INTERSECTIONS, CONFLUENCE, AND EMBODIMENT OF IRISH TRADITIONAL AND FOLK MUSIC REVIVALS: GALWAY, 1961-1981

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This essay explores the intersections, confluence and embodiment of Irish traditional and folk music revivals in an urban locus, Galway city, 1961-1981. Revival efforts of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (Confraternity of Irish Musicians – Comhaltas thereafter), the second wave of Anglo-American folk revival and site-specific circumstances emerge as major stimuli.[1] Of particular focus is the relocation of Irish traditional music-making into public houses (pubs), as it propelled music revival at a local level. Throughout my discussion, I investigate dynamic interchanges and multi-directional movements of ideas, policies, and people – socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic in nature, theorized as macro and micro flows.[2]

My enquiry of "complexities of flows and idiosyncrasies of place" (Billick and Price 63) reveals the importance of people-driven extraneous circumstances as important stepping-stones in the causality of revival processes in Galway city. Such extraneous factors are adventitious in the sense that they do not relate directly to ongoing music revival processes, but nevertheless form a significant part in their realization. Crucially, internal or local manifestations of revival processes subsequently also travel out and embody macro flows. This is a dynamic most apparent in the formation and musical activities of several successful music groups. Furthermore, I show that Galway city's vibrant Irish traditional music scene (Kelly) was entwined with the performance of songs associated with folk music revival: a 'blueprint' repertoire existing of traditional instrumental music and ballads became endemic across commercial pub music venues throughout the 1970s. Popular with customers, such a "hybridisation" (Hall 466) was the direct result of the confluence of the two music revival strands. My analysis is an attempt to untangle the on-the-ground reality of key actors and of cultural and societal developments which are embodied through their actions. It

1 This essay forms part of my doctoral research (ongoing), which is funded by a Freyer-Hardiman Scholarship from the National University of Ireland, Galway (now University of Galway). I am most grateful to the time witnesses who have generously shared memories and archival materials. I would also like to thank my supervisor, Dr Méabh Ní Fhuartháin, for valuable feedback in the writing of this contribution.

2 Initially working with the categories of local and global used in ethnomusicological and Irish traditional music scholarship (see for instance Slobin, "Micromusics of the West"; Ó hAllmhuráin, *Flowing Tides*; Kaul, "The Limits of Commodification"), I subsequently came to the conclusion that the terms macro and micro, borrowed from the field of anthropology, are more apt in the context of my research. Macro flows may be larger scale but not global, as was for instance the case with Comhaltas's revival efforts during the 1950s and 1960s.

enables insights into the specific context in which Irish music revival – a national phenomenon – flourished in Galway city. In highlighting the role of Comhaltas and key individuals in revival processes in a West of Ireland urban centre, I expand on a prevailing narrative, which focuses on the enormous, albeit perhaps at times "exaggerated" influence of Seán Ó Riada (Breathnach, "The Traditional Music Scene" 172), Ceoltóirí Chualann, and the Chieftains in the popularization of Irish traditional music during the 1960s and 1970s.[3]

Music Revivals: A Complex Web

Musical developments in Galway city were deeply embedded in larger processes of Irish traditional and folk music revivals: macro flows, traversing local, national, and international dimensions, interplayed with and enriched site-specific micro flows (extending DeWalt and Pelto 1-21). Forming a complex web, folk and traditional revival strands intersected and nourished each other to varying degrees at different points in time, described by Ní Fhuartháin as "a twin track process, overlapping continuously and reciprocally dependent" ("Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 24). With my research situated in the microcosm of Galway city, I use the term macro flows referring to developments at a larger scale, in a national and international context, and the term micro flows relating to processes at a local level. These are also referred to as external and internal events respectively. Crucially, local refers not only to locality of place but also to the locus of individual experience, acknowledged by Arjun Appadurai as the ultimate one in his "perspectival set of landscapes" (33).

Previous instances of music revival in Ireland were inextricably linked to nationalist aspirations of independence. A key historical moment was the 1792 Belfast Harper's Assembly, which took place in parallel with Bastille Day celebrations in Belfast.[4] Subsequently, "both music and poetry played a major part in the political propaganda to raise support for the United Irish uprisings of 1798 and 1803" (Lanier, "It is New-Strung and Shan't be Heard" 12). Revival efforts were further advanced with the foundation of the Cork Pipers' Club in 1898, the year of the centenary of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, and that of the Dublin Pipers' Club soon after in 1900. Both clubs had close ties in aspiration and personnel to the Gaelic League, founded in 1893. In addition to its annual Oireachtas festival competition, the Gaelic League organized feiseanna (competitions which featured Irish traditional music, song, and dance) and céilí dances to further the use of the Irish language in social settings (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 82-90; Hamilton, "The Role of Commercial Recordings" 37-41). In all three organizations, elements of Irish indigenous

3 Geraldine Cotter's research on Ennis offers already a valuable expansion on such a narrative.

4 While the term Belfast Harp Festival is frequently used in more recent literature, the event was referred to as an assembly by contemporaries (Lanier, "Belfast Harpers' Assembly" 64-65).

culture – music, language, and dance – served as identity markers and highlighted distinctiveness under colonial rule.

Fast-forwarding to the second half of the twentieth century, the socio-political context of revival processes in Irish traditional music is pronouncedly different. Ireland was entering the fourth decade of its existence as an independent political entity. An initial expectation that the newly founded state would take care of the promotion of indigenous music was however disappointed (Devlin 87; Ó Tuama 99), with a mere "lip service" being "paid" (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann" 223).[5] Dire economic post-war conditions led to internal migration from rural to urban areas and large-scale emigration, which meant the relocation of musicians into towns and cities in Ireland, England, and the US. Musically, while céilí dancing was thriving throughout the 1950s, among a younger generation, Irish traditional music was not popular (Ryan; Hession and Carney; Mullin). It was against this backdrop, that Comhaltas was founded in 1951, widely recognized as an initiator of Irish traditional music revival (Fairbairn 582; Ní Fhuartháin, "Irish Music in Irish Life" 528). Promoting "Irish traditional music in all its forms" (Ó Dubhthaigh 127), the organization drew on ideas of earlier revival formats used by the Gaelic League (Stoebel 30; Vallely, "Revival" 576). Changing economic state policies from the late 1950s and resulting economic growth throughout the 1960s nurtured an increasing confidence of Ireland in its own culture (Curtis 17-18) and by extension aided Comhaltas's revival efforts.

While accounts of 1940s and 1950s Ireland frequently highlight a decline in Irish traditional music-making, traditional music practice was in fact well and alive in parts of Ireland. Proof of this are the myriad of céilí band musicians active during this era (Hall 452; Ryan; Vallely, "Céilí [Ceilidh]" 116) as well as an abundance of sources being available to collectors such as Séamus Ennis and Alan Lomax (Long).[6] It is further evidenced by time witnesses in my own research for rural areas surrounding Galway city.[7] As such, Comhaltas's efforts were building on an ongoing and unbroken instrumental and song tradition rather than attempting to bring to life a "moribund or dead cultural" tradition (Ó Giolláin 17). For these reasons, the term revival has been rejected by a number of Irish music scholars, and numerous alternate terms have been used.[8] What is termed a bringing "back to life" (Slobin, "Rethinking 'Revival'" 37) was in essence a re-evaluation of Irish traditional music. Associations of Irish

5 For a detailed discussion see Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 73-75.

6 Regarding this point, the author Siobhán Long is citing Nicholas Carolan and Harry Bradshaw.

7 Fiddle player Kevin Rohan from Tysaxon, Athenry, Co. Galway, expresses that "[…] there was a musician in every house" (Rohan).

8 Revival processes in an Irish setting during the 1960s and 1970s have been referred to in numerous terms by various authors, for instance: revival, regeneration (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 317), revitalization (Fleming 227), or resurgence (Miller 505).

traditional music with poverty and rural backwardness were gradually left behind as music practice was re-contextualized (Commins 96; Kaul, "The Limits of Commodification" 705).[9] Despite these considerations, I employ the term revival throughout my discussion because practitioner numbers grew during the 1960s and 1970s, and continued to do so throughout the following decades. This developing interest took place predominantly among a younger generation, constituting an intergenerational shift, which went hand in hand with growing higher education levels and increased monetary affluence.[10]

For the purpose of clarity throughout my discussion, I use the term Irish traditional music revival in reference to the practice of Irish instrumental traditional music and unaccompanied English- and Irish-language song.[11] This was at the heart of Comhaltas's revival efforts (Ó Dubhthaigh 22, 127). I reserve the term folk music revivals for the British and American folk revivals of the second half of the twentieth century. While there are also instrumental strands to these movements, it was the song component that had a strong influence on developments in Ireland at large, and in Galway specifically. An indicator of this is the interchangeable usage of the terms ballad boom and folk revival as by Catherine Curran (59). Importantly, Anglo-American folk music was the "the pop music of the day" in the 1960s, and "commercial folk groups" fell under the mid-twentieth century folk music revival fold (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 31-33) with the music of the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem "creating a potential audience for the older traditional song and dance music" (Breathnach, "The Traditional Music Scene" 171). In other words, their music constituted "a gateway to more traditional forms of practice".[12]

The Pub: A New Socio-Cultural Setting

Comhaltas, as a main driver of Irish traditional music revival on a macro level (Vallely "Revival" 576; Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 4), provided an early framework in the establishment of Irish traditional music-making in pubs in Galway City. This was part of an ongoing process of re-traditionalization

9 Associations of Irish traditional music with poverty and rural backwardness are discussed in Hamilton, "Innovation, Conservatism" 85; Hughes; Kaul, *Turning the Tune* 24; Lamb; McDonagh; Ó Laoire and Williams 211. Fintan Vallely describes this process of re-evaluation thus: "What it [revival] has achieved in Ireland, however, is the installation, for a significant section of the population, of cultural confidence in the aesthetic and artistic merits of indigenous music" ("Revival" 576).

10 I would like to acknowledge Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's stimulating input in this regard in informal conversation. The following authors point to a younger base of revivalist practitioners: Hall 465; Hamilton, "The Role of Commercial Recordings" 26, 185; Kaul, *Turning the Tune* 705; Rosenberg 239; and Slobin, "Re-thinking 'Revival'" 40-41.

11 For a discussion thereof see Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* 1-2.

12 A succinct paraphrasing of Breathnach's observation by Ní Fhuartháin ("Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 16).

initiated by Comhaltas on a number of levels.[13] Notably, it encompassed the emergence of a festival scene or *fleadheanna,* centring on competitions. In a grass roots development, extensive informal and spontaneous music-making took place in public spaces (Hall 464), including pubs, "bringing people physically together" (Livingston 73). The latter dynamic coincided with a general re-positioning of the pub as more central to social activity within Irish communities.[14]

The rise of the pub as a new socio-cultural setting for traditional music-making was facilitated by Comhaltas's focus on local branch formation, which was initially realized predominantly by practitioners and tradition bearers (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 80). It happened in tandem with and later away from céilí band performance and domestic music practice. In addition, the emergence of the pub as a key site of music practice, transmission, and socialization was aided by a "conveyor belt of knowledge" (Egan 17) between rural and urban areas in Ireland, and with the Irish diaspora due to migrational patterns. Of particular influence here was a macro flow with London, where pub sessions regularized more than a decade earlier than in Galway.[15]

In a local embodiment of these revival processes, Irish traditional music-making in Galway also moved into this new space, the pub. It was a gradual process, which tentatively commenced in the mid-1950s, gathered pace throughout the 1960s, accelerated in the 1970s and flourished by the 1980s. Eventually, the city morphed into one of the Irish "hotspots for revival sessions" (Kaul, *Turning the Tune* 63). There were precursors to such a move and irregular, non-remunerated sessions already took place in the 1950s in pubs in Galway, in Cullen's on Forster Street, the Eagle Bar on Henry Street, Tigh Neachtain on Quay Street, but also in surrounding rural areas. Of the latter, those in Spiddal to the West of the city, in Folan's (now An Crúiscín Lán), were of particular importance for subsequent developments in Galway because of multi-directional, transient people flows.[16]

Key Individuals

Within American ethnic music revival, ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin recognizes that it is "usually a very small number of key individuals who set the pace and/or serve as source for an entire ethnic community. Often this consists of a kernel group including an activist, a researcher and a pragmatic practitioner" ("Rethinking 'Revival'" 39). Irish traditional music revival had its own particularities:

13 I am employing the spelling as favoured by Commins, rather than Ó Giolláin's "retraditionalization". For a discussion of processes of re-traditionalization see Commins 92-102 and Ó Giolláin 10-13, 16-17.

14 See also Brody 160; Hall 565-89; and Ó hAllmhuráin, *O'Brien's Pocket History* 151.

15 For a detailed account of early pub sessions in London, see Hall 586-617.

16 The pub's front signage read: Mac Fualáin. However, time witnesses refer to it as Folan's, or Tim Johnny's after the first name of its then proprietor.

> When compared to other twentieth century, international music revival movements, Comhaltas was, and is, quite distinct as a grass roots organisation, initially driven by the tradition bearers themselves from inside the community of practice and not by those outside. (Ní Fhuartháin, "Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: Shaping Tradition" 80)

As has been demonstrated by Reg Hall in the case of the earliest sessions in pubs in London from 1948 (588), by Adam Kaul regarding the first sessions in Doolin from the 1950s (Kaul, *Turning the Tune* 39-40), and by Geraldine Cotter writing on Ennis from 1945 (59), publicans with an interest in Irish traditional music were of crucial importance in this development. In Galway, Larry Cullen of Cullen's, and Mary and Martin Ford of the Eagle Bar facilitated Irish traditional music sessions that went hand-in-hand with the establishment of the Galway City Comhaltas branch and the foundation of the Lough Lurgan Céilí Band. A founding member of the Galway City Comhaltas branch, established in 1956, was Brian Galligan, one of Comhaltas's early cultural and national activists and president thereof from 1956 to 1959. He advocated "that branches should be founded throughout the land, any place and every place possible" (Ó Dubhthaigh 95). Hence, Galway is one arena were Galligan actively furthered that goal himself. Cultural activists like Galligan, acting on a macro level – and, as shown above, intersecting with Galway's local specificity – and Mary and Martin Ford, the Eagle Bar owners, at a micro level, functioned as organizers, administrators and facilitators, and on occasion straddled a middle ground, as a part of a musical community but not, or not primarily, as practitioners.

Fig. 1. The original Lough Lurgan Céilí Band. From left to right: Anne Hynes (piano); Tommy Mulhaire (fiddle); Tommy Coen (fiddle); Brendan Mulhaire (accordion); Eamonn Ryan (drums); Eddie Moloney (flute); Lar Kelly (flute/piccolo); Mícheál Ó hEidhin (accordion). Eagle Bar, ca 1956. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of Tom Kenny.

By the 1960s, there were a number of practicing traditional musicians in Galway, most of them recent migrants from East Galway, who were involved to varying degrees with the Galway City Comhaltas branch. A nucleus Irish traditional music scene had emerged during the 1950s as a result of rural–urban migration in a local realization of a macro level phenomenon throughout Ireland. People came for reasons of work from surrounding rural areas to the urban hub of Galway City, Connacht's largest economic centre then and now, in a migrational flow for extra-musical reasons. A particularly high number of musicians was to be found amongst the incomers from East Galway, then an area with strong traditional music practice. These tradition bearers included fiddle and flute player Tommy Mulhaire, who, alongside Mary and Martin Forde, became central to the Galway Comhaltas Branch (Mullin; Moloney). Musicians such as Eddie Moloney, Tommy Coen, Lar Kelly, Brendan Mulhaire, Paddy Farrell, and others from East Galway met in the pub to rehearse for céilí band performances and competitions (Mulhaire; Kenny) and also gathered for irregular, semi-private sessions (Burke) from ca 1956 (see Fig. 1).[17]

Intersections

An investigation of the regularization of sessions at the Eagle Bar reveals the importance of folk revival influences, as well as that of local particularities (or what I coin extraneous circumstances) – in this instance the socialization network associated with a musical society. Key activist in this process was Dick Byrne, a pragmatic practitioner and recent newcomer to Irish traditional music (see Fig. 3). His eclectic music interests spanned Western art music, jazz, dance band, American folk, and a growing repertoire of narrative English-language songs from the Irish oral tradition. In the late 1950s, he became involved in the small session scene in Spiddal, centring around violinist and fiddle player May Standún, originally from Mullingar, and Spiddal native, renowned tin whistle player Festy Conlon. Music-making at Folan's was enabled by family ties between the publican and Festy Conlon and was informal and non-remunerated in nature. Having made the acquaintance of May Standún at Galway's Patrician Musical Society,[18] Dick Byrne was invited to attend sessions in Spiddal (Byrne, Personal Communication). Dick Byrne remembers: "[…] but then I got a guitar. I had known the Standún's in Spiddal, so May said: 'Oh, you should come out sometime, we have great craic, we play in Tim Johnny's [Folan's]'" (Personal Interview). These Spiddal sessions subsequently inspired Dick Byrne to set up a ballad club in 1961, later named the Fo'Castle Folk Club (1963), in the Enda Hotel on Dominick Street in Galway. It was an experiment made possible by friendship ties between Dick Byrne and the owners' son, Joe Hegarty, and linked to the coincidence

17 There was a smaller number of musicians from other surrounding regions of Galway who merged with this nucleus scene, namely Mícheál Ó hEidhin (whose father had co-founded the Comhaltas Branch with Bernard Galligan), Martin Rabbitte, Michael Hession, and Jimmy Cummins.

18 Like Comhaltas, the Patrician Musical Society was founded in 1951.

of a cold winter, in which the car journey to Spiddal became cumbersome (Byrne, *Tell 'em Who You Are!* 153-55). The first pub venue in Galway city for regular sessions with a commercial element,[19] it featured predominantly folk revival song material. However, Irish traditional musicians May Standún and Festy Conlon participated regularly in its early years, as well as singer Eithne Burke from Tuam (Byrne, Personal Interview). Subsequently, a younger generation of musicians took over from Dick Byrne, a peer group of arts students from University College Galway (UCG, later National University of Ireland, Galway) who called themselves the Freedom Folk. These friends influenced each other musically, playing folk music material (Tyrrell; Ó Connaire). At their gigs, Irish traditional music was regularly featured when brothers Martin and Eamonn Rabbitte played a half-hour guest slot on fiddle and banjo (see Fig. 2).[20]

Fig. 2. Martin Rabbitte and Eamonn Rabbitte, at the Fo'castle Folk Club, Enda Hotel, ca 1965. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of Eamonn Rabbitte.

Dick Byrne refers to the Fo'castle as ballad club or folk club interchangeably throughout interviews and conversations, while younger time witnesses like Jackie Small, Seán Tyrrell and Eamonn Rabbitte speak only of the Fo'castle Folk Club. This points to the extent to which folk revival movements in Ireland were driven by the popularization of the ballad repertoire during the early 1960s, in particular through the success of the Clancy Brothers in an Irish context, but also through musicians such

19 O'Connor's Pub in Salthill had live music during the summer months even before that, since the mid-to-late 1940s, consisting of popular music, ballads, and an odd céilí band tune. These were amplified performances catering to the many seaside tourists (Falkenau). Tom and Abigail O'Connor had moved into Galway from the Moylough area, in the Northeast of County Galway and took over the pub in Salthill in 1942. Tom O'Connor played accordion and sang in the pub during the summer months: "[…] to draw a crowd" (Byrne, Personal Communication).

20 Their father Martin Rabbitte played with the Lough Lurgan Céilí Band and had moved into Galway city from Tysaxon, Athenry, Co. Galway (Rabbitte).

as Burle Ives, Joan Baez, Woodie Guthrie, and Pete Seeger.[21] Eventually, 'ballad club' became too narrow a term and 'folk club' suited better as an umbrella term for the wide range of musical styles performed at the Fo'castle: English and American folk and protest songs, sea shanties, traditional Irish instrumental music, sean-nós songs, and original song compositions. Time witness, musician, and scholar Jackie Small remembers:

> That was a place where you could consciously hear the emerging performers in traditional music. I remember hearing Joe Heaney sing there at a time when nobody knew of him really, Ronnie Drew on his own as solo artist. (Personal Interview)

Importantly, the Fo'Castle Folk Club was also the catalytic locus for the emergence of seminal Irish folk revival band Sweeney's Men in 1966. Its genesis was the result of a brief intersection with the location. The group had a major influence "on the make-up of future groups such as Planxty, De Danann and The Bothy Band" (O'Doherty 673) and by extension on the revitalization and popularization of Irish traditional music nationally and internationally.

Confluence

Dick Byrne helped to further influence Irish traditional music revival on a local level with regard to the regularization of the Comhaltas affiliated sessions, which until then had been taking place on a monthly basis (Mulhaire). Here however, the importance of peer groups must not be ignored, so as to do justice to the tangled reality on the ground and to the complex web of interconnections. It was on May Standún's and Festy Conlon's suggestion – who were involved both with the Ballad Club at the Enda Hotel and the Comhaltas meetings at the Eagle Bar – that Dick Byrne and tin whistle player Pádraig Ó Carra attended Comhaltas meetings at the Eagle Bar, which was in close proximity (Byrne, Personal Communication).[22] According to Dick Byrne, meetings were a formal affair, but when elected onto the committee, Dick Byrne suggested regular, weekly sessions in lieu of meetings (Personal Interview). This was accepted and the thus regularized Comhaltas sessions became an important port of call for a new generation of novice learners from the mid-1960s: "The Eagle was pioneering in my time" remembers Jackie Small, then a student at University College Galway (Personal Interview). With international folk revival movements gaining momentum in England and the US, and with an increase in Irish traditional

21 These musicians are named repeatedly by time witnesses who I have interviewed. Radio programming also played an important role. In particular, Ciarán Mac Mathúna's *A Job of American Journeywork*, 1962 and 1966, featuring music collected in recording sessions in the US, in which he included music by the Clancy Brothers with Tommy Makem (Hall 465). It laid the foundation to their successful first tour in Ireland, 1963. Notably, *A Job of American Journeywork* also featured Irish traditional musicians who had emigrated to America, a considerable number of whom were from East Galway, among them Joe Cooley and Joe Mills (Collins, T. 17).

22 Dick Byrne and Pádraig Ó Carra were friends since their days of attending Cóláiste Iognáid, Galway's oldest Irish language secondary school colloquially known as the Jes.

music on Irish stage, radio, and newspaper, these sessions now attracted newcomers from a variety of musical and social backgrounds but mostly from the student body of UCG. These came to experience Irish traditional music first-hand in a social space: to listen, observe, learn, and perhaps join in. The Eagle Bar sessions enabled a transmission flow, informal and non-institutional in nature, instigating the revitalization of Irish traditional music on a local level in Galway city.

Comhaltas affiliated sessions at the Eagle Bar continued until the early 1970s, when the Fordes sold the pub and moved to Claregalway. The branch's sessions subsequently took place in Cullen's and by the summer of 1973 had moved to O'Flaherty's, Lower Salthill. Galway city's Comhaltas branch fizzled out in the mid-to-late 1970s, with the branch failing to attract new and younger musicians and herewith a renewed organizer base to carry on the running of it. However, as I will show below, Comhaltas still influenced developments through macro level flows, often in a grass-roots dimension.

The 1970s saw an acceleration of developments on a macro and a micro level. Ireland joining the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 propelled developments causing a "welcome boost in regional development, improved educational standards and new levels of Irish tourism", writes Ó hAllmhuráin (*O'Brien Pocket History* 158). Free second level education had been introduced in 1967. Together with the introduction of third-level student grants by the end of the 1960s (Ferriter 599), this resulted in a significant increase of students at UCG (Uí Chionna 27). In Galway, "[…] the two decades from 1961 saw the population of the city nearly double in size, inspiring the use of the moniker of 'the fastest growing city in Europe'" (Collins, P. 68).[23] The foundation for such a population growth had already been laid on a macro level with the 1958 Programme for Economic Expansion, also referred to as the Lemass-Whitaker Economic Plan, which "dislodged the country from its insular moorings, boosted native industry and opened the floodgates to foreign investment" (Ó hAllmhuráin, *O'Brien Pocket History* 150). As a direct result, economic investment increased in Galway, creating new employment opportunities for incomers and locals alike. From 1971 in particular, the American enterprise Digital Equipment Corporation (Western Digital) attracted a substantial number of musicians in its workforce (Mullin; Lamb), of whom some became key agents in Galway's traditional music scene, namely flute player John Lewis and accordion player Coli Mullin.[24]

A rise in population in Galway in general and a significant growth of UCG's student body in particular, by 442% between 1961 and 1981,[25] as well as "new levels of Irish

23 Between 1961 and 1971, the city grew by 3 080 inhabitants to 29 375. However, it experienced the fastest growth rate in its history during the following decade, 1971-1981, so that by 1981 its population stood at 41 861, with a growth rate of 42.5 percent (Collins, P. 63).

24 Further musicians who were working at Western Digital included Pat Mitchell (uilleann pipes) and Con Corcoran (fiddle) (Mullin).

25 Student numbers more than tripled between 1960 and 1970 from ca 945 students (Commission on Higher Education 39) to ca 2 913 students (Newell 31). Between 1971 and

tourism" (Ó hAllmhuráin, *O'Brien Pocket History* 158) coincided with the Irish traditional music scene in Galway city pubs expanding dramatically. "It became a kind of a boom then for the pubs, you see. They all wanted to have music. Quite a lot of them had sessions, back then, oh, in a very short time [...] because obviously it was bringing in people" recalls Pat McDonagh and Seán Tyrrell remembers: "There was a whole big mushrooming of a scene really in Galway."

During the 1970s, a pub scene developed for remunerated music performances. In this context, a blueprint of music emerged, remaining popular throughout the 1970s and beyond. This blueprint denotes a repertoire of half-and-half ballads and instrumental pieces (tunes), along with ever-present guitar accompaniment. Such a hybridization is the direct result of the confluence of the two music revival strands (Hall 465). I coined the term blueprint for its endemic reach across pub venues in 1960s and 1970s Galway. Remunerated, regular sessions of predominantly instrumental music and unaccompanied singing were relatively rare throughout the 1970s and until the mid-1980s. This points to the higher popularity of combined musical material and a customer demand for sessions featuring it. A blueprint repertoire was performed for instance in the Castle Hotel on Abbeygate Street Lower, the Cellar on Eglington Street, O'Reilly's on Forster Street, the Kings Head on Shop Street, the Cottage Bar in Lower Salthill, and in An Crúiscín Lán in Spiddal, with which a lively transient flow took place – including both Galway musicians performing there and Galwegians on a night out. However, throughout the 1970s, in a small number of venues Irish traditional instrumental music was played regularly, including occasional unaccompanied song. In Tigh Hughes in Spiddal and in Cullen's in Galway such sessions took place in a Comhaltas affiliated context. In those two pubs, musicians also met up spontaneously for non-remunerated sessions. Other meeting places for impromptu music-making included Tigh Neachtain on Quay Street (owners with Connemara roots), the Coachman on Dominick Street (run by supportive publicans), and the aforementioned Cellar on Eglinton Street (popular with UCG students). Thus, some venues were the locus of both remunerated sessions and impromptu music-making, such as the Cellar, Cullen's, and the Coachman.[26]

1981 there were further substantial increases, with the student body growing from 3 255 (Ó hEocha, *President's Report Sessions 1974-75 and 1975-76* iii) to 4 400 (Ó hEocha, *The President's Report to the Governing Body – Session 1981-82* 5).

26 The information in this section is drawing on analysis of primary data gathered in interviews conducted by the author between 2018-2020, as well as from personal communication, with time witnesses. These include: Dick Byrne, Alban Carney, Gerry Carthy, Philip Conlon, Noel Conneely, Johnny Finn, Des Forde, Seán Gavin, Greg Cotter, Jimmy Dillon, Pat McDonagh, Gerry Hanley, Celine Hession, Eleanor Hough, Seán 'Henry' Higgins, Breda Hughes, Ollie Jennings, Tony Kelly, Eugene Lamb, Charlie Lennon, Seán Moloney, Bernadette Mulligan, Coli Mullin, Íde Ní Fhaoláin, Charlie Piggott, Eamonn Rabbitte, Seán Ryan, Jackie Small, Donal Standún, Steve Sweeney, Seán Tyrrell, Séamus Walsh.

Embodiment

Throughout the 1970s, folk music and Irish traditional music remained strong in Galway, with the latter increasingly gaining in popularity (McDonagh; Hough; Ní Fhaoláin). This mirrors and embodies similar tendencies on a macro level. Broadcaster and music collector Ciarán MacMathúna estimated "that in 1977, Irish traditional music had come into its own" and went on to exclaim that no one "could have foreseen the tremendous upsurge of interest in Irish traditional music", describing Irish traditional and folk music revival processes of emerging pub sessions and Comhaltas's *fleadhanna* as a "cultural revolution". In fact, in Galway, sessions in public houses moved into a central position culturally. Galway Arts Festival founding member Ollie Jennings remembers: "And here was this mighty scene in Galway [...] jigs, reels, drink, songs, sex [...] that's where the buzz and energy was in Galway in the mid-to-late 70s." This is affirmed by film-maker Bob Quinn recalling Irish traditional music as Galway's "main attraction" during the mid-1970s. Guitarist and writer Fred Johnston supports such a view, highlighting the dominant place of pub sessions by pointing to a limited cultural scene beyond it: "But if you didn't play music, there was no other choice, culturally."

Fig. 3. Ceoltóirí Chonnacht, Eagle Bar, ca 1968. Back row, left to right: Pádraig Ó Carra, Eamonn Rabbitte, Martin Rabbitte, Dick Byrne, Donal Standún; front row, left to right: May Standún, Celine Hession, Pádraic Johnny Bán Ó Choisdealbha. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of Eamonn Rabbitte.

Comhaltas's influence continued to be felt in a number of vital instances, albeit at times not immediately visible and often in confluence with other factors located on the folk revival spectrum and with extraneous circumstances. An example is the formation of Ceoltóirí Chonnacht, Galway's "first band of influence" (Gavin). Ceoltóirí Chonnacht was assembled by Dick Byrne for participation in Comhaltas's *Scoraíocht* (Cabaret) competitions, ca 1968 (Byrne, Personal Communication). Here, Dick Byrne drew initially on the socio-musical peer group which developed at the Spiddal sessions and which expanded at the Comhaltas affiliated Eagle Bar sessions. Initially, this peer group encompassed tradition bearers and subsequently a newer generation of traditional musicians. As such, Ceoltóirí Chonnacht was a direct offspring of the new session scene, which had emerged in the early 1960s as a result of Comhaltas's revival efforts, folk music revival happenings and local specificities (see Fig. 3).

Another example can be found in the formation of De Danann, a seminal 1970s Irish traditional music band. This also shows once more a confluence of revival processes in conjunction with extraneous circumstances. As a band, De Danann found together at sessions in Spiddal at Tigh Hughes pub throughout the autumn of 1973 (Piggott; Quinn, T.). These sessions were run as a Comhaltas event, organized by John Lewis (Hughes). John and Breda Lewis had moved to Furbo with their young family in the early 1970s, with John Lewis taking up work at the aforementioned Western Digital (Mitchell; Mullin). Individually, members of what was to become De Danann – Frankie Gavin, Charlie Piggott, Johnny McDonagh – previously met at Comhaltas run sessions at O'Flaherty's in Lower Salthill in the early autumn of 1973 (Piggott). Furthermore, Comhaltas indirectly facilitated Johnny 'Ringo' McDonagh's entry into traditional music through its grass roots socialization scene in pubs at *fleadhanna.* He went to the Mountbellew *fleadh* in 1967 and recalls:

> And I was watching, there was a session going on, and I was watching, and there was an old guy playing a bodhrán, and I was watching him, and I said, "Jaysus, I can do that", sure right? And low and behold about an hour later, Charlie Byrnes came into the pub selling bodhráns, and jaysus, I said, "I want one of them." (O'Neill)

Building on a strong family background of Irish traditional music-making, Comhaltas's competitive scene played a substantial role in Frankie Gavin's musical development. Revival sessions at the Cellar Bar brought Frankie Gavin, Alec Finn, and later Charlie Piggott together, and subsequently drew in Johnny 'Ringo' McDonagh (O'Neill; Piggott; McGuire). Located on the extraneous spectrum, Charlie Piggott points to a non-musical interest in birds, which created an additional commonality with Alec Finn. Last but not least, UCG's socialization network played a large part in De Danann's formation. UCG student Ollie Jennings started his career in arts with a first concert promotion in early 1974, booking the Chieftains and Ceoltóirí UCG. Featuring Frankie Gavin, Alec Finn, Charlie Piggott, and Johnny 'Ringo' McDonagh, Ceoltóirí UCG was *de facto* De Danann. This was in fact their first public performance, ahead of a pivotal concert in a Dublin folk club. Ollie Jennings created numerous concert opportunities for the band throughout the 1970s and subsequently managed them from 1980-1982 (Jennings).

With the novel combination of fiddle, bouzouki, and bodhrán, as well as Charlie Piggott's banjo, De Danann combined a folk revival soundscape with expertise in and a depth of Irish traditional music performance. The result was a sound, which "followers of folk music should find […] [a] refreshing addition to the traditional musical culture that still thrives in Ireland" as Jackie Small wrote in the sleeve notes for De Danann's first EP from 1974 (Sleeve Notes).

Conclusion

In my discussion, I explored the degree to which two strands of twentieth-century music revival – that of Irish traditional and that of Anglo-American folk music – related to each other in a nascent and pivotal period for the development of an Irish traditional music community of practice in Galway city during the 1960s and 1970s. I showed that micro and macro flows of Irish traditional and American and English folk music revivals form a dynamic web in the imaginary landscape of Irish traditional music performance in Galway. Extraneous circumstances, site-specific and located in the ethno-scape, are essential in the local embodiment of revival processes. At times, these manifestations travel out, morphing into macro level flows. The emergence of a blueprint repertoire for remunerated Irish traditional music-making in pubs presents a confluence of the two music revival strands discussed here. An attempt at their clear-cut separation would not do justice to the lived realities of agents and practitioners and to the complexities of music revival processes on a local level.

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