *Moore’s Irish Melodies Restored* (1895), as well as the 1906 *National Song Book*. On the score to the *Fourth Rhapsody*, Stanford provided the following incipit, taken from Moore’s “The Minstrel Boy”:

> “Land of Song!” said the warrior bard  
> ‘Tho’ all the world betrays thee  
> One sword at least thy rights shall guard  
> One faithful harp shall praise thee!

Stanford cast this Irish rhapsody in a ternary structure, just as in the other previous works under the same title. The first section opens with a quotation of “I Will Raise My Sail” in the oboe; a brass chorale sounds “The Death of General Wolfe,” two folksongs he published in *Songs of Erin*. The second section comprises varied repetitions of an Ulster march tune from the *Petrie Collection*. The piece concludes with further statements and variations of all three folk tunes.

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On the final page of the score, Stanford appended a verse from Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Princess*: “Dark and True and Tender is the North.” Christopher Scheer wrote that the poem serves as “a meditation on wooing a difficult lover, expressed as a metaphor juxtaposing north and south.” Further, “the poem’s dichotomy reflects Stanford’s feelings and Northern and Southern Ireland and serves as a metaphor for the Irish Crisis and Stanford’s stance in it.”24
The folksongs themselves invite interpretation. “I Will Raise My Sail,” when one considers Grave’s text to the version published in the Songs of Erin, is a sorrow-filled farewell to Ireland. And General Wolfe, the fallen hero of the Plains of Abraham, was a devoted British soldier of Irish ancestry. Together, the tunes in the work offer commentary upon Stanford’s feelings about the divisive situation in Ireland at the time as well as his place within it. Like James Wolfe, the composer was a British citizen and
devoted to the British cause. And Ireland, viewed from his position as an academic in England, was best served as part of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{25}

The Ulster march from the rhapsody may have had a life of its own as a rallying tune for Unionist meetings in London. An arrangement of the tune, along with a unison song with piano accompaniment entitled “Ulster,” appears in an autograph manuscript in the British Library.\textsuperscript{26} Stanford set the short song to text by William Wallace:

\begin{verbatim}
Steadfast rank and glittering steel
Throng to guard a nation’s weal
Who dare crush us ‘neath the heel
Of hired disloyalty?
Red the gauntlet, red the hand,
Red the warning o’er the land,
Firm in Union still we stand,
And Ulster shall be free

Chorus:
Ulster for the right!
Ulster, know your might!
Raise your hand, and guard your land
With Ulster for the right!

Leave the ship yard and the plough,
Rally all to flag and vow
No usurper we’ll allow
To Tamper with our laws
Blood and treasure we will spend,
Sworn to gain a righteous end:
First and last we will defend
The justice of our cause.

Chorus

For the Empire we have fought,
We will not be sold or bought:
Count our loyalty for naught
When treason rules the land?
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{25} See Ibid., 159-170 for an article-length investigation of this interpretation.

\textsuperscript{26} British Library Add. MS 45850 B. The page bears the date 14 November 1913.
In the Empire we remain,
None shall rend the link in twain;
Never shall there be a strain
On Ulster’s loyal hand.

Chorus

Marked “stately and not too fast,” Stanford’s music is set in G major to an accessible range, simple enough for a wide audience to perform. The *Times* reported that the tune was sung at a Unionist rally in Birmingham on 21 November 1913, the same month the *Fourth Irish Rhapsody* was composed. On 12 February 1914, one week before the London premiere of the work, the tune was sung again at a rally in London.²⁸

Stanford expressed his views on Ireland in his memoir, *Pages from an Unwritten Diary*, published the same year as his letters to the *Times* and premiere of the *Fourth Rhapsody*. In reading these pages, Stanford's reasons for his conservative views become clear:

Before I left it in 1870, its glory was beginning slowly to depart, whether from increased facilities for travelling or from tinkering legislation, who can say? Perhaps from both. My eldest aunt, Kate Henn, a person of the broadest views and sympathies, and one of the first pioneers of the higher education of women in Ireland, ascribed the decadence to three things, all of which she had lived through and the results of which she had watched. She said that in her young days the country parishes of Ireland could boast of three cultivated men to guide them, the parish priest, the Protestant vicar, and the landlord. Before 1840 the priests were of necessity to travelled men, who had had opportunities of rubbing shoulders with Frenchmen and Italians. The Maynooth Grant narrowed their experiences and stunted their education. The Irish Church Disestablishment worked in the same retrograde fashion on the Protestant parson, and the Land Bill expatriated the landlord. So the country districts lost touch with any vivifying or elevating influence: and she added with a fine irony a fourth cause of friction, Dublin Castle, calling it a remnant of the worst side of Home Rule, which had outlived the Act of Union, and stood directly in the path of the complete representation of Royalty becoming a mere mouthpiece of Party, sans stability,

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²⁸ Scheer, “For the Sake of the Union,” 168.
sans permanent knowledge of the country, sans dignity, sans any of the experience necessary to a responsible chief. This simple and thorough statement always seemed to me to be the acme of common sense, and I could see the results of the policy she so disapproved acting slowly on every interest, practical and artistic, in Dublin.  

To further the point, Stanford quotes an 1868 letter from Joachim whereby, writing to his wife, the violinist recounts his experiences in Dublin. He wrote:

Dublin is a beautiful town, the only pity of it is that one sees so much poverty, drunkenness and naked dirt in the people. England has much on her conscience, and is beginning to find it out. But the republican Fenianism is imported from America, and has no future in the green island, which seems to be essentially feudal (in its tendencies), likes to admire pomp, and would be glad to be close friends with its aristocracy, if they were tender to its idiosyncrasies, and also showed consideration and love for the people.  

"Of excitement and rebellion," Joaquin continued, "I saw no sign. It seems much worse from a distance than at close quarters."  

To Stanford, then, England's influence upon Ireland was a positive one. The presence of the ascendancy kept Ireland a civilized and cultured island. And the composer stood against legislation that would further diminish and/or remove such a positive influence from the Emerald Isle, a view that was in line with contemporary Unionist thinking. The composer closed his argument with an illuminating phrase:

The late Lord Morris (himself a strong Unionist) once summed up the Irish question as "a stupid nation trying to govern a clever one": I should have liked to answer that very outspoken dictum by substituting "slow" for "stupid" and "quick" for "clever." The slowness, which in England's history has mainly tended towards sureness, develops a less valuable quality, when it produces a constitutional inability to rub the sponge over the slate, and to meet generosity of admission with generosity of appreciation.  

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30 Quoted in ibid., 100-101.

31 Quoted in ibid.

32 Ibid., 101-102.
Victor Herbert’s Irish nationalism

On Easter Sunday evening, 23 March 1913, Victor Herbert directed a concert in Carnegie Hall as part of the city’s Gaelic Festival, the Feis Ceoil Agnus Seanachas. He conducted his own Irish Rhapsody, his orchestral arrangement of Irish-American composer Swan Hennessy's Petite Suite Irlandaise, two movements from Stanford's Irish Symphony, and William Wallace's overture to Mariana. New York soprano Idelle Patterson performed popular songs and operatic arias, such as Moore's "The Last Rose of Summer” and "Caro Nome" from Verdi's Rigoletto. Charles Baker accompanied her on the piano. Joseph Dunn, Professor of Gaelic at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. gave a lecture on Gaelic literature as part of the festival.33

Herbert actively promoted the music of Irish composers and composers of Irish decent at Sunday evening concerts at Broadway Theatre and the Feis Ceoil.34 He even set the poetry of his once famous grandfather, Samuel Lover. In 1898, the composer published the song Sweet Harp of the days that are gone to Lover’s poem To the Irish Harp. The lyrics read:

Oh, give me one strain of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own!
Sweet harp of the days that are gone!
Time's wide-wasting wing its cold shadows may fling
Where the light of the soul hath no part,
The sceptre and sword both decay with their lord
But the throne of the bard is the heart!
(Repeat last two lines)

And hearts while they beat to thy music so sweet,
Thy glories will ever prolong;


34 On January 11, 1912, the Gaelic Society of New York, awarded Herbert an engrossed and illuminated reproduction of the Book of Kells for his dedication and service to the Society and its promotion of Irish language, music, and literature. Waters, Victor Herbert, 410.
Land of honor, and beauty, and song!
The beauty whose sway woke the bard's native lay,
Hath gone to eternity's shade;
While fresh in its fame, lives the song to her name,
Which the minstrel immortal has made!

Oh, give me one strain of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own!
The sceptre and sword both decay with their lord,
But the throne of the bard is the heart.\textsuperscript{35}

Simple, yet declamatory in style, the vocal melody opens in C major, punctuated with arpeggiated chords—a literal reference to the poem's title—in the piano. In the second phrase, the music shifts suddenly to E minor, highlighting the nostalgic line, "Sweet harp of the days that are gone!" Like a vague dream, the music returns to C major for the following phrase.\textsuperscript{36} Another brief harmonic interruption occurs with the line "the sceptre and sword both decay with their lord," which Herbert sets in the parallel minor. For the remainder of the line, "but the throne of the bard in the heart," the composer moves to reestablish the tonic with a secondary-dominant-to-dominant progression, D major to G seven. Herbert repeats the line for emphasis using the same harmony, which concludes emphatically in C major. In the second strain, Herbert establishes a different mood, notably in the piano part, which, now in C minor, adopts a subtle style of simple chords with inner-voice motion. The vocal melody, though it maintains the declamatory rhythm of the song's opening, now performs in pianissimo. Herbert's note to perform the passage "much slower," combined with the musical effects, serves to illustrate the text: "And hearts while they beat to thy music so sweet, thy glories will ever prolong." The

\textsuperscript{35} Victor Herbert, \textit{Sweet Harp of the Days that are Gone} (New York, London: Edward Schuberth and Co., 1898).

\textsuperscript{36} In the manuscript score, Herbert set this song in the key of D major. He likely changed it in the published version to accommodate the vocal range of the general amateur singer. Victor Herbert Collection, Libray of Congress, Box 115, Folder 11.
phrase concludes with a near whisper: the vocal melody and harmony grow increasingly slow and quiet, echoing the line, "the beauty whose sway woke the bard's native lay, Hath gone to eternity's shade." The final lines of the poem's second stanza set the tone for the remainder of the song; here, the music returns to the march-like feel of the opening.

Herbert's reasons for promoting Irish music were, in effect, more than musical; he was an Irish patriot and was an outspoken supporter of the cause for Irish freedom from Great Britain. In 1908, Herbert joined the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, an organization founded in 1784 by Irish veterans of the Revolutionary War that, during the years of Ireland's Home-Rule struggle, capitulated to a lost-cause ideology of Irish freedom. The society's gala dinners were extravagant affairs. Herbert's first, the 124th annual dinner on 17 March 1908, featured William Howard Taft, Charles Evans Hughes, and Augustus Thomas as guest speakers. Herbert prepared a selection of songs and piano pieces from Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*—"The Minstrel Boy to the War is Gone," "Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill," and "Remember the Glories of Brian the Brave" among them—to be performed during the evening, "a voluntary offering to celebrate his own admittance to the Irish company."[37]

Music reflected his political feelings. In a preface to a manuscript volume of the piece above, Herbert remarked:

The profound love of music which has always been a dominant trait of the Irish race has given us a wealth of beautiful melodies of which no other people can boast. The variety exhibited by Irish music is astounding, its classic examples ranging from the gentle lullaby to the inspiring war chant and the heartbreaking lamentation. Some of the oldest and best known of these I have arranged upon the pages which follow this brief introduction. To the great skill and proficiency of our

harpers was due the early development of the system of harmony and artistic introduction, [and]characteristic of our music. . . .

Music historians have had mixed results when analyzing Herbert’s political opinions. Edward Waters, writing in his 1955 biographer of Herbert, downplayed the composer’s politics. "It must be admitted," he wrote, "that some of his Irish contributions were rather vague; but there was never a moment when he did not believe he was aiding the cause." But Joseph Kaye, in his anecdotal biography of the composer, remarked that "apart from his music, Herbert had two great interests in life good living and the cause for Irish independence." Political affiliations were sometimes hidden in, what appeared to be, benign cultural societies. In 1911, the composer joined the American-Irish Historical Society, which had a broad focus but an exact cause: to encourage and assist in obtaining national independence for Ireland. And in the musical world, Herbert, from his established position, believed he was fighting for fellow Irishmen in the face of English injustice. Of fellow American musicians, he was especially protective. His close friend Henry Hadley, served as the first regular conductor of the San Francisco Symphony from 1911 to 1915. The organization, however, felt that, in order to attract a broad audience, it needed a new conductor with a foreign, preferably German, name. Hadley was released and Alfred Hertz was hired in his place. Herbert, though also a friend of Hertz, felt that the San Francisco Symphony

38 Quoted in ibid., 316-317.
39 Ibid., 410.
had committed a grave injustice to Hadley. In an interview for the Chicago opening of 
*The Only Girl,* Herbert expressed his feelings clearly:

I remember when I was in Berlin I answered an advertisement for first cellist in one 
of the orchestras. I entered the competition and was successful against a number 
of other cellists. Two days later I received notice that my contract had been 
cancelled because I was a British subject. The director said merely that it was the 
policy of the orchestra to give preference to Germans. I agreed that he was right. 
But out here in San Francisco, after an American and a good conductor had built 
up an orchestra, they go and get that German Hertz.  

Herbert stood as one of the few conductors to protest the contemporary practice among 
American orchestras of hiring foreign talent. He, along with many musicians and much 
of the concert-going public, felt that musical organizations too often neglected native 
performers in favor of European ones.

Vague as those instances may seem, the composer publically acknowledged his 
support for Irish Home-Rule and, later, the Free Sate in ways that seem uncharacteristic 
for the composer of *Babes in Toyland.* As it was with Stanford, his Irish sympathies 
occupied a central role by the 1910s, the decade of the third Home-Rule Bill, Ulster 
resistance, and the Easter Rebellion. In the spring of 1914, Herbert, along with his wife 
and young daughter, left the US for a European trip. Worn out from conducting and 
composing musicals for the New York stage, Herbert planned to spend some of trip as a 
vacation. Otherwise, he was busy securing a performance of *Madeleine* at the Théâtre 
des Champs Elysées in Paris. The planned production fell to Henry Russell, manager of 
the Boston Opera Company, who was, at the time, directing a season of grand opera in 
Paris. It looked to be an exciting time for the Herberts as the trip marked the first time 
that Victor and Therese had visited the old country since their emigration to the United 

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42 Quoted in Waters, *Victor Herbert,* 471.

43 Ibid.
States in 1887. On April 13, the first family of Irish-American music arrived in England. They settled at the Hotel Métropole and went sightseeing. *The New York Times* sent a reporter to cover the Herberts' trip, which appeared to be, for Irish-Americans, important news. The story, "Victor Herbert in London," ran on 19 April:

Victor Herbert, who arrived on the Mauretania on Monday, has been putting in busy days and nights sightseeing. This is his first visit to England in twenty-seven years, and he has not been in London since, as a child, he lived with his grandfather, Samuel Lover, at Sevenoaks. He is working just as hard at play as he ever did at composing, as one of his musical friends phrased it. A correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES found him in the smoking-room of the Hotel Metropole, where he is staying, the centre of an interested circle. He said he was greatly struck by the changes since he was here last, being especially impressed by the wonderful cleanliness of the streets. He drew a sharp comparison between the well-kept road-surfaces of London and the pockmarked asphalt of upper Broadway, and suggested that the rarity of auto-car accidents here was due largely to the good street surfaces.44

The conversation soon turned to politics:

The composer proclaimed himself an ardent Home Ruler and keenly interested in the Ulster imbroglio. He playfully remarked: "I would like to meet this man [Edward] Carson. I am in the pink of condition, and fit for a fight. If I do not get a commission to write a new opera while I am here I guess I will enlist, and not with the Ulster volunteers either. I have always been anxious to come over here, but I have been so busy in America that I could not find time before. I am going to Paris and Berlin-yes, partly on business. I expect to meet several managers in London and Berlin who have asked me to see them. I shall probably give a concert from my works in London. I have also been invited to conduct one of the leading orchestras in Paris. The only fly in the foreign ointment is that I am afraid I shall not have time to visit Ireland as the Old Country ought to be visited to satisfy my own sentiments and those of my countrymen."45

Perhaps as a result of professional jealousy on the part of Henry Russell, *Madeleine* was cancelled. A disappointed Herbert, who longed to present himself to French audiences as a composer of serious music, altered his travel plans, opting for a

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45 Ibid.
trip to Berlin rather than Ireland. In a letter to Horace Britt, the composer's friend and current principal cellist of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra, Herbert explained his new plans. Preparations ensued for a substitute performance of *Madeleine* in London. The reasons for its cancellation in Paris, to Herbert, remained a mystery:

My dear Britt  
It is very kind of you to go to all the trouble in finding out the cost of a concert in Paris. After all I hardly think it would pay to spend in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars for one concert, especially at this time of year. It would be just as well to conduct a number or two at one of your Sunday concerts and I will try to get an invitation to do so. Mr. Russell is trying to get "Madeleine" produced here, but I am (entre nous!) not very enthusiastic about Covent Garden, and really don't care much whether they do it, or not. As Madeleine will not be done in Paris (but I don't know why not) I will change my plans somewhat and probably go to Berlin after a short stay in Paris. I will inform you of our time of arrival there, of course, and will write you again before leaving London. We will probably stay here another week or a week and a half. So far I haven't heard or seen anything good here and the general conditions of things musical and theatrical is undoubtedly better in the U.S.A. Thank you again, my dear friend, for your great kindness and willingness to help me. I assure you that I deeply appreciate your loyalty.

Very sincerely yours,
Victor Herbert\(^{46}\)

But a bout with appendicitis on April 22, while visiting Buckingham Palace, cut Herbert's trip short. The composer, who nearly died as a result of the illness, underwent surgery two days later. For the remainder of the European venture, the family spent time relaxing. Mrs. Herbert even sojourned to Frankfurt while her husband recuperated at Brighton. In June, the Herberths, together again, sailed from England to New York onboard the Imperator. They arrived home on June 25.\(^{47}\) The composer's desire to enlist with the Irish Volunteers and engage Edward Carson in a fist fight was little more than political theatre. But Waters maintained that he regretted his lack of time to visit Ireland during his trip. "He probably fancied himself as a leader of Irish thought in the

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\(^{46}\) Quoted in Waters, *Victor Herbert*, 459-460.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 460.
United States," the author wrote. "He was certainly a leader in Irish feeling, and missed no opportunity to further the "cause" when music or musicians were needed." Indeed, he embraced his Irishness later that same year. In 16 November 1914, Herbert ascended to the presidency of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. The following St. Patrick's Day, the society gathered at the Hotel Astor for their 131st anniversary celebration. The new president, in addition to conducting the Glee Club he had previously founded, offered the following toast. His Irish sympathies were no doubt sincere:

Gentlemen, it is my privilege as President of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick to offer you a most cordial welcome, a Cead Mile Failte—a hundred thousand welcomes. On this day when the hearts of all Irishmen throughout the world are beating faster, and the little sprig of shamrock is worn by every son of our beloved Isle, we renew and reincarnate the everlasting love and undying devotion we feel for our old Home across the Sea. [Applause.] I do not wish to brag about the achievements of the Irish race, but is it not a fact that on every page of the World's history and particularly the history of this country, you will find names of some of the most illustrious sons of Erin, and have we not in generous measure helped to build up this wonderful country since its earliest development? But we have become grateful sons of the Goddess of Liberty, enjoying the blessings of Freedom denied us in our own land. [Applause.] Unbounded as is our loyalty to the country of our adoption—and we have done our best to reward America for opening her maternal arms to us—we are still fond lovers of that Green Isle beyond the Sea. [Great applause.] I could continue at length, gentlemen, but I must remember that I am only Toastmaster on this occasion. I will, therefore, content myself with asking you to give your fullest attention to the speakers that have kindly consented to address us to-night. Gentlemen, I ask you all to rise and rink to the first toast of the evening—The President of the United States.49

The guest speakers that evening included the Governor of New York; Joseph F. Monaghan, a lawyer from Detroit; and Mayor John Purroy Mitchel of New York City.

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48 Ibid., 469.

49 Ibid., 470.
After the latter had given a speech about New York City’s bright future, Herbert remarked:

I am sure you all love the roseate outlook for autonomy that our worthy Mayor has painted to you. I do hope that this Legislature at Albany if they do pass a Home Rule Bill for New York City will pass a better one than the English Parliament passed for our country. [Loud applause.] No matter what people will tell you about the Irish Home Rule Bill, and even it it be His Honor, the Mayor, I beg to disagree with him. The Irish Home Rule Bill is a check without a date. [Continued applause.]

For Herbert and undoubtedly a number of Irish Americans watching from the other side of the ocean, the third Home Rule Bill, which so threatened Ulster loyalists, did not go far enough.

Herbert’s critical views towards England expressed above even showed, wittily, in some of his music. Joseph Kaye recounted the following story from his biography of Herbert in 1931:

In 1914, gene Buck was supervising the staging of the current edition of the Ziegfeld Follies. In view of the world situation, he thought it would be a good idea to have a finale called "The Parade of the Nations." He would have a number of the Ziegfeld beauties marching down the stage in the glorified manner, each representing a nation and each accompanied by that nation’s anthem. Having a great admiration for Herbert as a composer of ensembles and knowing his great skill as an orchestrator, Buck commissioned him to arrange the music. The score for the "Parade" was finished the day before the opening of the Follies. As he handed him the manuscript, Herbert said:
"Gene, pay attention to this number."
"Why?" Buck asked.
"Oh, I've put a little joke into it. See if you can detect it."
When the time came, Buck did pay attention, but nothing happened. Then the orchestra played a rousing orchestration of "Die Wacht am Rein," and a stately show girl proudly marched in as "Germany." She was followed by Justine Johnson, a noted beauty of her day, as "Britannia."
At this moment the orchestra became abruptly silent and from the void came forth "God Save the King," in a suggestive squeak from a single piccolo. The audience, even if somewhat puzzled, probably thought Herbert did this for contrast,

50 Quoted in ibid.
especially as a crashing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" followed the English anthem.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1916, Irish sympathies grew to fever pitch. On Saturday, 4 March of that year, nearly 2000 patriotic Irishmen from all over the United States convened in the ballroom of the Astor Hotel in New York City. The organization called itself "The Friends of Irish Freedom," and, disappointed in the provisions of the Home-Rule Bill, set out to encourage and assist in the fight for national independence in Ireland. In doing so, the organization promised to become a sort of think tank for nation-building: A free Ireland would enjoy a revival of its native language and culture, and, moreover, become an industrial powerhouse. One of the leaders of the meeting on that March Saturday was Victor Herbert, who, "standing under a decoration made by twining American flags and the green Irish banner with the golden harp," called the delegates to order. The Friends elected John W. Goff, a Justice of the New York Supreme Court, president, but he resigned after one day; On March 5 at the George M. Cohan Theatre, Herbert was elected to replace Justice Goff. The composer, who still served as president of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, now occupied the most visible position in Irish-American politics; the most powerful man for the Irish cause in the United States was a musician.\textsuperscript{52}

Many of the leaders of the Irish American community, such as Jeremiah O'Leary, became disillusioned with Irish parliamentary leaders, particularly John Redmond and Edward Carson, when they advised that Home Rule, let alone independence, for Ireland not be granted until after the war Europe settled. Until then, Ireland ought to aid England in the struggle. O'Leary, a pro-German and anti-British agitator, helped move the

\textsuperscript{51} Kaye, \textit{Victor Herbert}, 239-240.
\textsuperscript{52} Quoted in Waters, \textit{Victor Herbert}, 480.
Friends of Irish Freedom, decidedly, in a reactionary and radical direction. The organization drew up its own Declaration of Freedom based upon American ideals for the emergent island-nation, and insisted upon an American-German alliance in a war against England. O'Leary even advocated that every Irishman ought to stand whenever "Die Wacht am Rein" was performed.\textsuperscript{53}

Herbert harbored pro-German feelings of his own. Indeed, he was as much German as he was Irish, having received his education in Germany and begun his musical career there at the insistence of his grandfather, Samuel Lover, who claimed that a Teutonic education was superior to an English one.\textsuperscript{54} His politics, as before carried over into his professional life. In 1916, Thomas Dixon, a novelist and film producer tapped the composer for a film score to \textit{Fall of a Nation}, based upon his book of the same name. A proud son of the South and southern apologist, Thomas Dixon supplied a literary answer to Harriet Beecher Stowe's \textit{Uncle Tom's Cabin}. His 1905 novel \textit{The Clansman}, which ranked number four on the best seller list in \textit{Publisher's Weekly} for that year, depicted the Civil-war-era south as a lost cause: a land of peace, morality, and prosperity prior to the conflict begot of northern aggression. The knights of the Ku Klux Klan, as the protagonists in his book, stood for States' Rights and womanly virtue, among other things. One decade later, D. W. Griffiths transformed Dixon's novel into the hit silent movie \textit{The Birth of a Nation}.\textsuperscript{55} Though not as successful as the

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 480-481.

\textsuperscript{54} Kaye, \textit{Victor Herbert}, 20.

\textsuperscript{55} Alice Hacket and James Henry Burke, \textit{80 Years of Best Sellers 1895-1975} (New York and London: R. R. Bowker, 1977), 69. The top three books of 1905 were Mrs. Humphry Ward's \textit{The Marriage of William Ashe}, Alice Heagan Rice's \textit{Sandy}, and Robert Hitchens's \textit{The Garden of Allah}. Books that made the list do so for achieving the highest sales figures, ranging from 750,000 copies or more for hardbacks and 2 million or over for paperbacks.
*Clansman*, Dixon’s *Fall of a Nation* was written as a propaganda piece to rally American support for the war in Europe. In the novel and film adaptation, set in a futuristic world of the mid-twentieth-century, imperialist European powers conquer America. Dixon wanted the invading army in the picture to be a German one, just as he had written in his novel. But Herbert helped persuade Dixon to neutralize the image of the enemy in a series of heated correspondence between the two men from November 1915 to March 1916. Dixon had by then secured the composer’s talent to write the score. In a letter of November 1915, he included a check for $500 as payment for Herbert’s work thus far. In a January telegram, Dixon made his vision for the picture and the score clear to the composer:

> Have written lyric scenes measuring sixty feet[.] Hero and heroine moon lit lutn (sic) beside fountain first meeting after the battle before house tragedy numbers six hundred and ninety three, A B C D E F G H, second act will play shorter than first[.] Manuscript with important letter tomorrow[.] Hope you can strike in the prologue and hold throughout the note of an oratorio of the religion of democracy[.] My scene is not preparedness but the religion of democracy against the might of kings[.] I warn of lack of preparation only to preach my religion of the new humanity which would be crushed in America by Imperial invasion. Thomas Dixon.\(^{56}\)

Herbert, though initially excited about the project, took issue with some of the film’s content. In late 1915 he wrote to Dixon:

> Right here I beg to call your attention to the fact that twice in the second act you call the attacking army "Germans." I think that the invading force must be an imaginary country’s army. You told me it would be when I saw you at your office and I sincerely hope you have not changed your mind. To offend hundreds of thousands of our best citizens in that way would be a great mistake and I sincerely hope that the invading army will remain "imaginary." Any way to think that the Germans would ever want to invade America is absurd—but even if they did, they would never act as they are made to in your picture. I studied in Germany and although Irish, have a soft spot for that country and its people. \(^{57}\)


\(^{57}\) Ibid.
By the turn of the new year, his patience with the writer and producer was wearing thin:

You promised me that the nationality of the invading army would be absolutely imaginary, but you mention and have inserts about Germany and German princes frequently. I will not be a party to the violations of our President’s proclamation of neutrality. Your novel was the basis of this work and I insist that you carry out your promise. That was the condition under which I undertook the work. V.H. 58

The composer’s letter originally included the following line, though he scratched it out before sending his opinions to Dixon:

England is our danger, not Germany, . . . . 59

From his position as head of two Irish-American organizations as well as his German upbringing, Herbert seemed a perfect fit a leader of men for the times. He issued his own statement on the Irish issue in an article for The New York Sun, published 26 March 1916. In it, he repudiated Redmond, denied the sincerity of Carson’s interest in Ireland, and hoped that Germany would beat England quickly in the war. Though his statements were laced with conflict, he hoped that America would remain neutral in the fight. 60 The text of the article stated:

If England could win the war by diplomacy or by some means other than fighting, there would be no doubt of the outcome of the conflict, but unfortunately for her, and very fortunately for what I believe to be the best interests of mankind in general, and if Ireland in particular, she is now fighting against foes whom she cannot frighten nor cajole, and in my judgment, from the outbreak of the war, it has seemed inevitable that the British Empire is doomed, and that again we are going to live in a world where there will be liberty and freedom, and where the weaker people will not have to live in constant dread that their countries and their rights are to be taken away from them. Such a result will bring happiness to many lands, but to none other in such measure as to the land of my birth. . . ."


59 Ibid.

60 Waters, Victor Herbert, 480.
In spite of the sophistry of Carson and the raimeis of Redmond, the Irish at home and abroad, with their old instinct as a fighting race, recognize and feel that England is being beaten in this present war. They have no sympathy of pity for the country which has ever tyrannized over the weak ad truckled to the strong. Ireland to-day, Mr. Redmond to the contrary notwithstanding, is not with England, and every day is preparing more and more to look out for herself. Events in Ireland soon boiled over.

On Easter Monday, April 24, Irish rebels, under the leadership of Patrick Pearse, declared independence for Ireland and launched a revolution in Dublin. The fighting lasted a week. When the British regained control, they executed fifteen rebel leaders, who, to the remaining members of the resistance, became instant heroes. The Irish freedom movement drew to an abrupt close when Roger Casement, another leader in the Irish rebellion, was captured by British forces on a German submarine that was carrying arms for the Irish resistance. He was condemned as a traitor and hanged on 3 August 1916. But sentiment for the rebel cause had already spread. On 14 May 1916, Herbert opened a mass gathering of Irish sympathizers in Carnegie Hall in honor of the fallen rebels. The orange-green-and white flag of the Irish Republic hung over the stage. In a short introductory speech, Herbert formally asked those in attendance to remember the Irish martyrs of 1916. Edward J. Gavegan, New York Supreme Court Justice, also spoke to the crowd, stating that "We may safely predict that the battle of Dublin will go down in history as the first and only victory in the world's great war which was won by English troops." The following October 14, Herbert opened the Irish Relief Fund and Bazaar at Madison Square Garden, an event that was, interestingly, sponsored by both

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61 Quoted in Kaye, Victor Herbert, 243. Kaye maintains that Judge Cohalan prepared the article. Herbert merely signed his name to it before publication. But Gould, in his recent study of the composer, claims that the New York Sun piece is a Victor Herbert original.

62 Quoted in Waters, Victor Herbert, 482.
Irish and German patronage. Herbert’s opening comments reflected the rebellion, which was still fresh on the minds of the public: "Those men paid the penalty of their convictions and have won for themselves imperishable fame." German propaganda, though seemed to dominate the Bazaar. There were an equal number of German booths as there were Irish ones. A model of a German submarine was placed on display in the basement. Portraits of Kaiser Wilhelm II were on sale with those of Roger Casement and George Washington.

Herbert’s operetta *Eileen* stands as one of the composer’s strongest political statement in music. *Eileen* premiered in at the Colonial Theatre in Cleveland on New Year’s Day, 1917. It made its first New York City showing at Schubert theatre on March 19, fittingly two days after St. Patrick’s Day. The audience comprised leading members of the city’s Irish community. Justice Victor Dowling, president of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, came dressed in full regalia, complete with the green scarf and golden badge of the office. Daniel Cohalan, a Tammany Hall Democrat and a judge in the New York Supreme Court, along with his party—Mr. and Mrs. Condé Nast and Mme. Marcella Sembrich—sat in the stage box. All were friends of Herbert’s, who, at this stage in his career, occupied the vanguard of Irish-American music. And the audience took notice: When the composer walked down the aisle to assume his place at the head of the orchestra, the crowd responded with fervor. “Mr. Herbert’s personality and intense enthusiasm constituted so much of “Eileen,” one reporter stated.

63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 483.
To Herbert, *Eileen* was as much as personal work as an artistic one: “One saw him fairly scramble to the orchestra pit the minute the fiddlers appeared from the lair, saw him pick them up with eyes alight, saw his baton darting over them like a living thing, realized that Mr. Herbert was having the time of his life,” an anonymous reporter noted. “Much of the man’s passionate devotion to Ireland, much of his hatred of England was written into the score of “Eileen”; he conducted with all the ardor of a rebel.”67 The writer continued:

Those delightful bits of music which accompanied outbursts of Irish resentment against British oppression, those harsh and stinging bars which heralded the coming of the Redcoats, were just what one would have expected from Herbert's pen. Wild Irish yells swayed the drop curtain as Mr. Herbert, mopping a pink brow with a handkerchief edged in green jumped back in the pit doing his best to take Dublin with music that surely would have charmed the bullets of the redcoats and their courses.68

*Eileen* recasts the Irish rebellion of 1798 in a comic and romantic light. Barry O'Day, the operetta’s leading male character, returns to Ireland from exile to lead a revolt with the aid of a coming French fleet. With a price on his head, Barry goes into hiding where he falls in love with Eileen Mulvaney, the daughter of his benefactor.

The short, spritely overture that precedes the drama brims with the characteristics of Irish music, even though Herbert appended the following note in the published score:

> In this [work] I have not made use of any traditional Irish airs, but have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to write all “Irish” numbers in the characteristic spirit of the music of my native country—Ireland.69

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67 Unidentified newspaper clip, Harvard Theatrical Collection. Quoted in ibid.

68 Unidentified newspaper clip, Harvard Theatrical Collection. Quoted in ibid.

After an introduction, the overture opens with a lively gig in G mixolydian mode. Drone basses and occasional szforzandos support the melody and countermelody. The following passage comprises an expressive ballad in E-flat major, which then gives way to a short march-like passage, complete with heavy accents and the scotch-snap rhythm. The overture concludes with a quick cut-time march in G major. Herbert’s overture is more typical of a musical theatre production than for a series opera. There is no development of the musical themes. Instead, the piece is a medley of the memorable numbers from the production.

The operetta opens on a misty morning just before dawn on Ireland’s western coast. A band of smugglers, lead by the witty Shaun Dhu, store barrels of silk, tobacco, brandy and other contraband into a cave near the Black Bull, a tavern owned by Biddy Flynn. She, meanwhile, is hiding Barry O’Day in the tavern. Shaun, knowing this, whispers to Biddy, “if Barry should need me, tell him I’ll give him me life.”

Just as in Shamus O’Brien, the characters in Eileen employ an Irish-English dialect in the dialogue and vocal numbers. The song “Free Trade and a Misty Moon,” for example,—performed by Shaun Dhu and his men—features the phrases “Tra Loo” and the emotional interjection “Och.” Gaelic passages appear as well: “On Silks and brandy; on snuff and tay, ’Tis divvil a penny we have to pay! Come then!,” the chorus sings, “Caide mille Failte Fill up and we’ll drink a roon! Traloo! Traloo! Free trade and a misty

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moon.”\textsuperscript{71} Other numbers invoke popular stereotypes of the Irish people. The lyrics to “Blarney is Our Birthright,” performed by Shaun Dhu, read:

\begin{quote}
Blarney is our birthright,
'Tis parcel and 'tis part
Of the nature of a craytur
With a loyal Irish heart
And in or out of season,
There's no one minds our teasin'
For the reason that we're pleasin'
Is our blarney.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

As the drama continues, Biddy's daughter, Rosie, comes into the tavern in search of eggs. She tells her admirer, Dinny Doyle, that he is not right for her due to his poverty. In “My Little Irish Rose,” a soft ballad in E-flat major, Rosie, confirming the stereotype about the sweetness of young Irish women, sings:

\begin{quote}
Although I'm young and very small,
I've no fear of men at all!
I just laugh and teaze and chaff,
And say "Aw, now go on wid you!"
They all try to steal a kiss,
But when that has gone amiss,
Each one cries and lies and sighs,
"I love you so, my Irish Rose."\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

The wealthy lawyer Lanty Hackett enters and makes advances toward Rosie. Barry O'Day, hearing the commotion, comes to her rescue. After an exchange, Lanty, who pretends to be a secret contact from the French—he, in fact, is as an informer for the English Colonel Lester—passes the following message to Barry:

\begin{quote}
The French under General Hoche have arranged for another invasion. Ye'll find it in cypher complete as I got it. But I've had to be careful. I think Colonel Lester has got his bad eye on me.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{71} Herbert, \textit{Hearts of Erin}, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{72} Stuart, ed., liner notes to \textit{Victor Herbert: Eileen}, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{73} Herbert, \textit{Hearts of Erin}, 23-24.
Lady Maude Esterbrooke, meanwhile, is due to arrive at the inn with her niece, Eileen. But their carriage breaks down and is assaulted by a drunken mob since they know that she is English. Eileen faints, but Barry O'Day rescues her from the mob. Barry then announces who he is to the gathering crowd and says, "I'm back here to work for the cause. Are you with me? It looks ever so bright! That's the spirit I love, for the time is at hand!" Barry and the chorus then sing their call to arms:

Glad triumphany hour! May the tyrant's pow'r
Now and forevermore be broken!
Hearts in sorrow tried, beat with loyal pride.
Mind our slogan: "Erin Slanthogal Go Bragh!"
So, friends, proudly we stand undaunted still,
Glad to fight for out land through good or ill.
Come! The time is now at hand,
Gladly for our native land,
For the right we'll bravely fight
"Gainst alien laws for Freedom's cause! Ah!"

The British soldiers surround the tavern, owing to Lanty Hackett, who informed them of Barry's presence. The crowd, angry that Lanty has betrayed them, seize and prepare to lynch him. Barry enters the tavern quicky, and in a split-second decision, changes clothes with Dinny Doyle so that Barry will appear to be Lady Maude's servant, "James." Maude insists that Barry has to make a choice: give up his mission to free Ireland or give up Eileen. Barry chooses duty over love and pleads with Eileen that she forget him. "The whole time I was abroad," Barry tells Maude, "I could think of nothing but the day when I would return to call Ireland my home again." He then sings:

When far from the land
I am proud to call my own,

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74 Stuart, ed., liner notes to Victor Herbert, 14.
75 Ibid., 15.
I repine till the heart of me is sore. 
And I dreamed of the past
And the happiness I've known
While my soul seems to whisper o'er and o'er:
"Tell me when shall I again see Ireland?"
There's no other spot I know that's half so fair.
I am longing for my home, my sireland,
Where my hearth, my heart,
My loved ones are there.
That's why I must sacrifice myself for the ceaseless struggle

Dinny Doyle enters with a band of rebels. "'Tis a great day tonight for the Irish!," he says enthusiastically. In the following chorus, Dinny and company call for Ireland's freedom:

Arrah! Ireland was a nation
Since the days of Adam's fall
And 'twas never meant that we
Should be oppressed
But the Saxon tyrants took us once
And robbed us of our all,
They've been trying ever since to take the rest.
But ev'ry loyal Irishman that's now alive or dead
Would give his life to set our wrongs to right,
And this faithful little band here,
Together heart and hand here,
May see the dawn of freedom break tonight!

'Tis a great day tonight for the Irish,
For the cause we have fought for and died.
And the time is soon to be
When you'll see old Ireland free!
'Tis the land of our love and our pride!
We despise and defy our oppressors,
And their tyrant laws we will fight.
But as fast as they can make 'em,
Begorra, we can break 'em,
Sure the Irish have a great day tonight!

The number, which served as the finale in some productions, is set to a rousing march in G major.

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76 Ibid., 37-38.
77 Ibid., 38-39.
Colonel Lester, in the meantime, has surrounded Maude’s castle with his troops; Barry, drawing his pistols, squares off with the Colonel, but before any fighting begins, a last-minute dispatch is received and read aloud. Lord Cornwallis, it is discovered, has been named the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The English king has also granted a pardon for all of the Irish rebels. With the news, Barry’s crowd breaks. "All right, boys, back to where we belong!," Shaun Dhu calls out. "Yiz! Where the drinkin’s thicker!," Mickey O’Brien, a member of the crowd answers. A confused Barry O’Day follows the crowd with his eyes. "Wait boys! I don't know what to say," he says. "Our plans have all gone cross. The British have beaten our French allies again." "Praise hivvin for that!," Biddy answers. "No offense sir," she adds, "but I've seen a world o' fightin' in me day, and nothin' ever comes of it but broken heads—or hearts—or both. What's in it for the women-folks, I ask ye?" "I would think it a shame to any man who didn't realize the part every woman plays in its country's destiny!," Barry says. With his arm around Eileen, Barry adds, "Aye! God bless the wimmen," then offers a final word on the future of Ireland:

Fair Ireland—fortune frowns upon her. But I've faith to feel that someday she will take her rightful place among the nations of the world.

In closing, the full cast sings the following:

Oh, that fair, prophetic day
That Ireland dreams of,
When at last from all oppression we are free,
When through martyrdom unknown
She has come into her own
Out of thrallldom that is nevermore to be!
I can hear, in fancy, now her children singing,

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78 “Eileen”. Program for The New Amsterdam Theatre Company, 13 December 1982 (New York: The New Amsterdam Theatre Company, 1982). Also, “'Tis a Great Day Tonight for the Irish” is marked as the closing number of the show in Herbert, Hearts of Erin.
I can see her well-beloved flag unfurled! 
And with heart and soul I pray 
God may speed the blessed day 
When Ireland stands 
Among the nations of the world

Given his noted interest in the Irish political situation, Herbert may have likely seen a little of himself in the character of Barry O’Day.

Between the acts at the New York premiere, the composer took the stage and, addressing the audience, said that he had always wanted to compose an opera that would be a credit to the traditions of Irish music. "[I wanted] to write an Irish opera which would be worthy of the tradition of a great race and its literature," Herbert told the crowd. "There is no place in all the world where there is more music than in Ireland," he added, "why shouldn’t an Irishman make an opera of Irish music?" He continued his speech:

The composer deserves no special credit for making an opera of Irish music because of the material at hand in abundance. The Irish sing when they work, and they sing when they suffer—unluckily they’ve never known much but work and suffering. Song, too, they’ve had, and song they have kept through all the centuries, as pure and sweet as ever it was. It has meant an Irish national music, which I have tried to express and reflect in my opera.

Eileen was a popular hit with New York audiences. The cast—including Walter Scanlon as Captain Barry O’Day, Algernon Greig as Sir “Reggie” Stribling, Scott Welsh as Dinny Doyle, John B. Cooke as “Humpy” Grogan, Olga Roller as Lady Maude

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82 Quoted in “Background Information on Eileen by Victor Herbert,” personal file of Evans Haile.
Estabrooke, and Grace Breen as the title character, Eileen—comprised “half a dozen or more actors with really good voices and singing chorus whose equal has not been heard since the days of Gilbert and Sullivan revivals,” one reviewer noted. The orchestra, though of excellent quality in the critic’s mind, drowned out the singers on occasion. The composer could be forgiven for his enthusiasm: “It was really Mr. Herbert’s fault last night,” the anonymous writer stated. “He was obviously enjoying making the musicians blow and saw the souls out of their instruments along with his tunes, and was oblivious of the fact that the singers were tearing their vocal chords out in an effort to pierce the orchestra’s curtain of notes.”

“Eileen is in Mr. Herbert’s best vein” and, further, the music was “bursting with rich melodies of the kind for which the composer is famous, some of them a trifle reminiscent, perhaps, but remindful of his own tunes and never commonplace,” the reviewer opined. Yet, even the political nature of the work, obvious, though, to the audience that New York evening, failed to go unmentioned in the newspaper: “An added element of interest,” he continued, “was given by the fact that Eileen is an Irish operetta, a form in which this composer should excel, since he was born in Dublin, and Ireland and all its works—except Ulster—has ever been dear to him.”

Critics, though, panned the libretto, which, some felt, relied too heavily in stage-Irish gimmicks than well-developed plot and narrative. Henry Blossom, who worked with Herbert on Mlle. Modiste, knew theatre production well and, as a writer, understood the

83 Gould, Victor Herbert, 438.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
shape of popular shows; however, as Neil Gould wrote, “he produced books that were
more than excuses to introduce musical numbers.” 87 Indeed, the somewhat convoluted
ending—whereby the British government grants clemency to the rebels thus bringing an
end to the revolution of 1798—failed to win the hearts of critics who were
knowledgeable about Irish and British history. Nearly a week after the New York
premiere, Alexander Woollcott wrote in the New York Times that Herbert had “seldom
written a more thoroughly characteristic and delightful score.” “It is a pity he could have
found no more inspiring a libretto than the awkward and diluted shillalah [sic] drama
which Henry Blossom has compiled,” he continued.

The book of Eileen, with its threadbare stage properties and its jests that have
seen better days, is simply preposterous. It is not Irish but Irish-American. Mr.
Blossom of St. Louis doubtless gathered his material and atmosphere by reading
for quite half and hour in some public library. Eileen is rich in melody. It is fairly well
sung and, thanks particularly to one Scott Welsh, well enough played. But as far as
it betrays any knowledge of or feeling for Irish lore, it might have been written by a
young man from Wyoming whose solo impressions of the Emerald Isle were
derived from two visits to a theatre where Andrew Mack was playing and one
conversation with a man who had once (long ago) seen a play by Dion
Boucicault. 88

"Mention of Mr. Blossom's contribution has been left till the last because it really doesn't
matter," another writer concluded. After labeling the libretto "of the Chauncey Olcott
school of romantic Irish melodrama," he asserted that "its humor is more elemental and
less effective than is usually the case with Mr. Blossom's books, but perhaps that is the

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87 Gould also opined that Blossom “was probably Herbert's best librettist” and that “his characters were
full-drawn, his situations believable, and the humor of his compositions grew out of the events he
created.” Gould, Victor Herbert, 369.

88 Woollcott, "Second Thoughts on First Nights," X5. Dion Boucicault was known in his plays for
establishing the stereotypical stage-Irishman, shillelagh, drink and all. Andrew Parkin notes, however, that
"he remodelled the stage Irishman to portray a more realistic gallery of types. What had once been a
foolish, drunken butt of English wits, he transformed into a clever, courageous and resourceful
descendant of the tricky slave of ancient comedy." See Andrew Parkin, ed. Selected Plays of Dion
fault of the subject.” “At least it provides the requisite number of music cues, and it is never a long time between tunes.”

But the composer’s charm and personality shone brightly through any visible problems *Eileen* may have had in New York. Herbert had such presence it was said that he could embrace the musicians and the audience with two smiles. *The New York Times* commented that “Mr. Herbert’s smile was so broad that all through the first act one kept expecting a German U-boat to poke its periscope through the shamrock sea.”

Herbert’s involvement with the production, at least for the time being, was short lived. After *Eileen*’s premiere, the composer quit the cast. Rumors quickly spread that he left the podium due to a disagreement with Joe Weber, the show’s producer, who oriented his own name at the head of the program in eighteen-point font. In fact, Herbert had only intended, originally, to conduct the orchestra for the initial New York showing.

The success of *Eileen* in the Big Apple soon ran its course: The operetta closed only after 64 performances, a short run for popular theatre. And as the case with Stanford’s *Shamus O’Brien*, *Eileen* succumbed to the political pressures of the day. General public outcry in the United States over Germany easily overwhelmed Irish political feeling. And when the United States entered World War I, Herbert found himself with conflicting loyalties. He had initially supported an American-German Alliance

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91 Ibid. Even the title page of the published score reads “Joe Weber presents a Romantic Comic Opera *Hearts of Erin.*” Blossom’s name is then listed as author of the book and lyrics; Herbert’s name follows as the composer. Herbert, *Hearts of Erin.*
against Great Britain, mirroring the leadership of Irish-America prior to the war. But his hopes did not come to pass; The United States, instead, allied itself with Britain against Germany when it entered the conflict. Further, Herbert's son, Clifford, enlisted with the U.S. army, and went on to fight successfully at the Marne and the Argonne.92

But Herbert, like Stanford, used his popular stage work in a political role. After Eileen closed in New York, Joe Weber, the show's producer, planned a two-year tour. Eileen kicked off in Dayton, Ohio, but was quickly closed due to a theater fire that destroyed the sets, costumes, orchestral parts, even the musical instruments. Plans for a tour were soon resurrected, though, this time, politics would play an even larger role. The Eileen Association was thus formed, an organization that aimed to present high-quality productions of Herbert's operetta for the benefit of the Irish cause: the establishment of a free Irish state. The composer sought support from his friend Judge Daniel Cohalan, to whom he previously told, "you have really done wonders for the cause and justly have gained the love and admiration of every true Irishman."93 In correspondence to the judge, Herbert outlined a one-month tour of the Midwest:

April 4-5-6 Dayton, OH
April 7-8-9 Toledo
April 10 Cincinnati (one week)
April 17 Kansas City (one week)
April 25 St. Louis (one week)
May 1 Detroit (one week)
May 8 Milwaukee (one week)
May 15 Chicago (one week)94

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92 Gould, Victor Herbert, 434.


94 Quoted in ibid.
The composer closed with the following line: “the profits of the entire run are to help swell the Irish Relief Fund, I hope you will do all you can to interest the leading Irishmen in the above cities in patronizing the performance.”95 Furthermore, Herbert committed to conduct opening performances on the tour when and where he was able.

Daniel Cohalan was born in Middletown, New York on December 21, 1865. He settled in New York City in 1889, four years after graduating from Manhattan College and one year after being admitted to the Bar. Cohalan’s mother and father came from County Cork, Ireland. And throughout his life, Cohalan "cherished a deep affection for their native land." Upon moving to New York City, he "soon made a favorable impression" in the Irish-American community and "was an unusually gifted person who put his genius into his living and his talents into the cause of Irish independence."96 The judge believed in Jeffersonian democracy and hoped that the Irish question would be solved by the incorporation of Jeffersonian principles into the Irish political process. He believed that democracy in Ireland would flourish only if independence was secured, an idea that allied him with John Devoy and his Clan-na-Gael. Home Rule, Cohalan thought, was only a palliative and would not cure the political ills between Britain and Ireland. The cause of Irish independence, moreover, would be best promoted in the work of the revolutionary-minded Clan-na-Gael.97 At a convention of the clan in 1900, the attendees adopted a declaration of principles. The quest for Irish independence stood out as the main objective. "Independence could only be secured through physical

95 Quoted in ibid.
97 Ibid.
force," Charles Tansill wrote, "and the Clan did not shrink from all the implications that went along with this program." 98 A circular issued to the members of Clan-na-Gael, dated October 10, 1900, contained the following call:

The object of the Clan is the complete independence of the Irish people and the establishment of an Irish Republic, and to unite all men of our race in all lands who believe in the principles of Wolfe Tone and Emmet. We pledge ourselves to the principles of physical force is the only engine a revolutionary organization can consistently and successfully use to realize the hopes of lovers of freedom in lands subject to the bands of oppression . . . Our duty is to nerve and strengthen ourselves to wrest by the sword our political rights from England. 99

All members of the Clan were pledged not to aid the parliamentary movement in any way and to avoid establishing Home Rule. And in this most significant stance, the organization, and, by definition, much of the New York Irish community was anti-Parnell. Clan-na-Gael had no sympathies with the Irish Parliamentary Party. Instead, the group heeded its Jeffersonian principle: watch, scrutinize, and, if need be, resist the corrupt national government.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson lobbied Congress to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Edmond de Valera, hoping to gain public support for Ireland's struggle for independence, traveled to the United States. Born in New York but raised in Ireland, De Valera spent eighteen months traveling the country. He was greeted wherever he went, publicizing the Irish cause and raising money; the Worcester branch of the Friends of Irish Freedom, in a drive, brought in over $130,000. 100

A feud soon broke out between De Valera, Devoy, and Cohalan. "All were strong personalities," Jay Dolan wrote, and each thought he should be the voice for Irish-

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98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

American Nationalism. De Valera, as president of the Irish Republic, claimed to be spokesman for Irish at home as well as abroad. Devoy and Cohalan, though, both considered themselves best suited to promote the Irish issue in the United States. Instead of nationalism, then, factionalism broke out. Devoy attacked De Valera in *Gaelic American*. De Valera said, "big as the Country is, it is not big enough to hold the Judge and myself."¹⁰¹ The Irish politician established his own organization: the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, a group that soon eclipsed Devoy's Friends of Irish Freedom and enrolled over 800,000 members by the summer of 1921.¹⁰²

Victor Herbert, in the middle of the political drama, sought Cohalan's support. In order for the Eileen Association and the Irish cause to be successful, he believed, a united front in Irish America was required.¹⁰³ A letter from the association's headquarters in Cleveland to the composer, which is housed in the Cohalan file of the American-Irish Historical Society, sheds light on the issue:

My Dear Mr. Herbert:
I wrote you on a subject which seems to me to be of the utmost importance to the continued process of our presentation of your opera Eileen. As I told you when you were here last week, we have all endeavored to keep strictly away from anything that might lend an atmosphere of factionalism to the Eileen enterprise. On the theory that we are serving Ireland solely, we at least have not consciously done anything that might offend any American Irish group. If Eileen is to be successful, it must have the unqualified support of all those groups. One of the most important of the groups named is the one which is led by Judge Cohalan of New York, whom I understand is a good friend of yours. Barry McCormack told me last week that he had approached Judge Cohalan on the matter of securing his endorsement, and that Judge Cohalan entertained the proposition so seriously, that he promised to have a representative witness the

¹⁰¹ Quoted in ibid., 204.
¹⁰² Ibid., 200-204.
show when it opened here last Monday night for the purpose of reporting to him at least as to what he thought of the performance from the artistic standpoint. I would deeply appreciate it if you would see the judge and seek to get from him his decision as to whether he can or cannot endorse. You may tell him that if there is any lingering doubt in his mind as to our sincere purpose to employ Eileen as a vehicle for furtherance of the Irish cause without regard whatever to any group, he needs only to consult Attorney James P. Mooney of this association. Despite the fact that we found it difficult to sell out the tremendously large Masonic Hall during Eileen’s engagement here last week, we did make a profit of which we are proud, when we stop to consider the unusual expense involved in getting things running smoothly. We have encouraging reports from Dayton, Toledo, and Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{104}

Neil Gould wrote that "apparently Cohalan was suspicious of the motives of some of the tour promoters, but he eventually came around, and \textit{Eileen} made a substantial contribution to the cause. Herbert’s musical-political statement had at last triumphed at the box office.”\textsuperscript{105}

During these years, Herbert published a number of politically-conscious songs. He set Peter Kearney’s text for \textit{Soldiers of Erin} in 1917. Rev. Robert F. Reilly edited and published the tune for the benefit of the Gaelic League of Ireland. The title page of the published song includes a sketch of the Irish flag, along with the subtitle, The Rallying Song of the Irish Volunteers. Kearney’s text reads as follows:

\begin{quote}
I’ll sing you a song a soldiers song,  
With cheery rousing chorus,  
A ’round our blazing fires we throng,  
The starry heavens o’er us,  
Impatient for the coming fight,  
While we await the morning’s light,  
Here in the silence of the night,  
We’ll chant a soldier’s song.
\end{quote}

\textbf{Chorus:}
Soldier’s [sic] are we whose lives are pledged to Ireland,

\textsuperscript{104} Quoted in \textit{ibid.}, 442.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}, 442-443.
Some have come from a land beyond the wave,
Sworn to be free, no more our ancient Sireland,
Shall shelter the despot or the slave,
Tonight we man the barna bweel,
In Erin's cause, come woe or weal,
'Mid cannons' roar and rifles peal,
We'll chant a soldier's song!

In valley green on towering crag,
Our fathers fought before us,
They conquered 'neath the same old Flag,
That now is floating o'er us,
We're children of a fighting race,
That never yet has known disgrace,
Then forward march the foe to face,
And chant a soldier's song.

Chorus

Sons of the Gael! Men of the Pale!
The long watched day is breaking,
The serried ranks of Innisfail,
Have set our tyrants quaking,
Our campfires now are burning low,
See in the east a crimson glow,
Out yonder lies our Saxon foe,
Then chant a soldier's song.

Chorus

Herbert set the energetic and memorable melody for Kearney's text to a rousing march.
The vocal range is just over an octave. The melody also contains short fanfare figures.
Together, both these elements make the song suitable for amateur singers; it surely
worked well as a rallying song. The tune, moreover, is as catchy and easy-to-remember
as George M. Cohan's Over There, which was published in the same year. The
accompaniment is diatonic, save for an occasional secondary dominant. The left hand
part of the piano, in particular, establishes the march style, compete with walking bass and "oom-pah" figures as well as thundering accents.\footnote{The Harry and Sara Lepman Collection, Library of Congress, Box 3, Folder 7.}

The Victor Herbert Collection at the Library of Congress also houses sketches for an orchestral accompaniment of \textit{Soldiers of Erin}. A standard orchestration, the composer assigns the melody to the upper strings and winds, with the accompaniment voice spread to the middle winds—clarinets and oboes—and strings. The bass and cello double the piano’s left-hand accompaniment. In addition, Herbert adds fanfare figures—triplets—in the brass and percussion for effect. There is no date given on the score.\footnote{Victor Herbert Collection, Library of Congress, Box 100, Folder 19.} \textit{Soldiers of Erin} was Herbert’s counterpart to Stanford’s “Ulster.”

Herbert continued to publish political songs. Two years later, He set the Irish air “Boys of Wexford” to words by J. Jerome Rooney for the Tin Pan Alley giant, Witmark and Sons. The resulting song was titled \textit{Old Ireland Shall Be Free}. The title page from the original 1919 sheet music notes that the tune served as a national anthem for Irish Americans. Rooney’s text reads as follows:

\begin{quote}
By all the glories of our race,
Who never yet were slaves,
By ev’ry mem’ry hallow’d place
That holds our martyr graves,
In Heaven’s sight, by freemen’s right,
From troubled sea to sea.
In deathless troth, we pledge our oath,
Old Ireland shall be free!

Chorus:
Old Ireland shall be free! We swear, Old Ireland shall be free!
In deathless troth we pledge our oath,
Old Ireland shall be free!
\end{quote}
We claim no right we do not give,
None less shall be our lot,
God made one law for all who live
In palace or in cot;
Then who shall take the bread we make
By sweat of hand or brow?
Not you, Sir Lord, save by the sword,
We shall have justice now.

Chorus

Wolf Tone has shown us what to do,
And Emmet is not dead;
Each Irish heart was leal [sic] and true
When Dan O'Connell lead;
Our Parnell's mound is holy ground,
And holier yet shall be,
When full confessed from East to West,
Old Ireland shall be free.

For who shall bind a Nation's soul,
Born by the grace of God,
And who shall fix a slave control
Upon a virgin sod?
None, none shall dare, while Irish air
Breathes life on you and me,
From Giant's Way to Bantry Bay,
Old Ireland shall be free.

Chorus

As in the previous tune, Herbert's skills as a song writer are in full view with *Old Ireland Shall be Free*. The simple and catchy melody makes use of a standard range—like many Tin Pan Alley songs—and is suitable for the average singer to perform. The accompaniment doubles the melody at times and adds to the effect of the lyrics at others. The opening bars of the chorus, for example, feature quick arpeggios on every beat of the measure, giving the sense of the strum of the harp, the national emblem of Ireland. The tune is a march and the piano accompaniment provides a steady walking bass throughout.
Herbert also scored an orchestral accompaniment to *Old Ireland Shall be Free*. The composer's orchestration opens with the full wind section as if to imitate a military band. The strings enter at the chorus and are instructed to ad lib the harmony onto the melody, which is lightly sketched into the score. The bass is given notes to emphasize the march rhythm. The harp strum of the published version is, in the orchestration, split between the piano and upper winds (flutes, oboes, and clarinets), which perform the figures as sixteenth-note triplets.\(^{108}\)

Victor Herbert's song *Mary Came Over to Me*, published by Harms in 1922, shows that the composer was adept at spinning a charming tune. The expressive triple-meter melody and flowing piano accompaniment are set in B-flat natural minor for the verses. The music shifts to the parallel major in the refrain, echoing the hopeful nature of Irving Caesar's lyrics:

The picture of Mary was in my heart
When I sailed over the sea,
It filled me with sorrow that we should part
For she was Ireland to me.
Sure I know what it is to be lonesome,
No sweetheart and far from home.

Refrain:
I dreamed of Mary and Ireland,
And in my fond dreams, I could see
Her eyes like the blue skies of old County Clare,
With her cheeks like the roses that bloom in Kildare.
Sad were the days of my yearning,
Today though, my heart's full of glee
My dreams of old Ireland, at last have come true
For Mary came over to me.

The lark and the mavis forgot their song
When Mary bid them goodbye;

\(^{108}\) Victor Herbert Collection, Library of Congress, Box 111, Folder 17. Orchestral sketch found in Box 111, Folder 14.
Each lad and colleen wept the whole night long
And stars grew dim in the sky.
Ev'ry true Irish heart loves my Mary,
But none love her more than I.

Refrain
offers the protagonist such an escape and she reminds him of the rustic, rural landscape he left behind in Ireland. Though he, as an obvious immigrant to American shores, is nostalgic for his homeland and his girl, her arrival puts those feelings at rest. She, effectively, embodies Ireland for the singer.

As Herbert remained steadfast in his opinions concerning the country of his birth, his skills as a politician drew the attention of an early biographer. Joseph Kaye offered a telling observation on Herbert's leadership:

In becoming the head of the important Friends of Irish Freedom, Herbert became one of the leaders of American-Irish patriotism—not because of any qualities of leadership, but because of his name and prestige. His duties in connection with the societies over which he presided were rather perfunctory. He was entirely influenced by his associates in the movement. He was vigorously against the League of Nations because his friend, Judge Daniel F. Cohalan, was against it. Judge Cohalan was one of his mentors and helped him considerably with any speeches or statements his official position obliged him to make.\(^{109}\)

He further recalled:

He was called upon to be present at many Irish meetings, but his duties were over when he had introduced the chairman for the occasion. Poor Herbert, although extremely proud of his new political distinction, was much more at home at a Lambs Club Gambol. Judge Cohalan relates that Herbert was rather subdued when in the presence of the Irish intellectuals over whom he was leader. There often were gatherings of such groups, which included men like Judge Goff, Judge O'Gorman, John J. Delany, Joseph I. C. Clark, Judge John Jerome, a gentleman named Rooney, who was in the Corporation Counsel's office and wrote the lyrics for some of Herbert's songs, and others noted in the Irish community. Occasionally Herbert would hold his own in the conversations, but by these friends, he was regarded as having a slower mind.\(^{110}\)

The composer, though, proved to be a capable politician, and one particular anecdote suggests the power he wielded in his role as a publicity-conscious musician. After Al Smith, a New York Irishman, announced his candidacy for the Democratic ticket in the

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\(^{110}\) Ibid., 244.
1924 presidential election, Calvin Coolidge, who ascended to the presidency after the death of Warren G. Harding the previous year, invited Herbert to the White House. One biographer wondered if "perhaps the photo of Herbert shaking the president's hand was meant to add a Celtic color to the Vermont Yankee's candidacy."\footnote{Neil Gould, \textit{Victor Herbert: A Theatrical Life} (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 443.} After the photograph was taken, Herbert turned away and said for all to hear, "I'm voting for Al Smith all the same."
CHAPTER 6
EPILOGUE

Separated by the Atlantic Ocean and divergent political views about the Irish question, Charles Stanford and Victor Herbert, shared seemingly odd degrees of separation. Indeed, the lives of the two composers were comically and ironically intertwined. Herbert was the grandson of Samuel Lover, who, during his tours of the United States during the 1840s, popularized Le Fanu’s *Shamus O’Brien*, which became the basis for Stanford’s opera. And Herbert conducted parts of Stanford’s *Irish Symphony* for concerts sponsored by the pro-nationalist Gaelic Society of New York. In addition, both died in 1924: Stanford on 29 March, Herbert on 26 May. They did not live long enough to experience the Irish Free State and an increasingly changing Great Britain and America fresh from the horrors of World War 1. As immigrants, their Irish nationalism, having evolved since their youths, was intensely personal and they poured their convictions into some of their late works.

After Stanford’s death, *Shamus O’Brien*, ironically, emerged in Dublin as part of the new Aonach Tailteann the following 11 August at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. The Tailteann Games, which were established to celebrate the Irish Free State, consisted of a variety of athletic events: boxing, cycling, football, handball, hurling, swimming, camoguidheacht, billiards, cross-country running, short-distance running, and others. There were also events for women: comoguidheachdt, chess, dancing, fiannuiocht, golf, literature, music, National costume, tennis, and swimming.

Originally, the Tailteann Games were scheduled for August of 1922. A short article in *The New York Times* stated that “the games have been organized entirely irrespective of political differences and men of every party and creed are said to be
represented on the council." But despite this promise, the United States decided not to send a team to compete, resulting in immense disappointment. The state of civil unrest in Ireland at the time was undoubtedly the reason for the U.S. decision. Aside from the destruction of Government hotels in Ireland, Dublin officials articulated that visiting teams from other nations, as well as the projected 20,000 visitors will be accommodated at local colleges.¹ The 1922 games were eventually postponed due to "disturbing conditions in the Emerald Isle." Two years later, the event was resuscitated. This time the United States sent a team of athletes to compete in the Irish festival, many of whom were headed to the Olympic Games and the British Empire Games. They planned to participate in the Irish festival before heading back the U.S. M.F. O'Hanlon, Commissioner of the Tailteann Games in America, reported that more than 100,000 people of Irish heritage and descent from the U.S. planned to make the trip to Ireland for the festival.²

The Tailteann Games opened on Saturday, 1 August 1924 at Croke Park in Dublin. A mass of visitors filled the stands. Free State airplanes flew over the grounds, which were decorated with the flags of all the Allied nations, save, polemically, for the Union Jack. The Free State Tricolor flew above all. On the grand stand stood representatives from participating nations and a number of Irish authorities, including Postmaster General J.J. Walsh, Governor General Healy, Compton Mackenzie, August John, Edwin Lutyens, and John MacCormack.³

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¹ "Irish Games to be Held," *The New York Times* (9 July 1922), 27.


In addition to athletics, the games also hosted competitions for vocal and instrumental music. The latter comprised separate events for military bands, civilian bands, brass bands, cinema bands, pipe bands, string orchestras, chamber ensembles—wind trios, sextets, and quintets—and solo performers on harp, fiddle, uilleann pipes, and war pipes. Test pieces were given to the participating bands and orchestras in advance of the competition and included works such as Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave*, Auber's *Le Domino Noir*, both arranged for wind band by Frank Winterbottom. Other test pieces included selections from Balfe's *Siege of Rochelle* and *Talisman* and Elgar's *Serenade* for string orchestra. For the chamber music competitions, performers were required to play *Beethoven's Quintet in E-flat for Clarinet, Oboe, Bassoon, Horn, ad Piano*, Mozart's *Sextet in E-flat for 2 Oboes, 2 Horns, and 2 Bassoons* and *Octet in E-flat for 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Horns, and 2 Bassoons*, and Swan Hennessy's *Trio for 9 Clarinets and Bassoon*, among others. The ensemble performers were also to be judged on Irish selections of their choice, "intended to encourage Band masters and others to make their own choice of Irish melody for their Bands."\(^4\)

*Shamus O'Brien* was performed as part of a special program, which included a recital by John MacCormack, an unnamed instrumental ode for band and choir, and two additional operas: Harold R. White's *Shaun the Post*, which was directed by Joseph O'Mara, and *Spuit na Maoile* by Molyneau G. Palmer.\(^5\) Regardless of its composer's wishes when he shelved the work in the previous decade, *Shamus O'Brien* seemed

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\(^5\) Ibid., 119.
fitting for such a festival. A review of the revived opera praised, among other things, the obvious politics of the work’s storyline:

. . . it is not much short of thirty years since the first production of the opera. With a tour in the United States of America, added to its seasons in London, in Ireland, and in the English provinces, it must have been performed over a period that would leave its last performance at four or five and twenty years ago. In more recent years Sir Charles Stanford set his face against all proposals for revival of this particular work of his. His death a few months ago freed it, and Mr. Joseph O’Mara, who helped the opera to popularity, and enlarged his own reputation by his singing and acting in the part of Mike Murphy, was able to join the accomplishment of his own eager wish to bring the opera to light again with the celebration of the new Aonach Tailteann. *Shamus O’Brien* pleased the last generation of Irishmen by the homely flavor of its libretto, its melodies and its humour. The libretto belongs to the school of Dion Boucicault—that school which the Abbey Theater has taught us now to call “stage Irish,” the school whose work reminds one of the picture postcards sold to English tourists, showing the Irishman of caricature, with Shillelagh, squat nose, green knickerbockers, and pig complete. It made a hero of the rebel, a fool of the British soldier, a heroine of an Irish colleen, and a despised rascal of an informer. Its unrealities did not prevent it from appealing to one set of people, and they made it possible for the other set—even to stout “removable” and Castle stalwarts—to take it as caricature, and enjoy it as such. As comic opera of that kind, the libretto was good work; it contained plenty of fun, a good dramatic episode here and there, and many well-turned verses. The music was sounder and more worthy as art. Stanford’s score, in its technique a model for many composers of its own time, and of the new generation, is remarkable, too, for its flavor of Ireland, with rhythms and melodies all in the spirit of our native music. 6


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Herbert’s *Eileen* suffered a similar fate. In March 1921, *Eileen* was revived for a run in Cleveland, the city where its premiere took place. This time, the show met little success and closed after one week. Evans Haile provided the following rationale:

The reason seen for its lack of success the second time around was because the Irish international and domestic crises of several years earlier had stabilized, and the American public was no longer interested in such an ethnic production. This, coupled with the taste of Roaring Twenties audiences for new, jazzier musicals, virtually insured a lack of success for an operetta whose charm largely stems from its national flavor.\(^8\)

Over six decades later, on December 13, 1982, the New Amsterdam Theatre Company, under the direction of Bill Tynes, performed a concert version of *Eileen* at New York City’s Town Hall. Jason McConnell Buzas staged the production and Evans Haile conducted the New Amsterdam Company Chorus and Orchestra as well as, fittingly, the Glee Club of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. The cast consisted of performers with a host of Broadway and opera credits. Vernon Hartman, who played Shaun Dhu, had previously performed with opera companies in Philadelphia, Dallas, and Boston, as well as the New York City Opera. He subsequently joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in 1983. Mark Jacoby played the role of Barry O’Day and Jeanne Lehman the title role. The Victor Herbert Foundation supported the production with a financial gift of at least 2,500 dollars. Financial gifts form a number of donors also contributed to the production.\(^9\)

In 1984, the New Amsterdam Theatre Company revived Herbert’s opera at the Schubert. Ivan Katz of the *New Haven Register* penned that "it isn't exactly fair to say

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\(^8\) "Background Information on *Eileen* by Victor Herbert," personal file of Evans Haile, 2.

that Victor Herbert's operetta "Eileen" is Irish, for actually it is very, very Irish." "The current production at Schubert of this delight by a scion of Erin is missing only Powers Irish Whiskey at the intermission." Katz further said of the production:

"Eileen" is Victor Herbert's musical valentine to his homeland, and in it he indulges in every trick at his masterful command to conjure up the Emerald Isle. Among his devices are some of the most mawkish, shop-worn cliches imaginable, but the fault is not all Herbert's. Henry Blossom's book and lyrics are at least equally at fault. But when the company launches into a number like "The Irish Have A Great Day Tonight," something other than pure intellect takes over. For all of its occasionally gushy sentiment, "Eileen" remains a pleasant evening at the theatre, for even when Victor Herbert was less than inspired he always remained a consummate man of the musical stage. In "Eileen," he was inspired far more often than not, and the results are magical.¹⁰

Despite the criticism of some of the show's elements, it is clear than Eileen still had something to offer for a new generation of theatre-going audiences in 1984. Moreover, the Schubert Theatre performance was an attempt to capture the glories of yesteryear in style and song. ""Eileen" will remind you of a lot of things, like Gilbert and Sullivan and Victor Herbert's far more famous operetta "Naughty Marietta"" Katz concluded in his article, "but most of all, it will remind you of what an operetta/musical can be in the hands of a true craftsman." "It is wonderful to have such thjings [sic] back at Schubert, precisely where they belong," he added.¹¹

Sectarian violence plagued Ireland—Northern Ireland especially—for much of the twentieth century. But from 1990 to 2007, Ireland's economy grew at an annual rate on average of 6.5 percent. Before the recent banking crisis took hold, Ireland, with a population of 4.5 million people, had more than 30,000 euro millionaires. 300 people


¹¹ Ibid.
owned fortunes of more than 30 million euros. As a result of the economic boom—known superficially as the Celtic Tiger—Irish popular culture enjoyed a sort of renaissance. American audiences were treated to shows such as Riverdance and Irish traditional music soared on airwaves and recordings. Irish classical music—including works such as Shamus O’Brien, Eileen, and Stanford’s Irish Rhapsodies that fought the political issues of yesteryear—went largely unheard.

In October of 2004, Axel Klein, a German-born scholar of Irish music, participated in a sixteen-day lecture tour in the eastern United States, visiting Harvard, Princeton, the American Irish Historical Society in New York, and the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. "I must say that I am getting increasingly fed up with the international notion of 'Irish music' as a purely traditional art," he wrote in The Journal of Music in January 2005. "In particular, when it comes to academia, and I see that 'Irish music' in US universities is no different from the term's meaning in the commercial marketplace, I get the feeling that change is overdue," he added.

Wide-spread enthusiasm for Irish classical music even seemed to be lacking at Boston College, home to one of the premiere Irish studies programs in the United States. Klein's talk drew only twelve people, including Mick Moloney and Seamus Connolly, two well-known performers of Irish traditional music. "But I missed the History professors and the English professors," Klein wrote—two groups of people who service the Irish studies program—"those writers of cultural histories who keep omitting Irish classical music from their books." "I would simply like to challenge any author who

12 Catherine Mayer, "This is the House that Ireland Built," Time 176/24 (13 December 2010), 62.

claims to be writing a cultural history of Ireland and who defines culture the way it has always been defined in Ireland—as a literary history. There is not one book on Irish cultural history on the market that adequately addresses art music in the context of a broader survey," he articulated. Klein’s main thrust in his lecture tour is summarized with the following:

I started out by wondering why German music, French music, English music, or American music, is not understood as traditional folk music in the same way as Irish music is. Why does ‘Irish music’ have the immediate sense of the ‘ethnic’ in it? Why can’t it be an art form as in other countries? Can it really be true that Ireland has been the only developed country in the Western world without classical music? One could notice some people at the lecture beginning to ask themselves the same question.

The shortage of Irish names in the history of Western art music has less to do with talent and financial resources than with, what Klein believes to be, a lack of will. "It is indeed the troubled past that Ireland shares with England that contributes to the lack of knowledge about Irish art music in the world," he wrote. "As a result of the two of three decades before and after independence, when the country made all efforts to de-Irish, classical music fell victim to politics that regarded classical music as un-Irish, as an imposed art-form that was associated with the protestant ruling classes."

The economic crises, which threatened to bankrupt the nation after global financial markets nearly collapsed in 2008, swelled old republican political feelings for many in Ireland. "Living well, they say," wrote Catherine Mayer for Time Magazine, "is the best revenge, and the legacy of animus left by the War of Independence against

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
British rule underpins Ireland's enduring desire to flip the bird at Britain or hoist tricolors over British assets.\textsuperscript{17}

The republican spirit fueled the Irish government's resistance to a bailout proposed by the European Union. An editorial on November 28, 2010 in the \textit{Irish Times} fumed, "having obtained our political independence from Britain to be the masters of our own affairs, we have now surrendered our sovereignty to the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund."\textsuperscript{18} Enda Kenny, current political leader of Fine Gael—the name means "Tribe of the Irish"—relates to the bailout of Ireland's banks to the centenary of the 1916 rebellion. The failed Easter Rising of 1916 "was the start of our path to economic independence," he said in an interview with \textit{Time}. "Fianna Fail would always say they are the true republicans. Here we are almost a century on from the start of that path to economic independence, and they've brought us to the edge of an abyss," he added.\textsuperscript{19}

Unemployment in the rural areas of Ireland has risen from 4 percent in 2006 to over 14.5 percent in 2010, higher than the national average, and higher still than the rate in Dublin. Children of unemployed and heavily-indebted parents risk playing ball outside in mud and raw sewage that bubbles up from an unfinished septic tank. This is the current scene at Silver Birches estate, one of a number of failed and halted developments—known as ghost estates—in the rural Irish Midlands.\textsuperscript{20} "This is not the

\textsuperscript{17} Mayer, "This is the House that Ireland Built," 63.

\textsuperscript{18} Quoted in ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Quoted in ibid; Enda Kenny assumed office as Taoiseach in March 2011.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 61, 63.
Hidden Ireland that Daniel Corkery had in mind,” professor and author Harry White said in a lecture at Durham University in July of 2010.21

In mid July of 2010, Patrick Zuk, Jeremy Dibble, and Alasdair Jamieson hosted the First International Conference on Irish Music and Musicians at Durham University in northeast England, the first of its kind to explore the extensive musical culture in Ireland. The four-day event comprised sixty-four academic papers from scholars from Irish, English, and American Universities, including the present writer, covering topics in the history of Irish art music, studies of specific composers and works, and ethnomusicological studies of Irish traditional repertoire. The conference ran concurrently with the Festival of Irish Music, hosted by MUSICON, Durham University’s professional concert series. The Festival included performances of chamber and vocal music by Irish composers—such as Stanford, Fleischmann, and Michele Esposito, among others—rarely heard in live performance. Conference and Festival attendees also had the opportunity to hear works by such contemporary Irish composers as Seóise Bodley and Ian Wilson. The final day of the conference featured a panel discussion in which Harry White, Barra Boydell, Mark Fitzgerald, and Maria Mc Hale discussed the Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland, an ambitious and significant project on the subject that will undoubtedly lay the groundwork for future research. The project, as of this writing, is still in progress.

The music of Stanford and Herbert appear to be making a comeback. Both composers have been the subjects of new biographical and musicological studies

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during the past decade. But some of their Irish-themed works remain problematic.  
*Shamus O'Brien* and *Eileen*, with their plots both rooted in Irish political discourse and use of stage-Irish dialect and character development, are dated. The orchestral works, on the other hand, stand on their own: Stanford's *Irish Rhapsodies* and *Irish Symphony* are delightful, well-constructed exemplars of the classical-romantic style, and Herbert's own *Irish Rhapsody*, as a tuneful potpourri of once popular Irish airs, is well-suited for audiences familiar with his operettas.

Yet, even dated material, such as *Shamus, Eileen* and the numerous folksong collections have their place in performance. Academic conferences—ones that concentrate on the cultural histories of Ireland and the Irish/Celtic World—may offer an ideal place for such music. Stanford himself wrote in his memoirs that the greatest honor a composer can receive is to have his music performed and remembered after his death. Irish art music, even by composers who spent a fraction of their lives on the island, it seems, is the new Hidden Ireland.

Aonač Tailteann: Handbook and Syllabus of Tailteann Games to be held in Dublin, 2nd to 18th August, 1924. Dublin: Kenney's Advertising Agency, 1924.


"Background Information on Eileen by Victor Herbert," personal file of Evans Haile.


A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland Arranged for the Pianoforte; Some of the Most Admired Melodies are Adapted for the Voice, to Poetry Chiefly Translated from the Original Irish Songs by Thomas Campbell, Esq. and other Eminent Poets. London: Clementi and Company, 1809.

The Ancient Music of Ireland. Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840.


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______. *Pages from an Unwritten Diary.* London: Edward Arnold, 1914.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Aaron Keebaugh came to the University Florida in 2002. There, he held the John Wayne Reitz Presidential Fellowship and served as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant in the Musicology Area. He taught Music Appreciation and Music Fundamentals at the University of Florida, Santa Fe College in Gainesville, and at North Shore Community College in Danvers, Massachusetts. In addition to teaching, Aaron has authored articles on Thomas Tallis, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and William Sterndale Bennett and continues to present research papers at regional, national, and international conferences. He has interviewed Joshua Bell, Keith Lockhart, Melvin Kaplan, the Borealis Quartet, and the Ahn Trio, among others, while working as a music correspondent for *The Gainesville Sun*. Aaron also enjoys piobaireachd and is an active performer and competitor on the Great Highland bagpipe. He currently lives in Salem, Massachusetts with his wife, Cari.