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**Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy:
Transmission, Performance and Commemoration
of Irish Traditional Music, 1973-2012**

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to the National University of Ireland, Galway

Centre for Irish Studies

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (SSWC) and its role in the transmission, performance and commemoration of Irish traditional music from 1973-2012. SSWC is regarded as the foremost summer school in the Irish traditional music calendar and serves as a template on which many other contemporary schools are subsequently modelled. The legacy of SSWC is explored through the School's historical development, organisational structure, ideological evolution and complex interactions with other institutions and an international community of Irish traditional musicians. Using SSWC as a case-study, this thesis introduces re-traditionalisation as a conceptual platform on which to interrogate the tradition-modernity dialectic within Irish traditional music practice and discourse. It finds that the rhythmical ritual re-enactment of the School's activities converts Miltown into a symbolic space in which the events of the School unfold and develop multiple symbolic meanings. A developing sense of regional consciousness created within the liminal time and space(s) of the School resonates with Irish traditional music communities of practice across the world, anchoring its success. Central to this exploration is the valorisation of Willie Clancy, the uilleann piper and the mutually reciprocal relationship between Willie Clancy and the School through which his status as a cultural icon is annually re-affirmed and reconstituted. Employing an inter-disciplinary theoretical model and utilising ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, it situates the School within the changing socio-economic and cultural structures of Ireland during the forty-year period 1973-2012. In doing so it expands the arena of SSWC's recognition, measurement and articulation within the epistemological field of Irish Studies, and by foregrounding SSWC as a site of analysis, makes a worthy contribution to the emerging discipline of Irish Music Studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BHF Belfast Harp Festival
GAF Galway Arts Festival
ITMA Irish Traditional Music Archive
NPU Na Píobairí Uilleann (The Society of Uilleann Pipers)
OAC Oidhreacht an Chláir
RnaG RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta
RTÉ Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SSWC Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (Willie Clancy Summer School)
WFO Wexford Festival Opera

INTRODUCTION

When I come into Miltown, time stands still. I don't look at the watch, I don't look at the newspaper, I don't listen to the radio [...] a standstill week. And when I leave on the Saturday, my head is just full of music. Tunes bubbling in my head, I get into the car and I drive out the Ennis Road, and I might stop to get petrol in Ennis and I get out and go into the supermarket and then 'oh my God' back to reality, what an awful thought.

Ben Lennon, Official Opening, SSWC 2009.

With these words, Ben Lennon, fiddle player, tradition-bearer and octogenarian launched the 37th Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (SSWC), the foremost school for Irish traditional music transmission and practice in the annual Irish traditional music calendar.¹ The particular success of the Willie Clancy Week (as it is more commonly referred to) is the result of a synergy of factors, the reverberations of which resonate in a dialectical exchange with the wider community of Irish traditional music practice. The sentiments encapsulated by Ben Lennon's words were familiar territory for the audience members present at the opening night of the School in 2009, and indeed the innumerable pilgrims who wend their way both regularly and occasionally to Miltown

¹ Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy is the official name of the Willie Clancy Summer School and is the name used throughout this thesis (abbreviated as SSWC) rather than its English translation. This is in keeping with the ethos of SSWC which privileges the use of its Irish language title. Indeed SSWC provides an important space for the Irish language (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5). However, SSWC is but one of a multiplicity of names used to describe it, due in no small part to the range of conceptualisations and experiences that this summer school located in Miltown Malbay, County Clare creates. SSWC is, therefore, used interchangeably throughout the text with the more colloquial and widely used metonym: the Willie Clancy Week. 'The School' is also used when speaking in particular about the formal and structured aspects of SSWC. The success of SSWC has essentialised both Miltown Malbay and Willie Clancy in much the same way as Adam Kaul reports that tourism has 'essentialised the notion of "Doolin" out of a more amorphous conception' (Kaul, 2004: 23). As Harry Hughes suggests, Miltown Malbay has become a brand name worldwide for Irish traditional music (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013). Despite the fact that 'Miltown' does not appear in the title of the School, the noun 'Miltown' provides the shortest and most direct metonym for SSWC in the discourse of Irish traditional musicians. When one musician asks of another (regardless of the time of year in which the question is posed) 'are you going to Miltown?' what they are in fact asking is; 'are you going to SSWC in the first week in July?' Additional vectors of meaning, therefore, are produced by the terms 'Willie Clancy' and 'Miltown' through SSWC as they are re-articulated and re-asserted over the course of its existence.

Malbay (henceforth Miltown) in County Clare during the first week of July for the Willie Clancy Week.²

Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy: A synopsis

SSWC is the foremost school for Irish traditional music transmission and practice in the annual Irish traditional music calendar and serves as a template on which many other schools are subsequently modelled.³ SSWC is equally, however, the outcome of non-musical transformations embedded in broader economic, political and cultural processes. Founded in 1973, it takes place annually during the first week in July, and offers a ten-day long experience and engagement with Irish traditional music.⁴

Miltown, where the School is located, is a small coastal village on the west coast of County Clare, in the west of Ireland. Workshop style classes in the core instruments of Irish traditional music, song and dance, reflecting the ‘master-apprentice’ dyad are given by ‘masters of tradition’ to the 1,000 or so participants.⁵ Each year, these classes take place in intense three-hour periods every morning (Monday to Saturday) and recitals, lectures, concerts and céilís are scheduled for the afternoons and evenings of the week. Students who attend the workshops number both children and adult learners from throughout Ireland and overseas and engage in a week-long apprenticeship from which they can emerge with an enhanced knowledge of the tradition.⁶ The School also attracts a much larger cohort of participants who may not be directly involved in the more formal elements of the Willie Clancy Week schedule. Attendees are attracted to

² See also Helen O’Shea’s critique and conceptualisation of SSWC as a site of pilgrimage (O’Shea, 2008: 78-104).

³ Robbie Hannan refers to SSWC as ‘an ócáid cheol tíre is tábhachtaí in Éirinn sna laethe seo’ (*‘the most important traditional music occasion currently in Ireland’*), Ó Rócháin as ‘the first and biggest of such events,’ Christopher Smith as ‘the most important Irish music school in the world’ and Siobhan Long as ‘the pre-eminent event in a traditional music calendar packed with festivals, seisiúin and fleadhanna ceoil’ (Hannan, 1990, Long, 2009, Ó Rócháin, 2011: 754, Smith, 2002).

⁴ The Willie Clancy ‘Week’ in fact lasts for ten days from Friday through to the following Sunday. In a reversal of the space-time compression phenomenon of modernity, the School appears to occupy an alternative time zone in which decelerated practices of re-traditionalisation and a mindful engagement with tradition take place as people take the time to dwell in a particular place. Furthermore as Falassi notes, ‘festival time imposes itself as an autonomous duration, not so much to be perceived and measured in days or hours, but to be divided internally by what happens within it from beginning to end’ (Falassi, 1987). The concept of a ‘week’ therefore is experiential rather than chronological.

⁵ Notwithstanding the wider complications of using the term ‘master’ it is utilised within the confines of this thesis as a useful trope to describe former teacher to student relationships and performance practices.

⁶ The terms ‘classes’ and ‘workshops’ are used interchangeably by organisers and attendees and this thesis follows suits.

musical and mythical qualities that are perceived to inhere to Miltown, qualities that are memory-bound, transmitted through performance, and renewed annually. Shared values and experiences of pilgrimage inculcate a sense of anticipation and expectation prior to the annual re-enactment of the School.

As both a community of practice and an industry, Irish traditional music creates unresolved tensions constructed by dynamics of power and identity. SSWC presents a case-study in which to examine the tensions that arise at the nexus of this dialectic and suggests avenues as to how they might be resolved. This thesis posits the theory of re-traditionalisation; what Diarmuid Ó Giolláin describes as ‘the re-orientation of traditional cultural production to modern contexts’ Ó Giolláin (2005). In the context of SSWC, re-traditionalisation embodies constructions of the local; the ‘authentic’; communities of practice; processes of surrogation; the development of cultural authority and the realignment of core and periphery. Location and a developed sense of regional consciousness are central to SSWC as are the liminal time and space(s) it creates. Mick Moloney notes that in order to achieve balance ‘we look for what we lack’ and in the time of rapid change experienced by Ireland during the 1960s and 1970s the process of re-traditionalisation at SSWC is ‘the stability’ that Moloney suggests society looks for (Moloney, 1999: 132). As discussed in this thesis, SSWC continues to offer stability to Irish traditional musicians and music practices. The rhythmical ritual re-enactment of the School’s activities converts Miltown into a symbolic space and the events of the School develop multiple symbolic meanings that resound throughout Irish traditional music communities of practice throughout the world. Through its annual occurrence and subsequent development of festival qualities, SSWC represents what Picard and Robinson have observed to be a ‘limited time and space frame in which a multitude of social interactions, aesthetic signs and narrative discourses can be observed’ (Picard and Robinson, 2006: 4). By examining the symbolism imbued in Miltown prior to the arrival of SSWC, historical factors which inform the School are contextualised, such as those embedded in its figurehead, Willie Clancy and the idealisation of the West. However, an exploration of Willie Clancy’s current status as a cultural icon demonstrates the mutually reciprocal relationship between Willie Clancy and the School through which his status is annually re-affirmed and reconstituted.

This thesis presents the first sustained critical account of SSWC. As one of the most important touchstones of Irish traditional music, SSWC has been the subject of surprisingly little academic scrutiny, though there are a number of articles, two MA theses, and a book, along with encyclopaedic entries and numerous literary and media representations (Commins, 2013, Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993, Kearns and Taylor, 2003, Mac Mathúna, 1975, Malone, 1996, Taylor, 1998, Ó Rócháin, 1999, 2011, 2013).⁷ As well as adding to existing literature on the School, it makes an original contribution to existing scholarly work in the area of Irish music studies. Informed by contemporary ethnographic research *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy: Transmission, Performance and Commemoration of Irish Traditional Music, 1973-2012* looks to the past recalling the inheritance of previous years, thereby mirroring an Irish traditional music model of recourse to the past. Such recourse was central to the School's namesake Willie Clancy and, as will be discussed, is still very much central to the ethos of the School itself. The analysis is situated within the changing socio-economic and cultural structures of Ireland during the forty-year period 1973-2012. The result is a mixture of detailed ethnographic research embedded in an inter-disciplinary Irish Studies methodology which reconstructs SSWC and explains how it both reflects and influences definitions of Irish traditional music at home and abroad. This influence, rather than punctuating discourse and practice, is manifest in gradual changes which occur over the life of SSWC.

West Clare, as a site of enquiry, has methodological significance on account of the highly influential Irish rural ethnography, *Family and Community* undertaken by Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball in this same geographical location (1968

⁷ Media-based representations of SSWC include two recent, independently produced audio-video productions. Both were filmed during the fortieth anniversary year of the School in 2012. The first to be released *In the name of Willie Clancy* is by film-maker Myles O'Reilly with Donal Dineen and Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and presents personal reflections on SSWC primarily by Ó Raghallaigh and Dineen interspersed with scenes from the School along with more abstract locational shots, available online at <http://arbutusyarns.net/2012/07/25/in-the-name-of-willie-clancy> [accessed 8 Oct 2013]. In contrast the *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary* is a descriptive documentary-style DVD produced by Malbay Films, a locally-based West Clare film company and was released and launched in Miltown on 26 May 2013 which gives 'a fascinating and revealing insight into the first 40 years of Ireland's largest traditional music summer school' (DVD sleeve, Malbay Films 2013). SSWC was also the subject of and features in a number of television programmes, for example *The Willie Clancy Sessions* (RTÉ 1997), *My Own Place: Muiris Ó Rócháin* (RTÉ 1981), *Faoi Lán Cheoil* (TG4 2008).

[1940]).⁸ A series of critiques of the methods and theory used by Arensberg and Kimball emerge at the same time as SSWC; notably by Peter Gibbon and Hugh Brody (Gibbon, 1973, Brody, 1973).⁹ These critiques document instead the negative dimensions of community life and rural decline have become sustaining tropes of Irish anthropological research, what Chris Curtin summarises as ‘the theme of the dying peasant culture of the remote rural west’ (Curtin et al., 1993: 9).¹⁰ Informed both by Arensberg and Kimball, their critics who refute the idea that local communities are self-contained or self-regulating, and more recent scholarship on rural decline (Crowley, 2013, McDonagh 2002), this thesis explores how Miltown and SSWC are linked into local, national and global scenes, communities and institutions. SSWC, therefore, offers a case study site in which to investigate the cultural performance of rural transition as it takes place in front of the backdrop of ‘the West’ (Wilson and Donnan, 2006: 19). While a growing scholarly literature, public debate and discourse foregrounds culture on primarily economic grounds, this thesis inverts the emphasis on the role of the economy by privileging the process of re-traditionalisation (Collins and Fahy, 2011, Du Gay and Pryke, 2002, Edensor, 2010, Marshall, 2012, Ray, 2001). It argues that the development of cultural and social capital affords the local community of Miltown greater control over its cultural and economic identity, thereby distancing it from narratives of rural vulnerability or decline.

The essentialising undercurrent of the idea of an ‘originary source’ understood to permeate the Irish music tradition is problematised in this research (Rudinow, 1994). Likewise, this thesis traces a diaphanous link between SSWC and *Aonach Tailteann* (the Tailteann Games), one of the great Aonachs of the past and the oldest known musical celebration in Ireland.¹¹ According to T.H. Nally, the institution of the Aonach arose from the burial of a distinguished royal, a warrior chieftain, or a ‘famous man of

⁸ Undertaken during the 1930s, it was perceived as one of the first modern European ethnographic anthropological studies of social change, providing a baseline from which many subsequent Irish ethnographic studies were measured and understood (Wilson and Donnan, 2006).

⁹ These challenged the unchanging traditional community concept presented by Arensberg and Kimball, drawing attention instead to breakdowns in rural community life, increasing economic marginalisation and the modernisation of Irish society: factors which also inform and contextualise the founding impulses of SSWC.

¹⁰ According to Wilson and Donnan the writings of Arensberg and Kimball in fact document Ireland ‘as a place which was experiencing the transition from the traditional to the modern’ (Wilson and Donnan, 2006).

¹¹ Roy Foster suggests that summer schools and rock festivals are in fact reincarnations of the revelries of patterns and fair days stamped out by the Devotional Revolution of the mid nineteenth century (Foster, 2007: 149).

learning' (Nally, 1922: 16).¹² *Aonach Tailteann* was a commemoration enacted at the burial site of Queen Tailtiu incorporating music and dance 'primarily instituted as a tribute in honour of the illustrious dead' (Nally, 1922: 11).¹³ Originally established nearly 2,000 years before the birth of Christ, these great Aonachs, such as *Aonach Carman* and *Aonach Colmain*, whose names resound throughout Ireland's cultural history, fulfilled three important public functions in a symbolic space; these were to honour the 'illustrious dead', 'to promulgate laws' and 'to entertain the people' (Nally, 1922: 16). While some festivals lack or lose meaningful cultural coordinates, it is argued here that SSWC maps directly onto earlier Irish music-making festivities in which Irish music, song and dance is integral to the celebration of both life and death.

Bringing Nally's tripartite functional division of the institution of the Aonach into a modern context through the process of re-traditionalisation, this research translates and maps these functions onto its own structural division of SSWC revealing a multiplicity of layers rendered available for symbolic interpretation. The processes that inform re-traditionalisation at SSWC are examined through the triumvirate of transmission, commemoration and performance. While these three categories do not have clearly defined boundaries or mutually exclusive categories of understanding, they are employed as organising principles by which to structure this thesis.

Methodology

Utilising theoretical ideas located at the intersection of several disciplines, this thesis conceptualises SSWC as a site of creative renewal and sets out to disclose the captured meanings of Ben Lennon's words by addressing the transmission, commemoration and performance of Irish traditional music distilled through the lens of forty years of music practice at the School. The study employs a qualitative methodological framework

¹² Nally suggests that Aonach is misleadingly translated as 'fair' or 'market place' (Nally, 1922: 16). Ó Dónaill's *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* translates Aonach as both 'Fair' and 'Assembly' <http://breis.foclóir.ie/en/> [accessed 10 January 2014] while the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* states that Aonach/Aonach means 'in primary sense "a reunion", hence a popular assembly or gathering, generally (though not exclusively) for games, races, and similar contests, as distinguished from an "airecht" or assembly for communal business; commonly transl'd. "fair", though it does not seem to have been intended for commercial purposes' www.dil.ie [accessed 10 January 2014].

¹³ According to Nally the earliest manuscript records of these national games, pertain to the death and burial of 'Queen Tailte, wife of King Eochaidh Mac Erc, the last Firbolg monarch of Erin' (Nally, 1922: 12).

which utilises a case-study approach based primarily on ethnographic research conducted during SSWC in 2009 and 2010. Case-study research is useful for investigating ‘bounded systems’ over which the investigator has little control (Stake, 1995: 2). This method, as opposed to an historiographical or ethnomusicological approach, facilitates a rich nuanced account, retrieving meanings from a variety of different voices and constituencies and providing access to primary materials that are not located in any archive.

The methodology applies already established methods of participant observation and face-to-face investigation through fieldwork to study the complexity and particularity of contemporary situations in order to generate broad understanding of particular issues (Madden, 2010). While SSWC 2009 and 2010 provides the main source for gathering primary material, the research is also informed by ‘multi-sited ethnographic experiences’ of Irish traditional music (which include other festivals and visits to SSWC both prior to and since these years) (Madden, 2010: 54). In turn, this is supplemented by accessing archived materials collected by a variety of agencies at SSWC since its inception in 1973.

SSWC is a site of ritual, celebration, remembrance and moreover entertainment. Its foundational impulses and structures do not however sit readily within the frame of economics, community development or tourism theories, yet all of these elements are now implicit in its success. Developing an Irish Studies framework methodology develops a holistic understanding of the processes and outcomes of SSWC by examining its role within cultural, social, economic, political and spatial spheres. Capturing the diversity of these various dimensions is possible only from such an interdisciplinary perspective. The space, the sensibility and the interdisciplinarity of Irish Studies is what allows this thesis to draw all dimensions together in a coherent way. The primary material therefore is approached ethnographically, drawing on insights from Ethnomusicology, Cultural Economy, Performance Theory, Community Development, Tourism Studies and Cultural Studies. Field-based evidence directs theoretical engagement throughout the thesis and Pierre Bourdieu’s forms of capital, particularly cultural capital which secures social status through the accumulation of cultural knowledge and his ‘fields of cultural production’, proved influential in finding ways to understand the complex processes and outcomes of SSWC (Bourdieu and

Johnson, 1993, Bourdieu, 1986). Joseph Roach's theory of 'surrogation' provides a useful method for conceptualising identity and loss in Irish traditional music (Roach, 1996).

The organisational architecture of SSWC is divided by instrument-type into separate 'sections' or 'schools', with each section managed by a deputy. The fiddle section of SSWC provides the key site of investigation for the research in this thesis. Attendance at fiddle classes as a participant observer took place during the six morning workshops of 2009 and at the Archive Room during 2010.¹⁴ A number of strategic reasons informed the decision to choose the fiddle school as the primary site of enquiry. It has been part of the School since its inception and as the largest section of SSWC in terms of student enrolments and consequently tutors employed, it represents a significant experience not just for attendees, but also for those who organise and teach at the School.¹⁵ Giving expression to the type of experience available to one of the largest taught cohorts at SSWC provides a useful rubric through which to understand other dimensions of the School. As a button accordion player with limited expertise on the fiddle, the author was able to undertake participant observation in a fiddle class as a learning engagement, without demonstrably altering the learning dynamic of the class. More importantly, it offered a continuity of engagement with the role of the older West Clare fiddle players, linked inextricably as they are to the development of the School through the interactive dynamics of the Archive Room.

The fiddle recital, along with other solo instrument recitals, lectures, tribute concerts, céilís, the graveside commemoration, and (where time permitted) the occasional session, provided additional sites for participant observation. Interviews were conducted with organisers, tutors, attendees (and their parents) and locals both during the week and on other occasions throughout the research period. Formal interviews, primarily with organisers and tutors were guided by a set of open-ended questions aimed at understanding experiences of the philosophy and practices of the School and ranging in length from twenty minutes to two hours. Interviews undertaken at the

¹⁴ The Archive Room, located at the fiddle school, draws its name from the presence of the Irish Traditional Music Archive who from 1999 recorded older musicians who performed there during the week of the School. It is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁵ There were thirty classes and more than fifty teachers in the fiddle section of SSWC in 2009 (Ó Rócháin, 2011).

School were both planned and spontaneous and took place when and wherever possible, notably during breaks in teaching, directly after class, in classrooms, sitting on walls, outside and inside public houses, in people's accommodation, their homes and even in their cars.¹⁶ Post-School correspondences took place by email, over Skype and by telephone and each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Many more informal interviews were held spontaneously at fortuitous rather than planned School sites taking the form of a conversation and lasting between five and thirty minutes.¹⁷ Not all of these conversations were digitally recorded and some were written up later as field notes.

Observational data was also collected at classes, recitals, lectures, the launch event, and sessions. A field work diary was maintained and together with transcribed interviews and transcribed meta-communications constitutes the core primary material of the research. Other documents consulted include the digitised brochures held by Oidhreacht an Chláir (OAC) and in the author's own archive.¹⁸ The annual brochure represents the principal vehicle through which the School disseminates information to the general public. A close textual analysis of the brochures as a series offers an unfolding chronological history of the School. The solidity of the written record contained in the School's brochure shores up the qualitative information gained from interviewees; intercepting and assisting personal memories to distinguish events between different years of the School within its now substantial history.¹⁹ Additionally, web pages hosted by set-dancing news, the new website for SSWC, pages hosted by the Clare county library and archived local and national newspaper reports on the

¹⁶ Respondents who were briefed on the project and consented to be interviewed are named in the text. The students who co-attended fiddle classes however, have not been named individually. While the objectives of the research were outlined to the class at the beginning of the week and permission was requested to record the activities of the class, for fear of disrupting the class dynamic, minor emphasis was placed on the author's role as researcher. No formal one-to-one interviews were conducted with members of the class, rather their comments were recorded digitally during class time or fieldwork diary notes were made after informal conversations. Likewise informal conversations rather than official interviews took place with parents and students from other classes at tea-breaks which were not digitally recorded as there was insufficient time to outline the purposes of the research and solicit official interviews.

¹⁷ Mason speaks to the spontaneity associated with ethnographic research and thereby the inherent responsiveness to situations and informants that it offers (Mason, 2002).

¹⁸ Digitised brochures from 1973 to 2003 were accessed at the archive of OAC. Brochures for the years 1977, 1980 and 1985 were missing from the set at the time of this research.

¹⁹ Due to the repetitive and ritualistic nature of the School, differentiating between events that occur annually often proved problematic for respondents. The brochures provided a useful means of confirming dates and information provided by informants who experienced uncertainty.

School are all subject to examination.²⁰ These documents were useful as they offered timely perspectives on issues current to SSWC and the wider Irish music tradition in general.

Details of particular performances such as the fiddle recital in 2009 and other performance sites; the graveside and various public houses, play a choreographical role in both the presentation and reception of performance at SSWC and in the wider context of Irish traditional music practice. Notes taken at recitals and lectures, particularly the meta-communications of musicians were enhanced by revisiting these recorded performances at the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA). Viewing archival performances from earlier years of the School helped to contextualise and draw out themes pertaining to this thesis. OAC and the archives of Na Píobairí Uilleann (NPU) also provided additional invaluable sources for consultation.

Informal music practices, primarily sessions, have increased significantly over the lifetime of the School as musicians gather in the corners of virtually every available pub and lift Miltown Malbay into a frenzy of musical festivity. While brief consideration is given to the informal session practices integral to the Willie Clancy Week, and their central role in the ritual process of continuity is acknowledged, it is the organised, structured events that are most closely documented, presenting themselves to be more reliably examined through fieldwork opportunities.²¹ The organisers of SSWC are clear to foreground the original impulses of SSWC as they relate to its ethos of transmission and likewise the emphasis of this thesis is on the structured elements, examining the festive elements only as they impact on and inform the development of the invariant elements of the Willie Clancy Week.

As both musician and academic, issues of familiarity and cultural translation foreground engagement with the field of study for the author. Madden reminds researchers that regardless of previous familiarity, an etic perspective is what drives the researcher to the field in the first place (Madden, 2010). Timothy Rice acknowledges that 'personal experience is neither free nor individual; it is constrained by interaction

²⁰ <http://www.setdancingnews.net/wess>, <http://www.seoilsamhraidhwilliclancy.com>, <http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/people/clancy.htm>

²¹ For further literature on the informal music-making of the session see for example Carson (1986: 55-8), Kaul (2007), Kneafsey (2003), Ó hAillmhuráin (1998: 188-9) and O'Shea (2008: 119-140).

with the tradition' therefore some elements of subjectivity are unavoidable in the process of ethnographic research and writing (Rice, 1994: 308). The ethnographic methods employed are inevitably filtered through the subjective experiences of the author and the narrative is similarly informed by subjective nuances. Following Ó Laoire, and utilising rigorous ethnographic methods, this research strives self-reflexively for a distanciation from prior assumptions and prejudice (Ó Laoire, 2005, see also Collins, 2013 and Koning, 1980). One of the methodological challenges presented by the research relates to delimiting the number of interviewees. This was partly resolved by locating the main body of research within the fiddle school. However, due to the longevity of the School there exists an inordinate number of patrons with opinions about its philosophy and practices and interviewing all of them would have proved impossible. Instead, a cross-section of voices representative of gender, age and local and national provenance are included. This thesis seeks not to write a narrative history or survey of the first forty years of the SSWC, but rather it aims to offer an in-depth contextualisation of the School, its foundation, the development of symbolic space, place-building, the process of surrogation and its relationship to and construction of Irish traditional music.

Chapter structure

The opening chapter, 'Locating Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy' problematises re-traditionalisation as a response to the tradition-modernity dialectic as it underscores both the Irish music tradition and SSWC. It places the origins of the School in a socio-historical context, investigating the development of authenticity and nostalgia particularly in light of their understanding as contested and invigorating subject matters. The valorisation of Willie Clancy both within and without the uilleann piping tradition is situated in this narrative, relating it to the handing down and taking up of tradition. This in turn gives way to a more detailed explication of the School, its origins, animation, development and organisation, introducing re-traditionalisation as a conceptual platform on which Irish traditional music discourse and enactment at SSWC is staged.

The second chapter reflects on the macro-level socio-cultural and economic circumstances that informed the genesis of SSWC in the early 1970s as well as the cultural milieu of Irish traditional music practices of the time. Eschewing economic impact models that report solely on the economic success of events, the chapter traces instead key factors in the development of the cultural economy of SSWC as well as highlighting the specific micro-site elements that prefigured the capacity for the School in west Clare. An exploration of festival drawing on Andersson and Getz (2008), Arcodia and Whitford (2006), Falassi (1987), Picard and Robinson (2006), Turner (1982) and in particular the development trajectories of two other contemporaneous festivals provides a context for the experiences of liminality and the idea of the 'standstill week' expressed by Ben Lennon in the opening quote (see also Daly, 2004, Quinn, 2003b, 2005a).²² It traces the role of SSWC in the transformation of Miltown, West Clare, and 'the local' from periphery to centre, the creation of symbolic space and the accompanying development of stocks of cultural and social capital elevating the status of both the town and its hero Willie Clancy.

Chapters 3 to 5 are concerned with collective and participatory activity at the Willie Clancy Week organised through the tripartite division of transmission, commemoration and performance. The propagation of the symbiotic relationships that develop in these activities and the on-going balance between the past and a living tradition, form the cornerstone of these chapters. Moving from the descriptive to the interrogative, they explore the tension between the pre-modern essence that fixes the identity carried by the School, and the creativity inherent in the realms of transmission, performance and commemoration that maintains its identity in the modern and propels the School in a continuing quest for the traditional. A structural necessity requires the division of this thesis into chapters: defining categories and boundaries where in reality there is fluidity and overlap. The performative nature of the graveside commemoration and the inherent commemorative and pedagogical elements present in performance are therefore implicit and the chapter division is acknowledged as a useful device for delimiting and assembling the thesis.

²² The concept of liminality at SSWC draws on the work of Victor Turner and is developed further in Chapter 4 (Turner, 1969).

Chapter 3 ‘Transmission’ interrogates the concept of oral transmission and the master-apprentice relationship historically, before carefully examining what takes place in the classes, the bedrock of SSWC. From research primarily situated in the fiddle school, it examines processes of re-traditionalisation and the concept of continuity of tradition as facilitated by the field-based Archive Room in which older masters of tradition share their music practices with all learners at the fiddle section of the School. In Chapter 4, attention is drawn to the commemoration of both Irish traditional music and musicians. Locating this within the wider context of commemoration in Ireland, it traces the chronology of the monumentalisation of Irish traditional musicians, citing the 1974 monument to Willie Clancy as the very first. Conceptualising Miltown as an entire site of commemoration, it considers how expressions of identity and values are shaped through repeated representations of the past, creating ritual continuity. The second half of the chapter deconstructs the graveside commemoration at SSWC and the enactment of symbolic rituals that confer authority onto the School.

Using performance as an interpretative category the final chapter explores the performance platforms scheduled at SSWC. It interrogates a number of factors such as a developing lexicon, the utilisation of space and the key role of tradition-bearers in the re-traditionalisation of Irish music and performative (re)constructions of the authentic. It highlights the unique platform created by the solo instrument recitals and explores the paradox presented by the on-stage performance of modesty.

Irish traditional music is a lived experience that occurs in multifarious places. SSWC has created a model for Irish traditional music socialisation, a key mechanism in the process of cultural transmission. This thesis aims to explicate the factors which create this site, and its role and relationship within the Irish music tradition. Ultimately it attempts to give understanding to the experience of thousands of attendees who like Ben Lennon in his opening quote leave Miltown with ‘tunes bubbling’ in their heads as the geographical and temporal return to reality, signified by a petrol station in Ennis, draws a week of hyper-reality to a close for another year.²³

²³ A book encapsulating the life of Ben Lennon was launched at SSWC 2011 (Piraprez et al., 2011). The book’s photographer Nutan Jacques Piraprez shadowed Ben for the entire week during SSWC 2010, taking photographic advantage of the music-making practices in which Ben participated at the School.

CHAPTER 1

Locating Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy

‘The question of tradition’¹

Writing in *The Crane Bag* in 1979 on ‘The Question of Tradition’, Liam de Paor provides his thoughts on Irish traditional music (located rather conveniently for this thesis) in County Clare.²

[I]t is only a few years since traditional music there was traditional. A man like Willie Clancy or Jimmy Ward would play to please himself and his friends or to conform to longstanding customs.³ Now, the traditional musicians who survive are fully professional. The tradition has been commercialised and absorbed into the all-embracing international culture, so that what was a fiddler in the corner of a farmhouse or a pub is now a member of a ‘group,’ travelling on a kind of international night-club circuit, modifying his skill to accommodate electronic amplification and the tastes of a wider - and shallower - audience. This is not a plea for retaining the ‘purity’ of traditional Irish music: it is an attempt to record a fact: that the change of context marks a radical change of culture (de Paor, 1979: 24).

Within the article, de Paor problematises the relationship between tradition and modernity and robustly critiques a romanticised view of an essentialised Ireland. At the same time he opines the ‘purity’ of traditional Irish music, a view point which corresponds with discourses and received notions of Irish traditional music that are replete with recourse to the past (Ó Canainn, 1993 [1978], O’Neill, 1987 [1913], Breathnach, 1996 [1971]). Using de Paor as a springboard, this chapter engages with and traces some of these received notions. Gerry Smyth asserts that tradition ‘thrives

¹ ‘The Question of Tradition’ was the thematic title of the *Crane Bag* (1979 Volume 3 Issue 1).

² The cultural journal the *Crane Bag* ran in 9 volumes from 1977 to 1985, edited by Richard Kearney and Mark Patrick Hederman. Diarmaid Ferriter describes the *Crane Bag* as ‘trying to punctur[e] the myths about Irish identity’ (Ferriter, 2012: 287).

³ A banjo player originally from Killenora, Jimmy Ward (d.1987) was a member of the Killenora Céili Band, who moved to Miltown Malbay in 1949 opening one of the first guest houses for music lovers to the Miltown Malbay area (Talty, 2013).

on the idea that the authentic exists' (Smyth, 1995: 6). Reflecting on the ubiquity of this trope, this chapter locates the shifting aesthetic, symbolic and territorialised narratives that create nostalgia for pasts perceived to be teetering on the brink of depletion, or indeed pasts no longer available. It locates these narratives nested within a broader discourse informed and framed by the tradition-modernity dialectic. This involves an explication of what is understood by the term Irish traditional music by various agents and stakeholders and the manner in which its practices have been organised in a wider historical context. The central place of the uilleann pipe tradition and Willie Clancy himself are then placed into this developing chronology as it examines how historical constructions and the theory of surrogation inform contemporary music practices. The second half of the chapter looks to tally some of these influences with the ideological underpinnings of SSWC and moves on to describe in more detail constituent operational elements of the School by examining discrete areas of its organisation and attendance. As such, it builds a foundation on which further explorations of the School are laid in the four chapters that follow.

'Preserved in the formaldehyde of sentimentality'⁴

De Paor references a litany of changes in function, context, location, professionalisation, mediation, amplification, purity and innovation. Unpacking his discussion reveals Irish traditional music as a complex musical genre: it illustrates the inseparability of its performance from the wider discourses that surround it and oozes with modernity's nostalgia for the past. Feelings of nostalgia for a past which is perceived as more authentic are attributed to the processes of modernisation which Karl Marx relates to the production of feelings of alienation from self and nature (Marx et al., 1974). Irish traditional music, then, is in a process of constant change reacting to the commercial intra-relational influences of the wider world and the more symbolic inter-relational recognition invested in the communities of practice within which it operates. SSWC creates a context to refashion feelings of nostalgia through performance and fosters a new cultural industry in the process.⁵ The label 'Irish

⁴ Address at the launch of *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Cronin, 2011).

⁵ Referring to this same article by de Paor, Seamus Heaney points to the futility of distinguishing any more between the categories of 'the traditional' and 'the commercial' by reminding us that 'Aran sweaters are not for the people of Aran or even Ireland anymore' (Heaney, 1990: 28). This is exemplified by the international profile of musicians, for example, Martin Hayes for whom the

traditional music' complicates, but observing its development and employment reveals the breadth of its configuration and symbolic power. Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin's 1998 definition presents Irish traditional music as a creative and current force:

There is no iron-clad definition of Irish traditional music. It is best understood as a broad-based system which accommodates a complex process of musical convergence, coalescence and innovation over time. It involves different types of singing, dancing and instrumental music developed by Irish people at home and abroad over the course of several centuries (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 8).

Taken from one of the first popular and comprehensive guides to Irish traditional music, Ó hAllmhuráin's acknowledgement of the inherent difficulty in attempting to define a music that is changing through innovation and creativity suggests, usefully then, ways instead to 'understand' it. This overrides de Paor's perception that in County Clare 'it is only a few years since traditional music there was traditional' by allowing for a narrative of continuity that references the past as it continues to inform both the present and the future. Tracing the development of these tropes in Irish traditional music narratives, leads invariably to what Adrian Paterson describes as a 'defining moment for music', the Belfast Harp Festival (BHF) of 1792 and one of the first festivals of Irish music for which a significant body of knowledge exists (Paterson, 2010).⁶ Both musical and thematic parallels can be drawn between SSWC and the BHF and the three elemental units of this thesis: performance, transmission and commemoration inhere to both. De Paor's thoughts, expressed some thirty years ago, resound with contemporary and historic sentiments of nostalgia and loss and slot seamlessly onto a continuum which begins with the BHF and the earliest known collections of Irish traditional music by Edward Bunting in 1792.

commercialisation of Irish traditional music is now a given. In a recent retrospective interview, Martin Hayes admitted that at one time he had not believed in the possibility of making a career in music. However, at the time of the interview his reconciliatory difficulty lay not (like de Paor) between the traditional and the modern - but with his personal difficulty in switching from artistry to business in order to ensure that his living was actually earned (Sheriden, 2013).

⁶ Further documentation of 1792 includes Young (1895) and Harbison (1986).

The Belfast Harp Festival

The organisation of the BHF of 1792 and the ensuing published collections of Bunting and later collectors such as those of George Petrie represents for many scholars the beginning of the salvage operation of Irish traditional music (Bunting, 1969 [1796,1809, 1840], Cooper, 2002, Harbison, 1986, Ó Laoire, 2004).⁷ A leading impulse behind the BHF's establishment was an essentialist notion of collecting a pure, unpolluted Irish culture on the brink of depletion, what Harry White describes as 'an immutable fact of the past' (White, 1996: 123). However, another equally significant aspect of its legacy is the creation of a new conceptual platform, one which privileges transmission in a new way. This is signalled by the employment of Edward Bunting, a young composer and organist, to collect and transcribe Irish music directly from the harp practitioners. Whilst collecting and transcribing music is now a common practice, this first 'recording' of performance was entirely novel. The subsequent transcriptions created by Bunting placed Irish music into the realm of print culture, creating a text, the first such text to conceptualise this 'ancient music of Ireland' as an authentic native repertory (Bunting, 1969 [1796,1809, 1840]). In the subsequent collections of Bunting, this process removed music (and words) from a state of ephemeral intangibility, establishing a text against which all future performances and transcriptions might be compared or referred. Capturing an oral tradition and 'fixing' it as a tangible text within a new literate tradition brought about a conceptual change as tunes once committed to paper, become objects for reflection and 'become a "text" for interpretation and appropriation' (Rice, 1994: 13). The self-conscious awareness of the appropriation of an object, in this case Irish music, corresponds to Timothy Rice's fourth sense of tradition; the 'bringing tradition to consciousness' which from that point onwards, takes on its own objective existence (Rice, 1994: 15). This has multifarious implications for the transmission of Irish traditional music, as revealed in the contestation and gratification presented by the presence of tune 'variations' and perceptions of authorship and ownership of such variations which is discussed in the context of both transmission and performance at SSWC in Chapters 3 and 5.

⁷ The BHF was organised by the Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge. A significant outcome was its role as a source of inspiration for further cultural activity, stimulating music collecting by Bunting, Petrie and others

The texts created by Bunting mark a preliminary step in the development of a market for the creation, distribution and consumption of Irish traditional music, paralleling the ‘works’ of music noted by Nicholas Cook for other music genres that progress from the beginning of the nineteenth century (Cook, 2000: 15). The act of transcription removed the harpers’ music from the realm of the evanescent into a transcribed format that endured beyond the bounds of live performance. Whilst earlier collections of Irish music were in existence at the time, Bunting’s publications created a tangible project, a repertory, and its accumulative potential projected Irish music into a new economic realm.⁸ As Ruth Finnegan observes ‘what was written was to be valued and analysed; and what was not written was not worth scholarly study’ (Finnegan, 1988: 124). The BHF then, is fundamental to the splicing of Irish music with several forms of capital, not least the one which remains so highly prized amongst Irish traditional musicians today, the aesthetic capital of repertoire.⁹

The origins and organisation of the BHF were tied into the ideology of the United Irishmen, a cultural nationalist movement, with a primarily protestant and middle-class membership for whom the traditional and the vernacular held a particular attraction (Cleary, 2004a, Ó Laoire, 2004). The cultural authority obtained at the BHF, therefore, served firstly to further the cultural-political ideology of the United Irishman, and secondly, to vindicate the ‘Irishness’ of its Anglo-Irish membership, by acquiring cultural authority and ownership over Ireland’s musical past (Crooke, 2000, O’Brien Moran, 2007). The use of Irish traditional music for political ends and its close association with Irish cultural identity is reiterated by revivalist endeavours that follow; notably the Gaelic League founded in 1893 and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (henceforth Comhaltas) in 1951. The BHF, then, represents a starting point for both the collection of music from practising musicians and the establishment of Irish music scholarship. More than this, as a trigger for revivalist practices it paves the way for the

⁸ The oldest known collection of Irish music is that of the Neal Brothers, 1724. A facsimile of this publication, edited by Nicholas Carolan, was published by ITMA in 2010 (Carolan, 2010).

⁹ Repertoire continues to be a key axis of Irish traditional music: extensive repertoires such as that of Pádraig O’Keefe are valorised. The value of regional styles is invested in particular repertoires with inherent implications for authenticity. Breandán Breathnach, for example, relates the influence of being ‘struck by the rich repertoire’ of musicians from County Clare (Breathnach, 1974: 73). Ciaran Carson hints at the musical connections made available by repertoire ‘we form an instant kinship through a repertoire as we recite its genealogy’ (Carson, 1996: 74). Peter Browne assures us that on hearing Willie Clancy ‘the beauty of his playing with his distinctive skills and repertoire will leave no lover of Irish traditional music unmoved’ (Browne, 2009).

process of surrogation into Irish traditional music, creating a preoccupation with authenticity and informing ideologies of nostalgia and loss that inhabit future performances of identity.

Authenticity and loss ‘they touched the hem of the cloak’¹⁰

According to Cook

the stories we tell about [music] help to determine what music is – what we mean by it and what it means to us. The values wrapped up in the idea of authenticity ... are not simply there in the music; they are there because the way we think about music puts them there, and ... the way we think about music also affects the way we make music, and so the process becomes circular. It is this kind of continuity in thinking about things that creates what we call ‘traditions’ (Cook, 2000: 14).

The concept of authenticity and negotiations of the authentic are key issues within the social sciences (Barker and Taylor, 2007, Bendix, 1997, Taylor, 1991, Trilling, 1972). The construction of authenticity and its multi-layered understandings are a cultural mechanism central to Irish traditional music practice and fundamental to the ethos and success of SSWC. As a conceptual basis for the Irish traditional music canon, constructions of authenticity, founded on a trajectory of its perceived loss (regardless of how that authenticity was constructed in the first place) is a philosophical touchstone that underpins traditionalising narratives traceable directly to the BHF. The BHF performed a duty of care to a repertory facing imminent chronological disaster due to the advanced average age and small cohort of harpists.¹¹ As such, the harpers presence and performance signalled an authentic link to an ‘originary source’, a concept hypostatized by Bunting and later Petrie (Rudinow, 1994). This same idea is echoed by Joseph Nagy when he suggests that the search for the truth

¹⁰ Taken from Heaney (1990: 29).

¹¹ After placing a notice in the national press inviting all harpers to attend, the Festival was in fact attended by just eleven harpers (including a Welsh harper named Williams). The average age was 57 years, more than half were blind, three of whom were older than 75, only one was female and the oldest and only player who still used his fingernails was Denis Hempson aged 97 (Yeats and Bunting, 1980).

is primarily a matter of delving into the past, where the 'truth' can be found in its pristine form. The past, which is usually portrayed as having much to offer the present, is also seen as teetering on the brink of oblivion, although it is rarely beyond some means of recovery (Nagy, 1997: 1-2).

Subsequent collections of music and indeed folklore, in Ireland, continued along this trajectory of preservation, constructing a native repertory literally as it is believed to have disappeared.¹² Its ethos to 'preserve for posterity' tunes that were 'classified and codified' created a nostalgic longing for past purity, privileging the concept of a fixed and immutable tradition (Cooper, 2002: 7). The concept of a pure and national tradition at the heart of the nation-building project is the antithesis of a musical reality in which a plethora of very different personal, local and regional musical practices existed. The theme of authenticity and loss which recurs and populates Irish traditional music discourse can trace its origins back to this time. The hunt for the originary and unpolluted source has created a temporal, nostalgic reaching back to presumed previous authenticities, creating an inconsolable sense of loss. This tracing back to an 'original' both validates the contemporary and contributes to sentiments of loss and recovery that resound throughout all revivalist institutions and the narratives of Irish traditional music since that time.

Irish traditional music - the label

The recognition of Irish traditional music as a distinct musical style that forms a constituent part of mainstream contemporary popular culture is a phenomenon that John O'Flynn observes has occurred in Ireland and elsewhere in approximately the past twenty five years (O'Flynn, 2011: 262). This concurs with Smyth's assertion that such is the strength of contemporary Irish traditional music in Ireland that the labels 'Irish music' and 'Irish traditional music' have become synonymous and that 'trad' does not

¹² In 1806, John Templeton, an advocate of Bunting stated that 'it is at present to be regretted that this beautiful fabric [Irish music] raised by our ancestors and preserved for us through so many ages now totters on its foundation... Let a few, a very few, years elapse and this monument of our ancient civilization will disappear' *Templeton Journal*, 9 Dec. 1806 (Ulster Museum) cited in Killen (1990: 181). Likewise in 1855, Petrie stressed the importance of 'preserving this greatest but most dilapidated monument of our national character', cited in Cooper (2002: 6).

need the adjective required, for example, by ‘Irish rock music’ (Smyth, 2004b: 9).¹³ The indeterminable point at which music played in Ireland was first conceptualised as Irish traditional music (Ó Giolláin’s ‘distancing’ and Tönnies *Gesellschaft*) coincides with what Lauri Honko describes as the ‘second life’ of folklore and following Honko and drawing on Nestor Garcia Canclini, what Diarmuid Ó Giolláin goes on to refer to as ‘re-traditionalisation’ (Ó Giolláin, 2000, see also Honko, 1988, Ó Giolláin, 2005). More recently, Adam Kaul speaks to a subtle ‘reorientation’ of tradition ‘over and over again’, which ‘has adapted to dramatic changes in the past while maintaining continuity’ (Kaul, 2009: 154). According to Honko, tradition’s ‘first life’ ends with its documentation - archived and ineffective for as long as this documentation remains dormant. The beginning of its ‘second life’ involves the taking into use of this material again, through a wide variety of means such as performance, publishing, recording or recycling. A body of Irish music publications started to appear in the eighteenth century (starting with the Neal collection in 1724).¹⁴ Honko’s second life theory is fully realised by institutions like SSWC and the collection, archival and digitisation projects developed within Irish traditional music in recent years (for example by the ITMA, Comhaltas at both national and regional levels, NPU and OAC). These create accessibility to the ‘tradition storehouse’ providing source materials which can and are reworked in a variety of contemporary ways. The ‘tradition’ then is conceptualised as a storehouse from which artifacts can be sourced and something ‘traditional’ done with them or as Ó Giolláin describes it; the ‘reorientation of traditional cultural production to modern contexts’ as demonstrated by revivalists organisation worldwide (Ó Giolláin, 2005: 17). Using this conceptualisation, the term ‘Irish traditional music’ corresponds appropriately as a label for the second life of the Irish music tradition.

Ní Fhuartháin pinpoints 1902 as the entry point of the term Irish traditional music into the written discourse. She suggests, however, that a more ubiquitous use of the term within the community of practice of musicians did not emerge until the 1950s (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 15).¹⁵ The creation and use of the label Irish traditional music legitimises its identity as something different and no longer commonplace, whilst at the

¹³ For further explorations of meaning with regard to the term ‘Irish music’ see also O’Flynn (2009: 1-24), Ó Súilleabháin (1981), White (1998: 94-124).

¹⁴ Others that followed include, for example: Bunting (1796, 1809 and 1840), Petrie (1855 and 1882) and Joyce (1873, 1888 and 1909).

¹⁵ She credits Séamas O’Keefe and Art O’Brien’s *Handbook of Irish Dance/Rince Gaodhalach* as the first written source of the term (O’Keefe and O’Brien, 1902: 91).

same time implying something older and less progressive (Ó Giolláin, 2000: 8, 12).¹⁶ In the grand narratives associated with modernity, processes such as globalisation and the perceived homogenisation of society increase the attractiveness of tradition and conceptualising a line of unbroken continuity into the past. The consistency of the label 'Irish traditional music' obscures the way in which Irish music is constantly negotiated and invented echoing Hobsbawm and Ranger's thesis on the invention of tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Methodologies to understand and untangle this constant negotiation and invention in Irish traditional music are prone to interpret change in two ways: firstly, change is construed from an essentialist viewpoint where outside influences negatively impact on a formerly 'stable tradition', and secondly, it is interpreted from a position which reads the tradition as being in a constant state of flux, undergoing change as people reconstruct and re-imagine the past. Those who condone the first argument bemoan the loss of its masters and predict the end of tradition. In reality, however, it is the demise of a particular construction of Irish traditional music that is lamented. In this second conscious encounter with tradition a tension is created between the world it once referenced and the modern world it must be made to reference (Rice, 1994: 15).¹⁷ Martin Dowling refutes Sally Sommers Smith's view that current upheavals and innovations threaten 'a formerly stable tradition' (Dowling, 2004: 115). Yet this essentialist notion of a once 'stable tradition' is not only highly irresistible, it is embedded in the discourse of Irish traditional music since the BHF. As John A. Murphy asserted in 1976 'it is native, authentic and ancestral' and the nostalgia that arises from any perceived loss informs the cultural matrix of Irish music (Murphy, 1976: 149). As the label Irish traditional music develops and persists, it legitimises this nostalgic longing for origins, imbuing it with a timelessness and reaching what Lyotard and Thébaud describe as 'a situation of continuous embedding, which makes it impossible to find a first utterer' (Lyotard and Thébaud, 1985: 39). Dowling offers a parallel narrative, one that realises the place of Irish music as 'a tradition that originated within and has been propelled though history by the dynamism of modernity' (Dowling, 2004: 115) This dynamism is demonstrated by the conceptual

¹⁶ A contemporary 'broad' definition of 'Irish traditional music' is provided by Nicholas Carolan. Originally written in 1996, it is available on the ITMA website and is succinct, accessible and useful for practitioners and scholars alike. This definition whilst acknowledging the variety of usages assigned to the term, draws together a number of 'generally agreed characteristics' on themes such as orality, living tradition and antiquity: <http://www.itma.ie/Publications/WhatIsLeaflet.html> [accessed 10 November 2010].

¹⁷ See Chapter 5.

junction of the BHF and continues into the present day demonstrated, for example, by the embracing of digital technologies by gate-keeper institutions such as NPU and the ITMA and the broad scope of material encompassed by the recently published *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Vallely, 2011).¹⁸

However, creativity within Irish traditional music is equally prized. Each actor has the potential to innovate and this is where the label as descriptive of itself breaks down. As Caroline Bithell explains

‘tradition’ has long been construed in opposition to ‘progress’ and innovation’ – and a conservative force that, while ensuring stability, resists change and casts innovation as inauthenticity’ (Bithell, 2007: xxxvi).

Practitioners of Irish traditional music, therefore, have continually innovated, and casting their music as traditional is somewhat paradoxical. Whilst for many European countries the term modernity is couched in positive associations: ‘industrial trail-blazing, national aggrandisement...’, the lived experience of modernity in Ireland instead recounts the ‘destruction of Gaelic culture’ giving rise to the need for a system of language and labels capable of describing ‘traditions’ that have been or are about to be lost (Cleary, 2004a: 9). According to Homi Bhabha the ‘originary’ is always open to translation (Bhabha, 1990: 210). This allows for the creative process in Irish traditional music and explains the vast range of styles and performances that converge in the workshops and on the stage during SSWC. Activities such as SSWC, therefore, facilitate this translation and since ‘the “original” is never finished or complete in itself’ the imitations and transformation that actors strive to achieve informs the continuing success of SSWC (Bhabha, 1990: 210). The School itself is an act of translation through which the meaning of the authentic is made contemporary and its continuing success resides within attempts to create and reform the elusive originary social processes that in themselves no longer exist.

¹⁸ Research by Scott Spencer examines the particular role of digital technology in the revival of the uilleann pipes (Spencer, 2010).

Tradition and continuity: from Garrett Barry to Willie Clancy

Recourse and respect for the past, realised musically, epitomize the narratives of the life of master-piper Willie Clancy (1918-1973) (Breathnach, 1965, Browne, 2009, Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972, Mitchell, 1976, 1988). These accounts are replete with references not just to his musical integrity but to his traits of generosity, humour and humility.¹⁹ Thus, his enduring fame emanates from his personality as well as his musical productivity. His status, now legendary, continues to grow as the number of those who knew him personally dwindles. Born in Islandbawn, a townland of Miltown Malbay on December 24, 1918, his parents were both singers and musicians. '[T]he Clancys may not have been wealthy in material things [but] they were immeasurably rich in the culture and learning handed down through unbroken generations and consciously cherished by them' (Mitchell, 1988: 83). Séamus Ó Duilearga states that manuscript collections are the embodiment of the past of a forgotten people and the Clancys were guardians of old manuscripts which they preserved in their household, one of which according to Mitchell dated back to Conor Óg McClancy who died in 1483 (Ó Duilearga referenced by Ó Giolláin, 2000: 136, Mitchell, 1988).²⁰ Central to Willie Clancy's self-narrative is his recourse to the past, driven as he was to recover the music of Garrett Barry, a nineteenth-century West Clare piper, whose music, while unrecorded was mediated to Willie Clancy via his own father, Gilbert Clancy. Born in 'Black 47' (1847) at the height of the famine in Inagh, Co Clare, Garret Barry was a phantasmagorical figure. Tangible musical evidence is absent as he slips between the collections of Petrie at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the revivalist recordings of the Feis Ceoil at the end. Petrie's visit to Co. Clare in the early eighteenth hundreds, resulted in the publication of his *Ancient music of Ireland* in 1855 when Barry was only eight years old. The first Edison cylinder recordings took place at the

¹⁹ 'Piper, wit, philosopher and conversationalist' is the by-line from a published interview with Willie Clancy conducted by Harry Hughes and Muiris Ó Rócháin shortly before his death (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972: 111). Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin recounts that Willie Clancy held court ... in the kitchen of Friel's pub where he hosted pipers and singers, storytellers and raconteurs from all walks of life who came to enjoy his wit and company (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 169). Brian Vallely described how 'his combination of wit, deep humanity, musical interpretation and humility made him the object of almost veneration by all who met him' (Vallely et al., 1973: 8). Sean Reid described the 'keen and loving interest' that Willie displayed in all he met 'delving into the life, customs and characters of their localities' (Reid, 1977: 197). Terry Moylan refers to 'the generous, open attitude that Willie Clancy epitomised' (Moylan, 2003) and Peter Browne speaks of how he 'could be light hearted, humorous and playful at times - he loved jokes, stories, wit and wordplay' (Browne, 2009).

²⁰ Jackie Small also refers to Willie Clancy as being 'archivally minded' making collections of music from Micho Russell and serving as a musical guide to County Clare for Breandan Breathnach's collecting there (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009).

Feis Ceoil in Dublin in 1899, the year of his death.²¹ Described by Tony Mac Mahon as the ‘great Munster piper’ Garret Barry bore Homeric qualities, amplifying the mythological trope of the gifted blind poet, singer or musician as he wandered from place to place, bearing an oral tradition (Mac Mahon quoted in Ó hAllmhuráin, 1974). Willie Clancy’s musical consciousness and reflexive self-identification as tradition-bearer, was in no small part due to his aspiration to repair a perceived broken line of West Clare piping, situated within a much wider discourse of desire for cultural purity (Davis, 2006). During his lifetime, Willie Clancy carefully collected, nurtured and conveyed Garrett Barry’s music into the twentieth century and ‘was by general acclamation given Barry’s hieratic cloak’ (Mac Mathúna, 1980). He was driven to make a connection to the grand past of West Clare music, even though ‘that connection wasn’t there to be maintained’ as Garrett Barry died in 1899, nineteen years before Willie Clancy was born (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009). Kevin Whelan describes a regional style as ‘that music evolving out of the local environment and spontaneously transferred between generations’ (Whelan, 1993: 27). Yet there was no spontaneity about Willie Clancy’s acquisition of Garret Barry’s music. His father Gilbert was not a piper but a flute player, the head of a household that Muiris Ó Rócháin explains cherished music and culture of the generations that went before and whose ‘lives were spent in creative dialogue with the past’ (Ó Rócháin, 1975: 59). After his death Barry was an ‘ever-present “absent guest” in his household’ and as Willie states, so profound was his loss that ‘my father could never speak unemotionally about [him]’ (Mitchell, 2000: 18, 1988: 84). This is significant for the formation of Willie’s musical consciousness and identity, as one who was to recover the music of Garrett Barry.²² It bears striking parallels with Nagy’s description of retrieving lost oral traditions in Early Ireland as ‘an attempt to get ... back to their roots, unwritten and based in the living context of performance’ (Nagy, 1997: 309). A delicate tightrope hangs between Barry and Clancy, strung between myth and reality, as Willie Clancy carefully collected, nurtured and conveyed his music into the twentieth century, despite the fact that these

²¹ Dinny Delaney the blind piper from Ballinasloe and a contemporary of Garrett Barry was recorded at this Feis Ceoil in 1899.

²² According to *An Píobaire*, ‘in his own quiet way Willie realised he was the sole inheritor of Garret Barry’s music, the remaining link with a treasure of the music of Clare’ (*An Píobaire*, 1973). See also Small’s description of Clancy’s sacred mission to ‘re-construct the technique which Garrett Barry had taken with him to his workhouse grave’ (Small, 1977: 109).

two musicians never met.²³ Yet their musical relationship, mediated through Willie's father, Gilbert Clancy, arguably enables musicians today to aspire to recreate the music of unknown musicians of the past.

Séamus Ennis (1919-1982) the Dublin born uilleann piper, collector and broadcaster was to become a close friend and Willie Clancy displayed a heightened consciousness of the continuity of tradition that ran through Ennis's piping. Ennis inherited not only his music, but his pipes, directly from his father, who in turn learned from Nicholas Markey at the Dublin Pipers' Club. Ennis exhibited stylistic continuity throughout his life and the sound he produced was highly distinctive, personal, and instantly recognisable. As Jackie Small recounts; upon hearing any recording of Ennis 'as soon as you hear the drones starting up - oh, it's Ennis' (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009). This contrasts sharply with Clancy's own convoluted relationship with both style and instrument. Clancy learned to play tin whistle from his father at the early age of five developing an expertise and renown which remained stylistically consistent. However, he was seventeen years old before first hearing the uilleann pipes. This first encounter took place at the races in Miltown Malbay and the piper in question was 'the celebrated travelling piper, Johnny Doran' (Browne, 2009). The Doran family exerted a pivotal influence on the piping tradition, not just in terms of their musical pedigree, but also their musical mobility and Johnny Doran made frequent and regular trips to County Clare. A musical friendship ensued and Clancy received his first bag and chanter from Johnny Doran's brother, Felix, at the age of about twenty (*Here and Now*, RTÉ Radio 1971). Whilst he aligned himself to Barry to access the 'pure drop' continuum of West Clare music, he listened widely and he was greatly influenced by Johnny Doran, Séamus Ennis, and in time, Patsy Touhey, when his recordings became available. When he was asked during an interview shortly before he died to describe his style he responded 'Well, it would depend on the mood I'm in and the pictures I conjure up. If I start to dream of Johnny Doran, I play a more legato or open style. If I think in terms of

²³ In the hagiography of Willie Clancy, the musical influence exerted on him by Garrett Barry has been mythologised to the extent that it is now believed to be real: for example, in the 2006 American Popular Music series *Folk* the entry on Willie Clancy states that 'as a youth Willie also heard the legendary local piper Garret Barry, one of the last of the so-called wandering minstrels' (Carlin, 2006: 31). Peter Woods, however, might forgive this mistake noting the way in which good musicians are remembered: 'people spoke of the piper Garret Barry who was long dead ... as if he were still wandering the roads. The music was always there' (Woods and McNamara, 1996: 12).

Seamus Ennis ... then I revert to the staccato or closed, with the old tricks and twiddle bits and that' (*Radio interview with Breandan O Ciobhain*, RTE 1972). Similarly, he swapped and changed sets of pipes throughout his life and whilst neither of these factors detracts from his piping aesthetic, it is clear that even by the time of his death, 'he hadn't clearly formulated an aesthetic for the sound that he wanted to get out of the pipes: maybe because he wanted every sound, Seamus Ennis only wanted one sound, Willie Clancy wanted everything' (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009).

This marks Willie Clancy as what Jackie Small describes as a 'very modern figure' (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009). Small contends that he exhibits an 'existential angst that could never have been satisfied'. This angst experienced by Clancy is what Anthony Giddens assigns to the 'radicalisation of modernity, ... whereby everyday life has become de-traditionalised' (Giddens, 1999: 4). An example of this anxiety is discernible from an archive recording made in 1961 in which Clancy visits and plays for Michael Cunningham, an elderly man born in 1862, who had known Garret Barry and was familiar with his music-making. After playing some tunes, Clancy can be heard on the recording questioning the old man 'Would that put you in mind of Garret Barry's playing?' (Lambe, 1992: 22). Needless to say, the ninety nine year old man, on being asked to recall the musical style of a piper who had died more than sixty years previously, was somewhat uninformative in his response. What is of importance here is how 'Willie Clancy was trying to remake the connection to Garrett Barry through the agency of this man' (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009). The past to which Clancy has insatiable recourse is symbolised by Garrett Barry. The breakdown in symbolic continuity that Willie Clancy experiences and witnesses during his lifetime due to rapid changes in the social, economic and political environment of his time, informs this recursive mind-set. Likewise it annually informs the School dedicated to his name. SSWC enacts what Emilie Pine refers to as 'remembrance culture' a narrative which frames itself in terms of memory as opposed to history and reflects 'a supposedly more stable past [...] provid[ing] a reassuring anchor, a line of progression, and a balancing sense of continuity and groundedness' (Pine, 2011, 5). Avoiding the objective ideas of history, the remembrance culture of SSWC is filled with personal and subjective meanings that strive to construct that future through recourse to the exemplarity of the past.

Surrogation and performance

The emergence of self-reflexivity displayed by Clancy corresponds to the sense of discontinuity created by this break in tradition, which according to Giddens is a marker of a modern rather than traditional period (Giddens, 1990). Rice suggests that once tradition becomes an object of reflection, it then 'takes on the appearance of objective existence, as if it were a being with a life and therefore demands of its own' (Rice, 1994: 15). Irish traditional music becomes a text for interpretation and 'readers' of this text, musicians like Willie Clancy, make claims and judgements about its authenticity. This constant search informed his musicianship throughout the course of his life. Clancy's behaviour conforms to Roach's theory of 'surrogation' which stems from the idea that a preoccupation with loss informs new and renewed performances of identity.²⁴ Willie Clancy, in emulating the music of Garrett Barry and other bygone pipers, undertook a process of 'surrogation' as he attempted to fill the vacancy created by the absence of the original, thus demonstrating the cultural process by which Irish traditional music reproduces and re-creates itself (Roach, 1996: 2). Surrogation forms a central tenet of Roach's work: a process of substitution that is made as 'actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitutes the social fabric' of a culture (Roach, 1996: 2). Through performance, Clancy attempts to fill the void left by Garrett Barry, as revealed through his questioning of those who knew him. As Roach concurs, surrogation rarely succeeds because the substitute can never fulfil all expectations. The music of Garrett Barry will only ever exist in the realm of the representative or the imagined, likewise, despite the advent of recorded sound and the degree of substitution that this facilitates: the same is now true for the music of Willie Clancy himself.

Conceptualising Irish traditional music practice within this theoretical frame explains why even when the original cultural context has gone, people continue with ritualistic performances of identity and reproduce and re-create and thereby retain aspects of that identity (Roach, 1996: 2). In Willie Clancy's later years, when the cylinder recording made by the Feis Ceoil committee of 1899 became available, on hearing the music of Mícheál Cúmbaí O'Sullivan (the Kerry piper who lived in Massachusetts) playing 'Giol

²⁴ Roach writes from the perspective of Performance Studies based on his research into Mardi Gras in New Orleans, describing the way in which the performance of African tradition has been modified for mass consumption through the liminality of festival space.

na mBan San Ár', 'he swore that if he had heard that single recording in his youth, he would have spent his whole life trying to resurrect the style' (Mitchell and Small, 1986: 9). Clancy's music practice was inspired to fill the void(s) left by the death and departure of previous musicians; to revise the unrecorded past through performance and to make it part of a lived and heard presence.

Musical journeys both physical and imagined interweave the biographies and influences of Irish traditional musicians. Willie Clancy is no exception in this regard, moving to Dublin briefly in 1951 and London in 1953. Diasporic accounts furnish us with social histories of both contemporary and historic music-making. 1950s and 1960s England is a period well documented by Reg Hall who gives detailed accounts of Irish traditional music-making in London during that time (Hall, 1995). Hall's description is of (mainly) men who arrived in London with the objective of finding work and engaged secondarily in music-making. In accounts of Willie Clancy's journeys, however, an underlying subtext proposes that these primary and secondary objectives were in fact reversed. Martin Talty suggests that Clancy's journey from Dublin to London was to satisfy musical rather than financial needs 'he had already met anybody who was worth meeting in the musical world in Dublin, but he wanted to develop his knowledge to the ultimate' (Martin Talty, tribute concert to Willie Clancy, SSWC 1982, OAC). The re-telling of his, albeit brief, exile in England is nuanced to retrieve music-making to centre-stage which stands in stark contrast to the emigration culture of 1950s Ireland.⁵ To some extent Martin Talty (and others) re-write Clancy's actions to fit the mythical hero status he has achieved since his untimely death and the extraordinary success of the School established in his name. The repeated enunciation of Willie Clancy's incessant search for the notes of an authentic and traditional voice, in conjunction with the access that he brings to West Clare piping, underpins the foundational essence of SSWC. The cultural authority of the School resides in the

⁵ The trope of musical journeys remains a contemporary one for Irish traditional musicians. An *Irish Times* article in May 2013 featured Frankie Gavin, virtuoso fiddle player of De Dannan fame, speaking to the necessity for traditional musicians to travel beyond Ireland in order to maintain a regular income, a view that is reiterated by Fintan Vallely in the Preface to *Crosbhuíalach an Cheoil 2* (Waters, 2013; Vallely et al., 2013). Clear markers of difference however delineate Gavin's narrative from that of the post-World War II musicians and contemporaries of Willie Clancy. Gavin not only makes his living from his craft but modern mobilities render the permanence of emigration to choice rather than necessity.

heroic status of its namesake and the mythical status that has attained since his death because 'to remember is to make the past actual' (Connerton, 1989: 46).

Kearney reminds us that 'without mythology, our hopes and memories are homeless' (Kearney, 1984: 80). However, he also points to the need for myths to be tied into and part of reality, in order to make sense of what we experience. An illustration of this process of myth-making is realised in the privileging of tune versions, the re-enactments of which makes them definitive. Utilising an example pertaining to Willie Clancy, Mick (banjo) O'Connor recalled his first time going to Willie Clancy's house in the company of Tommy McCarthy in order to secure the 'correct' version of a tune. 'I remember Tommy McCarthy saying "I want to check the last part of the Long Gold Ring" (he lifts it) you know the last part and Willie played it for us. It was like a little master class from him (Mick banjo O'Connor interview, SSWC 2010). Willie Clancy's tune versions transmitted both through oral memory and via recordings, are part of the legacy on which his mythical status is cemented into reality. While O'Flynn notes that 'authenticity is negatively linked to the commodification of music products', equally these products have a role to play in the 'the mythologization and festishization' of Irish traditional music (O'Flynn, 2009: 173). A further paradox created by the fixed versions that survive Clancy is that in transcribing his tunes, Pat Mitchell admits that 'Willie himself did not think there was only one correct way to play a tune; he kept changing it as he went along' (Mitchell, 1976: 11). Despite the 'fixing' of his versions, the creative process that informs them is integral. According to Mitchell, 'Willie's unique personal style shines through the many influences he incorporated into his playing' (Mitchell, 2009). Indeed O'Rochain refers to T.S. Eliot's analogy of the creative process of the poet or artist, who must draw on older strands of the tradition and then attempt to wed his own talent to it (O'Rochain, 1975: 59). Any account of a living tradition is necessarily an account of musical change. James Cowdery draws attention to Cecil Sharp's conclusion that folk music performers garner the most respect when they 'introduce changes or variations into their music ... that ultimately satisfy the demands of the forces of continuity (of general style) and selection (of the musical community)' (Cowdery, 1990: 1). SSWC facilitates continuity, not just of myth-making, but also of a space in which this engagement by musicians in a new creative dialogue can take place. The creative renewal and processes of re-traditionalisation at SSWC are an on-going act of surrogation, as the vacancies left by

previous musicians are recalled and celebrated and creatively renewed. This compares with what Richard Kearney refers to as 'the timeless tradition of dead generations' as musicians turn backwards to reference previous generations (Kearney, 1984: 71). The curatorial role of SSWC facilitates the on-going process of surrogation that keeps Irish traditional music away from the brink of depletion as individuals who personify the tradition, or represent 'local' aspects of the tradition are cherished in both life and death. The role of transmission, commemoration and performance in the process of surrogation, memories encoded in performance, and the meta-communications which bridge the realm between imagined and real form a key aspect to the re-traditionalising narrative of the School.

'This troublesome bunch of sticks': Contextualising the uilleann pipes²⁶

Willie Clancy, the School's eponym, is an uilleann piping hero whose techniques resonate through the generations of pipers that follow. A multi-instrumentalist, Clancy was a flute and tin-whistle player, a singer, dancer and storyteller, but it is as an uilleann piper that he is most revered.²⁷ The uilleann pipes are imbued with historical as well as musical value, embodying a unique cultural symbolism. The image of him playing the pipes on the front cover of the minimalist SSWC brochure, feeds into a wider global symbolism in which the image and sound of Irish traditional music is represented by the uilleann pipes (see Appendix 1). According to Breandán Breathnach references to piping in Ireland date back to pre-Norman Ireland of the eleventh century (Breathnach, 1996 [1971]: 69).²⁸ However, the current form of Irish pipes - the uilleann pipes (also referred to as the Union pipes) - developed in the early nineteenth century when it is widely believed to have replaced the harp as the indigenous instrument of Ireland. Due to the socio-economic consequences of the Great Famine of the 1840s, the fortune of the uilleann pipes and its players waned. Of the pipers who did survive this

²⁶ From an interview with Willie Clancy conducted by Breandan O Ciobhain for RTE Radio 1, November 1972.

A comprehensive representation of his uilleann piping is available on *The Gold Ring - Uilleann Piping from Co. Clare*, the most recent compilation of his recording which covers the entire span of his playing career. Produced and assembled by Peter Browne, it charts the main influences on his playing which Browne notes are Garrett Barry, Johnny Doran, Leo Rowsome, John Potts and Seamus Ennis (Browne, 2009).

²⁷ Breandán Breathnach (1912-1985) was an Irish music collector, an expert on the tradition and an authority on the uilleann pipes. A founder member and Chairman of NPU, he was widely involved with SSWC. His marriage to Lena Donnellan from Mullagh, Co. Clare, further strengthened his links to Co. Clare music and musicians such as Willie Clancy (Carolan, 2005).

period, many ended their days in poverty and Garrett Barry and the Galway piper Martin Reilly, for example, both died in workhouses in counties Clare and Galway. On the verge of extinction, the uilleann pipes subsequently become an instrument of revival. The instrument was privileged by the Gaelic League, the only instrument besides the harp to have its own competition at the Feis Ceoil and was subsequently championed by dedicated revivalist institutions such as the Cork and Dublin Pipers' Clubs founded in 1898 and 1900 respectively. According to Sean Donnelly, the term uilleann itself (as opposed to Union) while suggested in the late eighteenth century, only became the more common term for the pipes under the influence of the Gaelic Revival of the 1890s (Donnelly, 2002). Various factors thwarted the survival of the uilleann pipes. Notwithstanding the skills and techniques required to master the instrument, obtaining a set of pipes was complicated by the artisan skills required in their making, leading to issues of cost and availability. As a result, the uilleann pipes held and continue to hold a unique position within the revived Irish music tradition and an engagement in learning signals an extra-musical dedication that encompasses both material and symbolic values. All of these values inform Willie Clancy's fascination for the uilleann pipes demonstrated by his response on receiving his first set of practice pipes from Felix Doran: 'I was the richest man in the world that night' (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972: 11).

The commemoration of Willie Clancy's legacy as an uilleann piper is central to the organisation of SSWC. Indeed, the musical and social practices of Willie Clancy during his lifetime are vital to the vision the School both creates and celebrates. NPU plays an integral role at SSWC organising 'a school within a school' providing not just piping tuition, but also workshops in uilleann pipe-making, maintenance and reed-making (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). There is a particular emphasis on piping, the tutorial input of which was initially managed by Breandán Breathnach 'the spiritual father of the whole thing, especially where piping was concerned' (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009). Consequently the role of SSWC within the revival of the uilleann piping tradition is widely acknowledged (Ó Rócháin, 2013: 106). For any piper, the ability to maintain pipes and engage in reed-making are essential skills. As Willie Clancy himself noted, 'a piper has to be very much mechanically-inclined as well as musically-inclined to keep this troublesome bunch of sticks in some kind of tune' (*Radio interview with Breandán Ó Ciobháin*, RTÉ 1972). A carpenter by trade

and a noted maker of reeds, Willie Clancy was in the process of establishing himself as a pipe-maker prior to his death. Above all other aspects of SSWC, the piping section represents the heritage of Willie Clancy, and the centrality of his legacy as an uilleann piper to the School reflects the way in which uilleann piping is central to the Irish music tradition. While all core instruments of the tradition are taught, the uilleann pipes are thus privileged in multiple ways.

Designating the School in his honour demonstrates Willie Clancy's affective power and the names 'Willie Clancy' and the 'Willie Clancy Summer School' modulate meanings within an Irish traditional music spectrum that range from uilleann piper to hero. His current status as musical icon and star, both attributes which were embedded in his earthly disposition, have accrued additional meaning over time since his death, heightened by the additional symbolism of the School's name. The title of the School, rather than fixing one cultural meaning to his name, produces instead a cultural text, whose meaning is created and recreated continuously, in dialogue between the School, its attendees, the community of practising musicians (and in particular pipers), and the media. The following section details the origins and development of the Willie Clancy Week as well as portraying on-going operational and logistical aspects.²⁹

Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy

The first School took place in the summer of 1973, shortly after the death of Willie Clancy in January of that year. However, accounts suggest that discussions about cultivating a pedagogical initiative such as a summer school were underway before his death and 'the occasion created by death offered ... [the community of Miltown] an opportunity to affirm its semiautonomous but discreetly submerged existence within or against the obligatory rituals of the better publicized fiction called the dominant culture' (Roach, 1996: 60, see also Kearns and Taylor, 2003, Ó Rócháin, 2011). Honko asserts that in the 1970s, attention was increasingly being drawn to traditional culture in the construction of regions and nations, partly as an outcome of the growing popularisation of folk music during that same time (Honko, 1988: 12). The emergence of new actors in the field of Irish traditional music with different ideas about the locus

²⁹ See also Kearns and Taylor for additional insights into the history, organisation and flow of the School, recounted through a daily diary perspective of the week-long School (2003).

of music performance ensued. Clearly then, the instigation of SSWC is recognition of the submerged cultural strengths, potential and value tied into music-making in West Clare and like *Dal gCais* the journal launched in the previous year (1972), provided a means of self-representation that foregrounded these cultural strengths and in doing so firmly rejected perceptions of deprivation that were facing many small rural communities in Ireland at that time (McDonagh, 2002).³⁰ From a rural development perspective, SSWC constitutes an activity that achieves social, economic and cultural vibrancy, and can therefore be conceptualised as a locally-led intervention of socio-cultural and economic regeneration (Ray, 2006). During the 1970s, increasing attention was drawn to the transitory state of traditional rural communities highlighted for example by the publication *Inishkillane* in 1973 (the founding year of SSWC) and signalled in that same year by the foundation of the Sociological Association of Ireland (Brody, 1973).³¹ Increased global cultural flows informed these events and the foundation of SSWC, facilitating the re-traditionalisation of cultural practices in their places of origin and reinstating axiological modes of continuity as local masters re-traditionalise performance and transmission, utilising locally embedded resources, skills and knowledge.³²

According to the local *Clare Champion* newspaper report following Willie Clancy's death, a local committee quickly formed to establish both a fund and to organise a fitting tribute that would 'perpetuate the memory of a great musician' (*Clare Champion* 16 Feb 1973). Ó Rócháin highlights the presence of local musicians Martin Talty, Paddy Joe McMahon and Junior Crehan and the contribution of *Comhaltas timire cooil*

³⁰ The journal *Dal gCais: Clare its people and culture*, edited by Muiris Ó Rócháin and Harry Hughes, was initiated to valorise County Clare's unique cultural markers.

³¹ A widely influential account of rural Ireland was published by American anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball based on fieldwork conducted in County Clare during the 1930s. While its publication proved controversial, it informed many subsequent (mis)understandings, discourses and images of rural Ireland (Byrne et al., 2001 [1940]).

³² This is in contrast to Irish music festivals in North America which begin a short time later (the mid-1970s). Moloney cites the television mini-series based on Alex Haley's book *Roots* as a major impetus for the groundswell of cultural and ethnic heritage awareness that followed (Moloney, 2006). Clear resonances exist between SSWC and Irish Fest in Milwaukee founded in 1980 and now the biggest Irish Festival in the world, not least the symbolic value attached to the non-profit imperative underlining its original purpose and the influence it exerts on other festivals such as the Dublin (Ohio) Irish festival and the North Texas Irish festival (Ibid.). However, the symbolic significances, meanings and interpretations in the constitution of the trilogy of transmission, commemoration and performance at these festivals is an area for further investigation.

Séamus Mac Mathúna on this committee (Ó Rócháin, 2011: 754).³³ The first SSWC in 1973, was run in conjunction with Comhaltas, from which subsequently emerged the highly successful Comhaltas summer school - Scoil Éigse (more of which in the following chapter). In 1974 SSWC achieved independent status and since that time developed a symbiotic relationship with NPU.³⁴ The involvement of NPU is significant. Such was the encompassing musical identity of Willie Clancy as an uilleann piper, it was imperative that the main body for the organisation of uilleann piping would play a part in his legacy. NPU also had what Fintan Vallely describes as, 'a dominating aesthetic sense of what was "traditional"' (Vallely, 2004: 19). Founded in 1968, a number of the members of NPU had moved away from Comhaltas and the "'national", "broad front" policy on traditional music revival' that Comhaltas was perceived by some to embody (Ibid.). Breandán Breathnach, Chairman of NPU at that time, and a key revivalist figure, played a leading role in the piping element of SSWC and as Nicholas Carolan states, '[he] was again to the fore, organising, criticising, improving' (Carolan, 2005).³⁵

The uniform markers of success that encompass SSWC mask any cultural and productive tensions which existed at its outset. Such tensions between differing ideologies and worldviews reveal the struggles, however fleeting, to shape the dynamics of this emergent, re-traditionalising field of cultural production.³⁶ Local issues notwithstanding, the de-territorialising musical outcomes historically contingent with national revivalism clearly informed the pedagogical impulse on which the School was founded. Drawing on the national success of Irish traditional music revival modelled by Comhaltas, the committee of SSWC, with a posthumous Willie Clancy at the helm, created a re-territorialised covenantal relationship with the performance

³³ Brid Talty lists additional committee members: JC Talty, Paddy Malone, Jimmy Ward, Micheál O'Friel, Sean Talty, Seán Reid, Rena Lynch, Peadar O'Loughlin, Michael Falsey and Mrs Crotty (Talty, 2013: 236-39).

³⁴ Detailed accounts of the authorial provenance of the School and both the involvement and departure of Comhaltas after the first School are widely available and need no rehearsal here (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993: 264-5, Kearns and Taylor, 2003: 51-3, Talty, 2013: 243-54, 264-6). Brid Talty states that a split occurred in the committee at the end of the second year when it was decided to continue without the backing and financial involvement of Comhaltas and details the parties involved (Talty, 2013: 243-49). Harry Hughes suggests that this disagreement occurred later, in 1977 (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

³⁵ A succinct summary of Breathnach's life is presented in the article from which the above quote is taken (Carolan, 2005).

³⁶ This is not an uncommon phenomenon in the context of revivalism: see for example Livingston (1999) and Connell and Gibson (2003: 245-50).

rubric 'West Clare'. SSWC set out with a very simple format, but annual repetition codified and institutionalised this format, creating a model that has proved a sustainable template for other Schools.³⁷

Conceptually, SSWC shares the revivalist impulses fundamental to the origins of both the Gaelic League (in 1893) and more recently Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

Comhaltas, founded in 1951 and still the main organising body for Irish traditional music, continued the Gaelic League model of using competition as a pivotal revivalist technique. This manifested itself in a series of county and provincial fleadhanna (music festivals based on competition) culminating each summer with Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, a major annual event which currently draws over 250,000 people, and has attracted a significant attendance from its inception.³⁸ In the early 1970s, the founders of the Willie Clancy Week, like many members of Comhaltas, were concerned with the challenges created by competition and the commercialisation and festivalisation of the Fleadh competition festival itself. Like other revivalist projects, both nationally and internationally, Comhaltas suffered criticism for negative outcomes created by competition. Fears were expressed about the narrowing of styles within Irish music as 'winning' styles were imitated and peripheral styles were neglected or lost.³⁹ An outcome of the competitive process was that cultural authority in many cases was removed from competing practitioners, and transferred to, or co-opted by, a discrete number of revivalists, adjudicators and winners. Commenting on festivalisation and ancillary attendance at the Fleadh during the 1960s, Séamus Mac Mathúna deplored the 'guitar-bangers who have 'move[d] in and take[n] over the show' and stated that 'unless drastic changes can be brought about in the next year or so, the Fleadh, as we know it, should be scrapped to allow An Comhaltas to get down to more fruitful work for the music' (Mac Mathúna, 1964: 61-63). Eamon Ó Muirí, ex-chairperson of Comhaltas reiterated this fear, stating that the 'organisation will lose its identity in forests of Beatle hair-dos and fleeces of face-ŭngus' (Ó Muirí, 1964: 67-69). These feelings, which represented a widespread anxiety within Comhaltas engendered by the growing popularity of the Fleadh, were just one of many factors that influenced the

³⁷ The manner in which musical, social and discursive constructs of this field of cultural production were and are produced to re-traditionalise a regional style and identity for West Clare informs the discussion in Chapter 5.

³⁸ See <http://comhaltas.ie/events/competitions> [accessed 31 October 2012].

³⁹ For further information on this see Fleming (2004: 227-57). Ní Fhuartháin (2011: 281-333).

establishment of the Willie Clancy Week. Director and founding member Muiris Ó Rócháin (1944-2011) spoke of the reduction in spaces for music-making at the Fleadh, which he saw resulting in the side-lining of some musicians, older practitioners in particular.⁴⁰ SSWC was founded then not just to revive traditional practices, but to build a community in which those practices could take place, a community which actively facilitated older musicians, and re-traditionalised inter-generational respect and preserves of cultural authority. In keeping with this vision, older musicians are actively valued at Miltown each year. West Clare musician Marty O’Keefe, born in 1912 and a resident of New York since 1943 is a regular visitor to the Willie Clancy Week. In the summer of 2012, his one hundredth year, Marty performed at the graveside tribute to Willie Clancy as well as demonstrating his multi-instrumental prowess at both the fiddle and concertina recitals. Representing both a West Clare and Irish-American heritage, Marty and his music were honoured and embraced by those who heard him, and his performances exemplified a core foundational impulse of the School.⁴¹ Comhaltas perceived itself as the ‘authority for enlightenment in Irish music’, the main organiser of Irish traditional music practice and therefore a key author in constructing the narrative of Irish traditional music (Mac Mathúna, 1964: 61-63).⁴² The authorial intent of the Willie Clancy Week, however, was to privilege local ‘masters of tradition’, valorising Willie Clancy as above all, a West Clare piper and tradition-bearer. Accordingly, there was unwillingness on the part of its organising committee to allow the perceived ‘nationalising’ organisation Comhaltas to take control.⁴³ As Philip Bohlman notes ‘[o]nce folk music is uprooted from its pristine world and put on the stage of the nation, it loses its natural beauty’ since ‘the moment folk music enters the national sphere ... it ... loses the luster of authenticity’ (Bohlman, 2011: 9).⁴⁴ Likewise Ó Giolláin points to the significance of the local in ‘providing a useful record of the

⁴⁰ Ó Rócháin witnessed first-hand the marginalisation of older musicians at the Fleadh during the 1960s and envisaged creating a space for those discomfited by its increasing festivalisation (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

⁴¹ This is not to suggest that other cultural organisations do not celebrate older tradition-bearers, rather it is a general comment on the challenges presented, particularly during the 1960s, by the identity of the Fleadh.

⁴² Ní Fhuartháin presents evidence to suggest that ‘by the late 1950s, Comhaltas considered itself the authoritative institution of not just traditional music, but traditional culture in general’ (Ní Fhuartháin 2011: 249).

⁴³ A positive outcome for both organisations resulted, with the first SSWC providing a model for the subsequent highly successful Scoil Éigse, discussed further in the next chapter.

⁴⁴ Bohlman also notes the role of the Irish Diaspora in the creation of a national musical canon. He singles out the efforts of Francis O’Neill, who collected music from the geographically diverse post-famine Irish community in the United States (Bohlman, 2011: 42-3).

anterior and the peripheral within the linear and centralizing narrative of the nation' (Ó Giolláin, 2005: 10-11). With its territorial and re-traditionalising imperative, the establishment of SSWC kindled twinkles of authenticity dulled by the nationalising Comhaltas canon to regain a former resplendence.⁴⁵

Re-traditionalisation

A central theme for understanding SSWC as developed by this thesis is the concept of re-traditionalisation. Explaining re-traditionalisation as an inevitable result of modernity, Ó Giolláin describes it as

the creation of new traditions, the re-circulation of dead or moribund cultural traditions, the reorientation of traditional cultural production to modern contexts or the heightened definition of existing cultural materials (Ó Giolláin, 2005: 17).

In this description he includes 'the dynamic and vigorous reorientation of forms of traditional practice grounded in everyday life' (ibid.). Its primary significance is at the local level (although as Ó Giolláin remarks it invariably benefits from national and even global support). The construction of Irish traditional music at SSWC highlights the importance of continuity with previous generations, by privileging and commemorating those 'masters' who have passed away and the rural contexts in which their music-making practices took place. The creation of SSWC as a festival space for the celebration of Irish traditional music recognises that the events taking place during the week of the School are no longer commonplace. Irish traditional music is therefore something different, a celebration that surpasses the mundane, while it inherently celebrates something older and less progressive (Ó Giolláin, 2000: 8, 12). But in celebrating these 'pasts' in the present, it removes tropes of decay and decline, re-traditionalising the present by harnessing and engendering new generations of musicians, new masters and stars. SSWC encapsulates the practices of a living tradition situated within a movement of revivalism responding to the dynamics of earlier

⁴⁵ A parallel might be drawn with the State-funded Abbey Theatre. Tomás Mac Anna noted in *Hibernia* 1971 that 'the Abbey's reasons for being is not, and never has been solely theatrical, it is essentially national' quoted in Ferriter (2012: 261).

revivalisms and fashioning a site of creative renewal. Irish traditional music is located in the cultural activities it gives rise to, and the Willie Clancy Week for more than forty years has provided a key site for the exploration of its adaptation, translation, reception and appropriation (Rigney, 2008: 349).⁴⁶ The success of the School and the phenomena of Irish traditional music summer schools that now populate the months of July and August, demonstrates the sustainable balance that the re-traditionalisation of Irish traditional music and its re-territorialisation in a rural context, can achieve.⁴⁷

The personalities of governance

Vallely's description of 'dedicated idealists ... people who make things happen by belief, commitment, foresight, planning and persistence' epitomises the two key animators who have guided and shaped SSWC: Muiris Ó Rócháin and Harry Hughes (Vallely et al., 2013: 13).⁴⁸ The illness and untimely death of Muiris Ó Rócháin in 2011 has altered this dynamic but his leadership role during the first forty years of the School informed its very essence and continues to do so.⁴⁹ Demonstrating a degree of conformation with revivalist trends, neither men were either local or musical practitioners; Muiris Ó Rócháin and Harry Hughes, both school teachers, hail from Kerry and Mayo respectively.⁵⁰ As such they brought to a committee of otherwise local practitioners a skill-set and network that could access centralised (that is Dublin-based) avenues of power and influence through connections to the Civil Service, UCD, RTÉ, the *Irish Times* and Comhaltas. John McDonagh points to the inherent weaknesses of community-based initiatives in the face of national Government policy. He notes that

⁴⁶ Ann Rigney refers to 'texts' more generally rather than Irish traditional music in particular.

⁴⁷ There is a relevant literature in 'development studies' that also explores the tradition-modernity binary and addresses how tradition can function as a resource that promotes modernisation. Rather than treating tradition and modernity as a set of mutually exclusive concepts 'new modernisation studies' a school of development studies demonstrates how they coexist and intermingle (So, 1990: 60-87).

⁴⁸ Muiris Ó Rócháin displays many of the characteristics of what Max Weber was first to describe as 'charismatic leadership' (Weber et al., 1978). The skill to shape the sometimes diametrical attitudes, beliefs and values of locals, organisers and attendees demonstrated by Ó Rócháin is tantamount to the School's success and reflective of the way in which charismatic leadership is linked to movements of social change and renewal (Levay, 2010).

⁴⁹ Public recognition of Ó Rócháin's life's work was demonstrated, during his lifetime by the award of 'Gradam na gCeoltóirí' at *Gradam TG4*, 2010 (TG4, 2010). He was awarded a posthumous doctorate by the University of Limerick in March 2012 and the eloquence of his obituaries pay tribute to his immense contribution to Irish life, see for example Hughes (2012) and the *Irish Times* (22 October 2011).

⁵⁰ Neil Rosenberg (1993) and Livingston (1999) for example, speak to the urban middle-class intellectual constituency that advocate folk music revivals.

while community input is ‘valued in terms of government rhetoric, rarely [has it] instigated, led or controlled the direction in which development took place in any given community’ (McDonagh, 2002: 107). This hypothesizes the difficulties confronting local committees without the standing of outsiders such as Hughes and Ó Rócháin.⁵¹ Their presence corresponds to Whelan’s revivalist ‘social constituency’ list in which he includes ‘journalists, publicans, schoolteachers, clerk, artisan and cleric’ and resounds with Tamara Livingston’s ‘basic ingredients for a music revival’ in which she also indicates the ‘middle class’ orientation of revivalists (Whelan, 1993: 35, Livingston, 1999: 69). Furthermore, Richard Voase, drawing on Bourdieu suggests ‘[t]he reviewing of a work by a legitimate critic in a legitimate forum, such as the arts page of a broadsheet newspaper, itself confers legitimacy on the work’ (Voase, 2009: 152). Muiris’ access to Donal Foley, deputy-editor of the *Irish Times* ensured that the School attained exactly this type of consistent national coverage and legitimization.⁵² However, the entire local committee and indeed Willie Clancy himself were beneficiaries of the fruits of an additional layer of work, namely the music revival stimulated by the foundation Comhaltas which by 1973, had been in existence for over twenty years.

By 1973, Comhaltas, through their branch structure, had strengthened and built on existing musical networks throughout the country. The organisation of a fund-raising concert for SSWC in Liberty Hall, Dublin, in June of 1973, just a few months after Clancy’s death, demonstrates the collective networking power of the early SSWC committee, mobilising musicians such as the Chieftains, Tommy Peoples and Matt Molloy to take part.⁵³ Indeed during his own lifetime, Willie Clancy had tapped into and widened this same network through the pursuits of learning and performing on the uilleann pipes. A pivotal link in this network was Clare-based revivalist musician and county engineer Seán Reid (1907-1978, originally from Donegal). As the owner of a car from the 1930s, his actions in physically bringing musicians together, to perform at

⁵¹ Chris Eipper in his ethnography of the town of Bantry similarly describes the ‘activist organizer’: the Bantry curate. Arriving from ‘the outside’ and therefore lacking kinship or other local connections to the town, gives him ‘room for manoeuvre’ as he fulfils the role of ‘local influential’ (Eipper, 1986: 104).

⁵² See for example, (Foley, 1973, 1974, 1977a, 1978, MacConnell, 1978, Ó Rócháin, 1977). By way of contrast, it was ten years before the Galway Arts Festival featured in an editorial in the *Irish Times* (Quinn, 2005b: 2+).

⁵³ This high-profile, Dublin-based, annual fund raising concert continued for several years featuring De Dannan, Paddy Keenan, the Ó Domhnaills, as well as maintaining a Clare element: The Miltown Trio and the Mullagh Set.

events such as the Oireachtas and Fleadhanna Ceoil and in transporting the Tulla Céilí Band, of which he was a member, had considerable influence on the development of a ‘County Clare’ performance rubric.⁵⁴ By conveying musicians such as Willie Clancy from one part of the country to another, Seán Reid facilitated the sharing of their musical endowment with multiple audiences. Reid therefore bears significant responsibility for developing the return musical pathway to Miltown as visits to Willie Clancy were reciprocated. Despite its peripheral location, the road to Miltown Malbay was well trodden by musicians who came to sit and bask in the aura of Willie Clancy in both life and death (more details of which in Chapter 4). The resulting attendance from the very first year of SSWC demonstrates just how well this musical highway to Miltown was signposted. As Geoffrey Cubitt explains; ‘events [...] take on significance from patterns of expectation that are rooted in the memory of earlier episodes. Most events derive at least part of the meaning that is attributed to them from a pre-existing understanding of what is going on, to which the memory of earlier events must make a contribution’ (Cubitt, 2007: 208). It is at this juncture that the image of SSWC as a local organic utterance, in a rural, peripheral, location, celebrating West Clare music as embodied in its legendary figure-head - Willie Clancy - is confounded. Rather, the origins of the School are wholly intertwined within a discourse and traditional canon operating at a national and international level and the School is a marker in the re-traditionalising of Irish traditional music in the rural west from which it was perceived to originate.

Enclavic and heterogeneous spaces

Three core elements underpin the structured and formal part of SSWC: classes, lectures and recitals. These correspond to what Tim Edensor (writing in the context of cultural tourism) describes as ‘enclavic spaces’, the elements of tourist spaces that are controlled and maintained, often through funding, furthering the aims of the dominant discourse of the event (Edensor, 2000). Classes, according to Muiris Ó Rócháin, are ‘the bedrock of the School’ and in its formative years were given in uilleann piping, fiddle, flute and tin whistle, instruments which reflected the musical capacities of

⁵⁴ Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin also notes how ‘throughout the 1940s, Reid promoted the art of piping in Clare, working diligently to locate practice sets of pipes for beginners, and furnish experienced players with full sets’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 157).

Willie Clancy and therefore an expertise that emerged from within the local community of Miltown (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁵⁵ As such they were agreeable and appropriate symbols to represent the ethos of the School. This symbolic representation expanded in 1980 with the introduction of the concertina, preceded in 1975 by the initiation of an annual concertina recital and cognisant of the strong Clare concertina connection on account of practitioners such as Elizabeth Crotty and Packie Russell.⁵⁶

In stark contrast to the way in which the School has subsequently unfolded, the early years of SSWC were decidedly modest. According to Jackie Small it was a minority event and when interviewed, John Joe Tuttle struggled to recall the earlier years of the School (Jackie Small interview, Oct 2009, John Joe Tuttle interview, SSWC 2010).⁵⁷ Eighty students took part in the first year and several sources state that during these first few years, many Miltown locals were unaware that it was even taking place (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁵⁸ Likewise Terry Moylan describes the first ten years of SSWC as being ‘a relatively low-key affair’

In those days the presence of the students hardly changed the appearance of the town at all. ... The daily round of classes, lectures, recitals and convivial gatherings could take place without seeming to disturb the pace of life in the town, and it was possible without much difficulty to find a place to share tunes or songs in any of the town’s many hostelries (Moylan, 2008).

Clearly the School has grown significantly since these first ten years and the arrival of set-dancing on the teaching agenda in 1982 (which Moylan goes on to discuss in the same article) was a major contributory factor to the subsequent increase in

⁵⁵ There was also a vestigial oddity; a workshop in adjudication and teaching, which did not appear again and suggests a particular input from Comhaltas in the first year (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

⁵⁶ Noel Hill described the exponential growth in the concertina numbers in the first three years from four in the first year to eight in the second and sixteen in the third. He noted also that there are now sixteen concertina teachers (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013).

⁵⁷ James Kelly admitted that nobody realised what it would turn into over the years (James Kelly interview, SSWC 2009) and as Angela Casey put it, ‘it was just something they wanted to do for a local friend’ (Angela Casey interview, SSWC 2011).

⁵⁸ Harry Hughes confirms that no actual records exist for the first year of the School, however repetition of this figure, eighty, in various sources has established this as a fact in the narrative of the School. Alternative narratives do exist however, and Brid Talty suggests an attendance of forty students at the first School in 1973 (Talty, 2013: 248).

attendance.⁵⁹ Indeed Helen Brennan attributes the phenomenal acceleration of the set-dancing revival, that had slowly taken root from the 1960s under the auspices of Comhaltas and GAA competitions, to the introduction of dancing classes at SSWC (Brennan, 1999: 159-60).

Attendance numbers at the School grew during the 1980s and 1990s, peaking at 1,500 in 2005 and settling at 1,200 in 2009 (Ó Rócháin, 2011: 755). New elements have progressively been added to the school, although as Muiris qualified ‘we introduced nothing unless we felt that it had something to give culturally; we weren’t bringing in something just for the sake of adding a new dimension’ (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁶⁰ Traditional singing workshops were introduced in 1985, something of an anomaly in the classes provided at SSWC in that it is a singing demonstration, where guest singers share their songs and styles rather than an actual tuition class. Instigated by Tom Munnely ‘he introduced his students to singers, songs, and thereby to Irish traditional aesthetics [... and] maintained that, by definition, folk singing cannot be taught’ (Scott, 2007: 277).⁶¹ Dancers comprise the highest number of attending students, although the fiddle workshops (with approximately thirty classes utilising the services of over fifty tutors in both 2009 and 2010) continue to attract the highest attendance out of all the instrument classes (Kearns and Taylor, 2003: 96). This part of the School informs the ethnographic research central to Chapter 3.⁶²

Change at the School happens gradually and Muiris intimated that the introduction of any new instrument was the subject of much discussion and debate. Attention was drawn to this point by Kieran Hanrahan during the 2012 concert ‘Ómós do Mhuiris Ó Rócháin’. Banjo and harmonica classes were new additions to the School in 2005 and having been appointed to organise the banjo section, Kieran asked Muiris how they would advertise that the banjo would now be taught at the School. Muiris’ response, with which Kieran regaled the audience at the concert, epitomises continuity and change at the School: ‘we’re just going to put it in the brochure, the same as everything

⁵⁹ Beginning with just one class in 1982, there are now ten dance workshops teaching a variety of traditional dance types, taught by a team of over thirty teachers (Ó Rócháin, 2011).

⁶⁰ Concerning the introduction of button accordion classes in 1987 Charlie Harris commented that ‘it took all those years [since 1973] for it to be accepted’ (Charlie Harris interview, SSWC 2010).

⁶¹ The singing workshop is currently led by Ian Lee and Brian Mullen.

⁶² A number of the fiddle tutors co-teach, which explains the discrepancy between the number of teachers and the number of workshops.

else. We don't want the place littered with them [banjos] either' (Kieran Hanrahan, Ómós do Muiris Ó Rócháin concert SSWC 2012).⁶³ The onset of harp classes in 2007 is the most recent addition to the symbolic repertoire of SSWC.⁶⁴ Welcoming these new instruments into the Miltown fold, reflects both a germane acceptance by the tradition, and a SSWC seal of approval, which operates at a symbolic 'whole tradition' level; however the process of choosing which bits of the tradition to valorise and revive is not without tension and contestation.⁶⁵ The piano accordion, for example, remains outside of the taught musical instrument inventory at SSWC (although it is taught at the Comhaltas-run Scoil Éigse and other summer schools) demonstrating a sustained difficulty with its acceptance (despite the endorsement of Comhaltas) within the wider Irish traditional music canon.⁶⁶ Such tensions are not an unusual feature within revivalist organisations and a pertinent example is demonstrated by the rejection of set dancing as a 'foreign import' by the Gaelic League in the early twentieth century (Brennan, 1999: 29-43).⁶⁷ These difficulties reflect the on-going challenges faced by gate-keeper institutions in negotiating the boundaries of tradition when faced with the often conflicting issues of hybridity and continuity (as represented at SSWC by the piano-accordion). John Connell and Chris Gibson note that 'authenticity and credibility are constructed in relation to how continuity and change are perceived' and the sense of continuity maintained by SSWC achieved by small-scale and unhurried change contributes to the perception of authenticity enjoyed by the School (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 44). Design-wise, little has changed from the vision projected by its original founders and the most considerable and visual change in the School has been its growth in attendance. Set-dance workshops added in 1982 contributed substantially

⁶³ Ó Rócháin reveals that similar issues to do with limited space and concerns related to attracting too many attendees motivated the title 'advanced button accordion class' in the brochure of 1987 when the button accordion was introduced for the first time as a taught instrument (Ó Rócháin, 2013: 105).

⁶⁴ Helen Lawlor records twenty two summer schools and festivals that cater for the harp, but name-checks only SSWC, demonstrating the legitimising weight that the School carries (Lawlor, 2012: 104).

⁶⁵ For a discussion of this in the context of the English Folk Revival see Boyes (1999).

⁶⁶ The absence of a workshop in piano accordion has not gone without comment. Edel McLaughlin raised the point in an article in JMI in 2006 (McLaughlin, 2006). The same publication carried an article by Aibhlín McCrann who likewise questioned the absence of harp workshops at SSWC (McCrann, 2006). The arrival of the harp as a taught instrument at SSWC in 2007 perhaps demonstrates the on-going difficulty in reconciling the piano accordion with what can be construed as authentic and local to West Clare. Máire O'Keefe's research on the journey of the button accordion into the Irish music tradition demonstrates over a longer-term the traditionalising timeframe required for the passage of an instrument into the Irish traditional instrument lexicon (Ní Chaoimh, 2010).

⁶⁷ A cohort of the Gaelic League rejected set-dancing as part of the national canon of dance. Moloney suggests that this sanitization of dancing was in-part class-based, corresponding to the 'neo-Victorian sensibilities and ideology espoused by members of the upper echelons of the League' (Moloney, 2008: 3).

to this growth and a variety of dance types are now catered for. Four other workshops are also available; a foundation course in Irish traditional music, a discussion and demonstration workshop on traditional singing and since mid-2000, a conversational Irish language course and a course in Scottish Gaelic.⁶⁸ All of these new additions to the taught repertoire at the School reflect both continuity and change within the wider Irish music community and are made within the boundaries of what is perceived to be traditional. A key strength of the School is the modalities of transmission that occur in the classes, conceptualised as a re-traditionalisation of the master-apprentice dyad. Constituted as a dynamic memorial, scholars engage in an apprenticeship emerging at the end of the week, with an enhanced knowledge of the tradition and this forms the basis for discussion in Chapter 3.

SSWC is formally launched by a prominent member of the Irish traditional music community on the first Saturday evening of the week, followed immediately by the 'Breandán Breathnach Commemorative Lecture'. On average, three other afternoon lectures give a platform to recent Irish traditional music related research. A number of afternoon and evening recitals organised according to instrument-type, an afternoon tribute to a renowned musician and a closing concert comprise the 'formal' performative elements of the School and are discussed further in Chapter 5. The graveside tribute to Willie Clancy on the first Sunday afternoon is a key threshold event for the week. Its symbolic role within the School and its significance in the role of monumentalising the tradition and as establishing a ritual of commemoration is discussed in Chapter 4. Beyond these formal enclavic spaces, SSWC attracts an additional larger cohort, who rather than participating directly in the structured parts of the School's schedule occupy instead its 'heterogeneous spaces' (Edensor, 2000).⁶⁹ These attend to partake in, or soak up, the atmosphere created by the numerous music sessions which take place throughout the many pubs of Miltown and its environs on

⁶⁸ The Scottish Gaelic class demonstrates the institutional links between SSWC and *Colmcille* (a partnership programme between Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig promoting the use of Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic). It reflects the availability of funding from *Colmcille* to provide such tuition, acknowledging the shared cultural space between the two languages.

⁶⁹ The opposite of enclavic spaces, Edensor describes these as multifunctional spaces in which outcomes are less predictable and the boundaries are more blurred.

what would appear at times to be a twenty four hour basis.⁷⁰ Many of these sessions include the workshop teachers - ‘the masters of tradition’ amongst their ranks.⁷¹

A global school

Courting international visitors was never an explicit aim of the School; however, it does concur with its general ethos that ‘everyone is very, very welcome’ (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). The Willie Clancy Week succeeded in attracting an international cohort from its inception, reflecting the agency of Willie Clancy as a cultural broker and the School’s inheritance of this legacy. Séamus Mac Mathúna described Willie Clancy as Miltown’s

greatest attraction visitor-wise ... not a week passes without its quota of callers to the Clancy home, collectors, students from England and the Continent, Professors and scholars from the US, or just plain tourists, and of course lovers of piping from all parts of Ireland (S Mac Mathúna, 1973: 8).

Visitor numbers and visitor expenditure are important tangible outcomes, particularly in a tourist-dependent economy such as Miltown Malbay and the presence of international visitors contributes to an increased per capita spend.⁷² However, the economic benefits created by the School, whilst enjoyed by sectors of the town and its outlying areas do not influence, in any direct way at least, its organisation, ethos or delivery. The kudos warranted by this expanding international attendance does however boost the reputation of the School and confers additional authority onto both Miltown Malbay and County Clare as key Irish traditional music sites. Fashioning a symbiotic relationship with the School, international visitors have added to the critical mass achieved by steady growth. One of the big attractions for the international cohort is the sense of authenticity generated by the School, provided in no small part by the

⁷⁰ A Red C Poll commissioned by Fáilte Ireland found that 40% of Irish residents attended a festival in 2009. 22% of these stated attendance in the ‘trad music/dance festivals’ category (Nugent, 2012).

⁷¹ Mick Conneely spoke animatedly about the experiences of his first SSWC in 1984; ‘you’d walk into pubs and you’d see people you’d only ever seen before on the back of a record sleeve ... and listen to them playing in the flesh; unbelievable’ (Mick Conneely interview, SSWC 2009).

⁷² According to an interview given by Harry Hughes to the *Clare Champion* in 2012, ten out of the eighty people who attended the first School were from the continent or the UK. The current ratio (as of 2012) is 40:60 with 40% of School attendees coming from overseas (O’Connell, 2012).

continued high attendance of an Irish cohort. Simultaneously, international attention confirms the value of the School at the local and national level. The sense of authenticity that is nurtured at SSWC through careful gate-kept creative renewal and re-traditionalisation is the ultimate key to its success.⁷³ Irish traditional music at SSWC therefore is constituted simultaneously through the local and the global. Increasing cultural diversity is a relatively recent phenomenon in contemporary Ireland (in comparison to the UK for example) with Diarmaid Ferriter describing the 1970s Irish environment as ‘monocultural’ (Ferriter, 2012: 549). West Clare like many other rural areas had experienced little cultural diversity by way of inward migration, adding to the impact created and signified by the attending international cohort.⁷⁴ Denis Liddy recalled meeting his first ever American in the fiddle class at SSWC when he was a young attendee in the mid-1970s ‘I had never met an American before; she used to turn up in all sorts of weird and wonderful gear - totally exotic at the time’ (Dennis Liddy interview, SSWC 2010). Oisín Mac Diarmada similarly addressed the new experience that being in a class alongside people from other places afforded, noting also how it is much more commonplace and taken for granted now. He pin-pointed the experience of learning tunes from a German fiddle player with whom he shared a class in the mid-1980s as particularly remarkable and original for him at the time (Oisín Mac Diarmada interview, SSWC 2010). For the Irish contingent then, the learning experience has developed into a novel and intercultural one. Reporting for the *Irish Times* Michael MacConnell surmised, albeit a little more pithily:

the international aspect of the exercise is best summed up by the fact that a young Frenchman who was playing ‘Jenny’s Chickens’ in Marrinan’s pub on Tuesday could not speak a word of English (MacConnell, 1978).

The School now attracts visitors from countries across the globe, including those with no traditional diasporic links.⁷⁵ It embraces diaspora, but more pertinently, recognises

⁷³ McLaughlin and McLoone observe that the question of authenticity within music discourse in Ireland is prominent across various genres suggesting that a legacy of authenticity from folk and traditional music is carried through to Irish rock ideology (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012: 38).

⁷⁴ Michel Peillon speaks of the dense network across the planet that Ireland is in touch with through emigration (Peillon, 1983).

⁷⁵ Students from forty different countries registered in 2009 (Ó Rócháin, 2011: 755).

that Irish traditional music is no longer contained abroad by diasporic endeavour.⁷⁶ For an operation that has eschewed marketing policies, this demonstrates both the (often unacknowledged) ambassadorial role that touring Irish musicians play and the efficacy of positive word of mouth as it feeds back into communities of interest.⁷⁷ For the twenty-first century musician, SSWC offers a familiarisation not just with the mythical tropes and constructions of authenticity that imbue Irish traditional music by directly experiencing the resonances of Garrett Barry and Willie Clancy, but an opportunity for the enculturation of attitudes and behaviours through the experiential embodiment of those myths. Indeed the performance of ‘West Clare’ and of ‘the local’ is central this and is expounded on in Chapter 5.⁷⁸

Profiling attendees

The School does not cater for complete beginners in the instrument classes (with the exception of the uilleann pipes) and it is expected that the rudiments of the instrument and some degree of competency has been acquired. Furthermore, the three-hour morning workshop session is concentration-intensive (albeit with a tea-break half way through) and not suited to very young children. For these reasons the age cohort rarely dips below nine or ten year olds (and there is no upper age limit). Classes are divided by ability rather than age. Whilst a few of the classes at the fiddle school consisted entirely of under-eighteens, the majority included a mixture of adults and children. However, a number of seemingly straightforward factors make a significant contribution to the way in which the summer school accommodates all age cohorts in a mixed-group context. The tea-break for example plays a pivotal role, not just by providing a much needed break for younger participants, but also by creating an opportunity for all attendees to socialise with their cohorts by creating an interactive community-building space outside of the class. This socialisation and the musical

⁷⁶ This prefigures the academic study of Irish traditional music in countries with mainly non-diasporic communities. See for example ‘Irish Music and the Experience of Nostalgia in Japan’ (Williams, 2006).

⁷⁷ Ó Rócháin states that ‘no serious attempts have ever been made at marketing; it is, like the music, oral recommendation only, based on satisfaction and goodwill (Ó Rócháin, 2011: 755). David Robinson describes this type of word of mouth feedback as ‘the promotional dream of most marketers [with] satisfied customers serving as voluntary ambassadors for the brand’ (Robinson, 2006: 249). The implications of this in a cultural economy context are discussed further in the following Chapter.

⁷⁸ For a wider discussion of ‘the local’ in terms of rural production in County Clare see Wilson and Whitehead (2012).

friendships that develop at SSWC, inform the narrative storyline of many Irish traditional musicians' biographical accounts. The provision of a temporary tuck-shop at the fiddle school replenishes the sugar levels of both young and old. The queue for these products (including tea for adults) provides another means of making acquaintances and sharing notes with students from other classes and in this way tea-drinking at the break equally offers a forum for adult socialisation and community building.⁷⁹ A number of overlapping communities exist within the Miltown milieu; a local community, an organisational community, and both student and teacher communities of practice. Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of the week for many of those at SSWC is the ability to attend and become a part of one or several communities at a very intense level during the week. Those attending classes have the opportunity to join their fellow attendees in a community of learning, which may then develop into session communities as they meet to go through their new tunes and listening communities as they attend recitals. What emerges from across fieldwork interviews is the very subjective experiences that resonate with attendees, teachers and casual visitors in any given year at the School. According to Helen O'Shea, adult learners make up fifty per cent of the workshop attendance (O'Shea, 2008: 97). A number of factors contribute to the high number of adult learners, a significant number of whom are drawn from the attending international cohort. It conforms to increases in life-long learning and the increase in multi-purpose 'activity' holidays in which the sea-side location of Miltown Malbay has a significant role to play and contributes to the discussion on cultural tourism in Chapter 2. Adult learners also comprise the parents of children learners who decide that they may as well take advantage of their time by engaging at some level with the School as well. Indeed Sean Donnelly wryly suggested that the addition of set-dancing workshops in 1982 was 'to keep the bored wives and girlfriends busy' (Sean Donnelly interview, Jan 2010). Miltown, as a 'holiday destination' (weather permitting), is an attractive option not just for the students themselves, but also for holidaying partners and family members.

⁷⁹ Jimmy O'Brien Moran had a clear memory (when numbers were smaller in the 1970s) of piping tutor Dan O'Dowd and his wife Mary making tea for everyone in the back room of the Vocational School (a practice that continues today) and the sense of 'family' that this engendered (Jimmy O'Brien Moran interview, Mar 2011). At the fiddle school the staff tea-room provides a similar space and opportunity for socialisation, community building and networking. It facilitates discourse on Irish traditional music and informs the organisation of sessions and music performances during the duration of the summer school and beyond.

The School fee for the week is modest in relation to the quantity of teaching hours and other *inter alia* events that it covers.⁸⁰ Moylan asserts that the teachers' 'remuneration is nothing like the market rate for a week's work and this allows the class fees to be set at modest levels' (Moylan, 2003). The ideology of voluntarism on the part of the teachers produces a community of regard between all levels and engenders a resolutely non-commercial ethos that cannot help but inform the students' attitude to the music (Moylan, 2003).⁸¹ However, for attendees, the cumulative costs of fees, accommodation, food, and for some, international travel, equates to a significant investment. Irish family members interviewed pointed to the cumulative cost of registration (particularly where there was more than one child) and the limited choice of (relatively expensive) accommodation, along with the prospect of enduring an Irish summer. One parent had worked out that a 'sun holiday' abroad might not be significantly more expensive (parent interview, SSWC 2009). However, what is at stake for many attendees lies not with what Jean Baudrillard labels as the 'exchange value' of such accumulated costs but instead its 'symbolic exchange value' situated in the learning process with a master of tradition and the 'sign exchange value;' the fact that this learning is taking place at SSWC in Miltown, County Clare as opposed to any other learning environment or indeed any other summer school from Tubercurry to Milwaukee (Baudrillard, 1981). For those who make regular pilgrimages to SSWC, participation signals an alliance to a cultural ideology and the visibility of SSWC's symbolic capital increases with the School's notoriety. However, the early adopters, those who attended the early years of the school, benefit from this long-term investment and hold the greatest symbolic accrual. Ultimately, investment in the School, be it of time or money, pays dividends for both attendees and the cultural economy of the School.

⁸⁰ The fee as of 2009 is €140.

⁸¹ Additional benefits in-kind are received by tutors. These include meal vouchers and for the non-locals, the provision of accommodation. Due to the difficulty of accessing accommodation during this week, this carries a high premium. Martin Hayes notes this as he lists the benefits that ensue after first being invited to teach at the School 'I was just thrilled to be booked to play there for a week and to be part of this thing and to have bed and board, to be in a situation where I could meet all these musicians and spend all this time for the week' (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013). Furthermore, the legitimising status of being 'a master' at SSWC accrues personal, social and cultural capital that extends beyond the week of the School.

‘Music flows through West Clare like a river’: representing and performing SSWC⁸²

From the outset the School produced a brochure each year to describe and announce its activities. Giving a daily breakdown of events, this continues to be the principal vehicle for information dissemination, providing an annual template on which the School’s ideological pathway is revealed; a rolling constitution that demonstrates the values encoded in shorthand that pervade the School’s ethos.⁸³ In the early years of the School this consisted of a piece of paper, typed, folded in half and photocopied. Whilst the brochure has become more sophisticated in design and layout over the lifetime of the School, the same graphic template remains, consisting of just a one-paged, double-sided document, albeit concertina-folded to carry the increasing amount of information reflecting the growth in the School. It outlines key information with regard to teaching, commemoration and performance and an archival review of this document over the life-time of the School presents a concise timeline of continuity and change. The annual incremental expansion in programming that occurs in the brochure reveals the coming into being of the School, and consolidations brought about by gradual revision and renewal over time. As such, the scheduling framework of the School reflects and champions pathways and trends within the broader Irish music tradition and such emergent directions are demonstrated most clearly by the increase in class numbers and additional instruments taught as discussed earlier. It discloses information with regard to funding sources, not least the international links signalled through funding agencies. Yet it also signals the way in which the School maintains its autonomy: the Arts Council of Ireland is the only logo that reaches the front page of the brochure. It also provides a forum for the announcement of the bestowal of accolades and awards that demonstrate innovation and examples of best practice within a national and provincial context.⁸⁴

⁸² Quote taken from the sleevenotes of the *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary*, 2013.

⁸³ In the first year ‘it was only a sheet that came up from Comhaltas’ (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

⁸⁴ For example: the Bank of Ireland/RTE Arts Award for Achievement of Excellence in the Arts in Ireland, attained by the School in 1991 and 1992, the AIB Better Ireland Award for excellence in the Arts in 1993 and a Clare Tourist Council Award for excellence in the Arts in 1994.

The sense of orality that pervades the school resonates equally with its management style; the School operated during the forty years under consideration without its own website, which foregrounds the centrality of the brochure, over and above any technology-led public engagement.⁸⁵ Instead the brochure listed the names and telephone numbers of the key organisers of the School if further information was required.⁸⁶ Digital technology where used is peripheral and emails and texts have not replaced face-to-face meetings and phone calls. The absence of a website and indeed the absence of any overt use of technology is one of several factors that inculcate a sense of informality and becomes another authenticating factor in the School. Ellen Hazelkorn writes of the role of digital technology in providing a mechanism for ‘transforming “traditional arts” [] into commodities of the “cultural/media industry”’ (Hazelkorn, 2001). In post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, public discourse on the potential value of the arts has increased with ‘cultural and heritage tourism [] emerging as one of the largest and fastest growing tourism markets.’⁸⁷ However, SSWC persists with an ideology that leaves technology and the digital media peripheralised from its core activities. This particular style of management which Muiris simply referred to as ‘the human touch’ engenders a sense of engagement and belonging sometimes absent from comparable management systems. This is not to suggest that the School is a technology-free zone. The array of digital recording equipment sported by learners, the ITMA, OAC and Raidió na Gaeltachta (RnaG) and the sharing of recorded events via archives and radio transmission post-School is testament to this. However, the crux of the School, the master-apprentice relationship occurs in a relatively non-digitised and unmediated environment. Happening in the presence of the moment, there is no alternative to not being there. Hazelkorn goes on to say that ‘today, cultural and creative activity has become increasingly identified as a potential mechanism of

⁸⁵ A number of organisations have carried a digitised version of the brochure on their websites (most notably www.setdancingnews.ie), or indeed have set up their own websites to portray or privilege certain aspects of the School. SSWC launched an official website in 2013. Although this is beyond the research time-frame of this thesis, the website demonstrates continuity in utilising an informational display commensurate with the style of the brochure. Web-based information is now a prime way in which people access information. Hosting its own website is an important means for the School to control its own image not just in the present, but also historiographically through the website’s archive. An archive page is now a common feature on festival websites giving festivals the opportunity to display the ‘official version’ of their own histories.

⁸⁶ The utilisation of digital technology for contacting the School was not engaged until 2011 when the email address of Secretary and Administrator Harry Hughes was published for the first time.

⁸⁷ This claim is made in the introduction to a Fáilte Ireland conference held during Ireland’s Presidency of the EU in 2013. *Culture & Heritage: An Emerging Economic Engine?* included a session on how to make Ireland’s intangible cultural assets ‘more accessible to leisure visitors’ (Fáilte Ireland, 2013).

national economic generation drawing on the growing intersection between software, content and cultural products'. Whilst the cultural economy of SSWC will be explored in the following chapter, suffice it to say that the School itself does not emphasise economic generation as a core principle and accrues further symbolic value in doing so. As a result, a lasting impression of the School which emerges from interviews and informal discourse is the atmosphere of friendly informality in which it appears to seamlessly operate. As Ó Rócháin stated 'we don't believe in stifling things with bureaucracy' (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009) and this factor was highlighted as comparing favourably with the bureaucracy that entangles other spheres of life. This escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life is an authenticating factor, articulated by Ben Lennon in the introduction to this chapter; 'time stands still. I don't look at the watch'.⁸⁸ It facilitates real-life contact: the telephone numbers on the brochure put enquirers and potential attendees in touch with real people rather than the layers of anonymity that can pervade websites displaying generic email addresses.

Informing the success of his role as amateur, Muiris Ó Rócháin was noted for his 'way with people' and his ability to engage and communicate across all levels of society. Not unlike Willie Clancy, he was fascinated by people and was naturally curious and interested in learning their backgrounds. He explained that when groups of people from abroad made contact with regard to attending the School, additional efforts were made to assist them with accommodation and other logistical requirements (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). This personal face-to-face connection to the School's organisation not only vitalises the visitor experience, it creates a micro-level experience that has implications for the sense of authenticity experienced by all attendees, including tutors and organisers, and has repercussions for the positive word of mouth feedback that has promulgated the School's popularity.

This could not occur without the keen organisational minds that operate the School and the attention to and retention of small detail. One example of this is the coordination of accommodation for in excess of one hundred tutors at the School. Máire O'Keeffe described the experience of her first year of teaching at SSWC. On arriving in Miltown at the start of the week, she (amongst many other tutors) inquired of Harry Hughes

⁸⁸ This resonates with nostalgia for the myth of eternal return. The rituals of SSWC in collapsing profane time, harness the mythical appeal of Willie Clancy and enter into mythic time (Eliade, 1965).

about her accommodation. He immediately gave her an address, directions and produced an enormous bunch of anonymous and unlabelled keys, from which he extracted one and announced ‘that’s yours’ all of which occurred without consulting any list. Máire recalled that all of this information and detail was entirely in his head (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009). Clearly the social capital imbued in local knowledge and organisational skills counters the perceived advantages of database technology.⁸⁹ The eschewal of communication technology and the informality it creates adds to the authenticating experience thereby increasing the viability of the School. Whilst the avoidance of such media technology in the organisation of a major festival might appear retrograde, in actual fact, the ability to connect directly with the local knowledge and organisational skills exhibited by organisers and locals accesses a social capital advantage absent from more regularised automated booking experiences. Ó Rócháin and Hughes manage and are supported by a considerable backroom team which draws on a body of volunteers from the town of Miltown Malbay and from a wider community of Irish traditional musicians and their families. The social capital of this team of volunteers is revealed as they access local and insider knowledge to perform the roles of furniture movers, car-park wardens, registrars and hall stewards.

SSWC encompasses an integrity that is both academic and practical, inherited from Willie Clancy and delivered through the years by key figures in its organisation such as Breandán Breathnach and Muiris Ó Rócháin. This stems from the historicity of Breathnach’s belief in the integrity of County Clare which he traces to George Petrie who ‘entertained the notion that the music of the county possessed features not shared by that of the rest of the country’ but also notes that ‘long before I had read these words I had listened to musicians from Clare [...] and was ever struck by the rich repertoire and the liveliness of the music’ (Breathnach, 1974: 73). Essentialising as this discourse may appear, this experience was very real for Breathnach, just as what happens at SSWC each year is real for all those who attend and further insights into this are given in Chapter 5. As the next chapter will demonstrate, cultural rather than economic objectives have maintained the upper hand in the decision-making processes that have

⁸⁹ Following Bourdieu, social capital is used to describe the connections and networks of social relationships and the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed by members of that network which give access to or help to multiply those other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993). For example, being a tutor at SSWC or indeed citing SSWC as a site of learning has a multiplying effect on the capital owned by a musician.

guided the School's development. The School has no elaborate or published constitution other than a simple remit that it will promote Irish traditional music, song and dance.⁹⁰ This ensures that whilst there is agreement on the symbols that constitute the School's identity, the meaning of these symbols might still diverge between different subgroups who attend, enabling the School to maintain a broad church of meaning and reduce the potential for feelings of alienation. According to Hughes and Ó Rócháin this has enabled the School to remain 'flexible in administration and innovative in policy' and the development and expansion of the school demonstrates its healthy relationship with the tradition as both an indigenous player and an asserting force (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993: 6). Rather than referring to a constitution, the School articulates its ideology (frequently couched in views that Willie Clancy himself held) at all opportunities, particularly by way of introductions given at key events, such as the opening lecture and the graveside commemoration. Annual rituals of repetition prioritise and privilege particular practices, thereby indirectly enunciating the School's interpretation of Irish traditional music. Indeed the three defined areas of this research; transmission, commemoration and performance, all facilitate orature in their ritual performance. In an interesting parallel, Roach draws attention to the unwritten constitution of Great Britain and hence 'the added importance of orature in its ceremonial transmission of memory' (Roach, 1996: 114). In a similar vein, the centrality of orature exempts the School from adhering to rigid definitions offering instead fluidity in the constant negotiation and renegotiation of the tradition-modernity binary both at School level and within the wider Irish music tradition.

Summer school space

A major challenge which presents itself to the organisers of an expanding festival is the production of space. Miltown is a small rural town with an urban population of just 575 people (the wider population of the town is 1,580).⁹¹ The accommodation of over a hundred workshops plus the vocational requisites of students, tutors and the thousands of other visitors who attend during its ten-day duration presents an infrastructural challenge annually. John Kelly remembered his first (unplanned) teaching experience,

⁹⁰ The School was incorporated in 1987 for practical and organisational reasons that related to issues such as funding and insurance (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

⁹¹ CSO, 2011.

during the first year of the School at the Vocational School on the Ballard Rd; 'I taught in the cloakroom which was about half the size of this [hallway]. I can still see the coat hooks on the wall' (John Kelly interview, SSWC 2009).⁹² A solution to this problem has been an expansion in the geographical footprint of the School. All available spaces within a six mile radius of the School are now utilised in facilitating its activities. These include schools, public halls, houses, housing developments, hotels, the golf club, the GAA clubhouse and grounds and hired facilities such as marquees and prefabs. Classes were housed entirely in the Vocational School in the first few years, extending to the National School and then out to the Secondary School in Spanish Point as student enrolments increased.⁹³ Set-dancing also moved to Spanish Point and the button accordion even further afield to Quilty.⁹⁴ Since 1982, classes have taken place in people's houses, and while many of these originated as a substitute response to increasing student numbers, they have since become established annual locations. Each summer, sitting rooms and sideboards in houses on the Ballard Rd are cleared to make room for the elbows and drones of uilleann pipers. Ita Crehan remarked on this less orthodox use of people's houses and kitchens and felt sure that it would not happen anywhere else and that people wouldn't think of using those spaces (Ita Crehan interview, SSWC 2011). Yet this unorthodoxy has become one of the remarkable and distinctive features of the School, an additional measure of its integration and a further hallmark of authenticity. A positive outcome for the School from the post 'Celtic Tiger' decline in the economy is the availability of houses and apartments that currently lie unsold and empty. Since 2008 the School has utilised Miltown's E-town housing development for classes in concertina, whistle and flute.⁹⁵ The use of these domestic spaces (both lived in and empty) in a novel way completes the return of Irish traditional music practices full circle back into domestic settings, albeit institutionalised through the agency of the School.

⁹² See Appendix 2 for a map of all the locations mentioned in this thesis.

⁹³ The use of the Vocational School corresponds to a wider phenomenon in which Vocational Schools become sites for Comhaltas-led Irish traditional music classes (McCarthy, 1999: 134).

⁹⁴ The button accordion occupied a variety of venues from its beginnings in 1986 at St Joseph's School. When they were first 'put out to Quilty' (on account of volume), Charlie Harris wondered if 'Mutton Island was the next stop for accordion players!' (Charlie Harris interview, SSWC 2010).

⁹⁵ Shannon Development has sponsored the School by facilitating the use of its E-town (a housing/workspace development that has lain unoccupied since its completion in 2008). See <http://www.etowns.ie> [accessed 20 November 2013].

Not all the externalities created by the School are positive. The functionality of the community hall and indeed the town itself is entirely reconfigured for the week of the School. This inevitably creates tensions within the local community, as the systematic rituals and relationships of locals are disrupted. Clearly the hall is unavailable for non-SSWC activities and likewise, the regular functions of the town itself such as shopping and banking are problematised by the difficulties of finding parking spaces, overcrowding and long queues, thereby causing locals to re-orientate their daily tasks to more distant sites.⁹⁶ The physical make-up of the town of Miltown Malbay, then, both configures and challenges the development of the School. However, the School has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in meeting challenges as new social, technological and cultural dimensions impact on the School. Infrastructurally the town suffers from poor transport connections. Just one bus a day connects Miltown to Ennis (the nearest connective hub) and the train station closed along with the West Clare Railway, in 1961. The importance attached to 'the arrival of the bus', during the early years of the School bearing an unknown entity of potential students has diminished with changing travel patterns (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). Increase in car ownership since the 1970s while reducing the peripherality of Miltown, has brought with it its own choreographical rhythms, shaping and altering localities and temporalities of music-making. The extension of the session scene to the outliers of the Crosses of Annagh, Mullagh, Coore and further afield, is predicated on accessing these places. Musical excursions to the Crosses and Mullagh with a view to escaping the throngs of the town, informs the narratives of many musicians interviewed. Likewise the geographical scope of accommodation sees both students and tutors commuting from various points in County Clare to the School. Changes to drink-driving laws have added a further dimension to issues of transport, with the visible availability of taxis now a common feature. As the national profile of the School has increased, a significant number of taxi drivers from the environs of Ennis (twenty miles away) now work the School and this author witnessed the novel sight of a queue of taxis waiting outside the Bellbridge in Spanish Point on the Monday night of the School in 2012. During the first ten years of the School, the traffic impact created by the School was minimal. Since that time, however, a clear visual signifier that the Willie Clancy

⁹⁶ Arcordia and Whitford note that the success of many festivals is relayed in economic terms and little attention is paid to the negative socio-cultural impacts on the community (Arcordia and Whitford, 2006).

School is underway are the lines of (inappropriately) parked cars, extending snake-like along each of the narrow roads leading into Miltown as the car-parking facilities of the town are simply overwhelmed by the numbers attending the School. Similarly Muiris Ó Rócháin noted another new transport trend stemming from about 2008 - an increase in campervans (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). The temporary re-alignment of social space and the extra-ordinary usage of non-purpose-built venues during the week of the School is a key element in the creation of what Victor Turner describes as liminal space, an appropriate space in which re-traditionalisation can occur (Turner, 1969). These changes and externalities reconfigure the social environment of the School, reshaping the geographies of its music-making. Rarely however do they interrupt its continuity; instead continuity and change is fundamental to the shaping and authentication of the School.⁹⁷

Conclusion

In this chapter, historical themes that underscore understandings and perceptions of Irish traditional music and underpin its changing trajectory are outlined for further exploration in subsequent chapters. Preservation by collection at the BHF motivated essentialising narratives, an ideology of cultural difference and new discourses of music transmission. Subsequent agencies of revival have created processes of surrogation and constructed discourses of authenticity embedded in recourse and nostalgia for the past. The ethos of SSWC centres on the recognition and understanding of Irish traditional music within a global ecumene, rejecting nostalgic notions of 'pure' tradition, recognising instead the presence of multiple and hybrid identities. SSWC creates a space for the 'rambling conversation' on Irish traditional music that Ciaran Carson qualifies 'is nevertheless bound by very well-defined rules' (Ormsby et al., 1991: 7). These rules are tied to understandings of the past and attempts to recover what has been lost. SSWC facilitates and mediates this reconstruction and re-imagining of the past offering a structured enclavic environment in which Irish traditional music

⁹⁷ Over its forty year existence, SSWC has neither applied nor received capital funds to build additional capacity to house any aspect of the School. The community hall has out-performed itself in this context and in the process of re-traditionalisation, in place, in Miltown Malbay. It is interesting to note in comparison that one of the key aspects of the Comhaltas report to Congress in 1973, the first year of SSWC, concerned the urgent need to establish a HQ building for Comhaltas; an Irish cultural institute (*Treoir* 5. 5, 1973).

can authentically ‘become’ and where through the informal processes of oral transmission, these unwritten ‘rules’ can be learned. Attendance at the School stakes a personal claim on this process of recovery. It also builds and maintains various communities that through the annual enactment of cultural performance both negotiate and create an Irish traditional music community.

SSWC presents a cultural setting in which a particular type of authenticity is championed through organisation and performance. A shared value system and agreement on how this authenticity is constructed is a crucial factor in determining the personnel who ultimately facilitate and continue the School. By allocating cultural authority at the School, particular representations of the past are captured in order to legitimate the present and SSWC becomes an ideal place for that past to culminate. Ó hAllmhuráin’s earlier definition of Irish traditional music as ‘a complex process of musical convergence’ maps onto SSWC and ‘ways to understand’ Irish traditional music encapsulates exactly what SSWC offers to its attendees (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 8). SSWC imbues Irish traditional music with new meanings that extended beyond ideologies of preservation to wholly embody the realm of social practice. In this thesis, nostalgia for the past; for that which is believed to be real; and for the locations in which this past took place, are presented as key tropes that underscore the meaning of the School. In attending to these tropes SSWC creates a space in which the cultural authority to direct and understand them can be developed and the ways in which this occurs is explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2

The Cultural Economy of Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy

The late 1960s and early 1970s represent a time of cultural, social and economic transition both in Ireland and within Irish traditional music. This chapter contextualises this transition particularly as it manifests itself in the creation and subsequent development of SSWC. It places the origins of the School within the context of EU accession (both of which occur in the same year, 1973) and within a broader conversation on delimiting and maintaining cultural difference in the face of perceived potential homogeneity.¹ Attention is drawn to the cultural economy dimension of SSWC. Rather than deploying economic impact models that utilise statistics and multipliers to generate figures for ‘income from tourists’ and ‘visitor spend’, the analysis of cultural economy is built from an engagement with lived social practices (Arts Council, 2011b, Slater, 2002). It explores how Irish traditional music, like most cultural markers, has become inseparable from economic activity, but also how the activities which it gives rise to are embedded in culture (Du Gay and Pryke, 2002). Renato Rosaldo argues that it would be foolish to imagine any artist ‘produces without regard for the market’, or that ‘the market fails to take the nature of artistic production into account’ (Rosaldo, 1995). However, recognising that festivals and indeed music itself are commonly approached as economic systems rather than through some means of cultural assessment, this chapter interrogates the role of qualitative phenomenon in the production of symbolic, cultural and social capital.

Irish traditional music practices both prior to SSWC and indeed throughout the time period of this study, have demonstrated marked increases in commodification and commercialisation. Likewise, cultural production at SSWC simultaneously produces and is a product of economic and cultural forces. On this basis, an exploration of the cultural rather than economic imperatives that informed the founding and subsequent development of SSWC forms the basis of this chapter. A focus on the organisational techniques which have eschewed specifically economic gains demonstrates how this has constructed a consistent and estimable sense of integrity. The School’s sense of

¹ When Ireland joined the EU in 1973 it was known as the EEC (European Economic Community). The title EU (European Union) was established by the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 and this is the name used throughout this thesis.

integrity has gained traction during the forty-year period under research, a time during which ‘cultural traditions and heritage’ are, according to Ullrich Kockel ‘increasingly being viewed as scarce goods in the global economy field’ (Kockel, 2002: 9).² As the stocks of cultural capital now invested in Irish traditional music increase, the symbolic representation of Irish traditional music becomes increasingly important, in tangent with the irony implicit in the self-realisation of commodity consumption (Little, 2006). This chapter seeks to demonstrate how the public realm of SSWC provides a space in which to challenge what Mary Corcoran calls the ‘mass consumer model’ in order to ‘reconnect people ... and constitute sites of interface that counter civil disaffiliation’ (Corcoran, 2013). This takes place through an exploration of the ideological nexus between the creativity of Irish traditional music and the business economy through which it unavoidably intersects and interweaves.

This exploration begins by presenting the national, international and local backdrop to SSWC, placing it into a wider cultural, social, economic and musical perspective. It considers the accrual of symbolic and cultural capital predicated on the construction of authenticity and discourses of continuity, recourse to the past, location and style. It signposts potentialities for translation of a variety of forms of capital into economic capital and other synergies created by the School, fortuitous to the local area. In chronicling the social, cultural and musical capital of Miltown, it charts the key role of local animateurs in harnessing and developing this capital and their subsequent refusal to bow to commercialism, a driving factor in the successful constitution of the School. It indicates through a temporal and geographical contextualisation the conviction that the cultural significance of Irish traditional music was endangered and aspects of its transmission were being lost. It then holds up a festival lens through which to draw comparison with two other festivals whose initial animation is comparable. It problematises the School both within the myth of the West and in core and periphery discourses as the continued development and success of the School creates festival ripples that undulate throughout Miltown Malbay for the remainder of each year.

² The concept of cultural goods as scarce goods maps onto fears of cultural homogenisation labelled by Alan Lomax as ‘cultural grey-out’ predicated on assumptions of a once ‘pure’ tradition unhindered by acculturation and change (Lomax, 1968).

‘The social life of things’

By employing a cultural economy framework, this chapter reaches beyond theories of ‘cultural economics’ and the utilisation of straightforward market exchange values to explore the culture-economy nexus, at which different types of capital are exchanged and circulated. The term ‘cultural economy’ as distinct from ‘cultural economics’, is utilised by Arjan Appadurai in the discussion of commodification and market exchange values to express what he describes as ‘the social life of things’ (Appadurai, 1986).³ Drawing on Appadurai, Keith Negus explains this in terms of how commodities are used, appropriated, imbued with, or accrue additional meanings, uses, and sign values (Negus, 2002: 117). Informed in part by Bourdieu’s concept of different forms of capital, Negus considers the way an artistic practice (be it a session, an opera or a play), is dependent on the particular conditions of its production which cannot be approached in isolation, but have to be understood in relational contexts, taking account of local, historical and geographical resources (Bourdieu, 1986).⁴ Commodities exist within a culturally constructed framework and therefore communicate complex, context-dependent messages. These extra-cultural values which commodities accumulate and exhibit contribute to their continuing circulation and exchange; what Negus describes as ‘the social value of things’ (Negus, 2002: 117).⁵ Pertinent also to SSWC and the other festivals under discussion is the attention that Edensor draws to the centrality of place in this equation and the emergence of place-making as a result of cultural and artistic outputs (Edensor, 2001, 2010). Clearly the creative, expressive and symbolic activities of music-making practices may also have potential for gainful commercial or economic activity, however a cultural economy analysis is that built from an engagement with lived social practices rather than one deduced from statistics or macro-characterisation (McRobbie, 2002). An inherent tension within Irish traditional music practice lies between music as ‘an authentic’ means of collective expression against music as a commodity. Utilising a cultural economy framework

³ According to Negus, cultural economics is a term that emerged during the late 1970s concerned with applying formal economic models and theories to artistic activities (Negus, 2002: 116). ‘The social life of things’ corresponds to the meanings that people attribute to things driven by human transactions and motivations. It relates to the ways in which people find value in things and things in turn give value to social relations (Appadurai, 1986).

⁴ According to Bourdieu, these encompass complex social and political mechanisms that regulate taste, trade, and desire and relate to the role of material culture in human social life (Bourdieu, 1986).

⁵ Negus goes on to demonstrate intersections with the writings of Bourdieu (cultural capital), Canclini (cultural capital of artisans) and Baudrillard (the sign value of commodities) Negus (2002: 116).

endeavours to explore the resolution of this tension at SSWC and the economically non-rational ‘experiential dimension’ of the School (MacCannell, 2002: 146). It includes a consideration of capabilities such as tacit knowledge and intangible capital, the interrogation of unique cultural markers and their use in the reaffirmation of senses of place and cultural identity through the valorisation of physical, human and indigenous capabilities.

The 1970s in transition

Commentators point to the 1960s and early 1970s as a period of transition in Ireland (Brown, 2004, Ferriter, 2012, Foster, 2007, Lee, 1989). Rapid change in political, social and cultural life during the 1960s and 1970s is attributed in part to the end of de Valera’s era as Taoiseach in 1959 and the subsequent opening up of the Irish economy, creating an Irish society in which ‘life seemed to become more and more like urban and suburban life everywhere else in the developed world’ (Brown, 2004: 299). 1973 saw Ireland enjoy a degree of political change with the election of a coalition Fine Gael and Labour government following a consecutive sixteen-year period under the administration of Fianna Fáil.⁶ Transition is underpinned by key social and cultural changes that followed including the removal of the public service bar on married women and the requirement to pass Irish in the Leaving Cert for entry into public service employment.⁷ A stabilisation in emigration rates and the first population increase since the foundation of the state is recorded in the 1971 census (Foster, 2007: 19). Furthermore the early 1970s saw the retirements of both President Éamon de Valera and Archbishop John Charles McQuaid, longstanding figures in Irish life who according to Dermot Keogh and Andrew McCarthy were losing their relevance for 1970s Ireland (Keogh and McCarthy, 2005: 331). Crucial to Terence Brown’s sense that ‘the country was altering in radical ways’ was Ireland’s accession to the EU in 1973, an ambition that was first disclosed in 1961.⁸ Ireland’s entry to the EU brought issues of cultural identity to the fore through an increased sense of global awareness

⁶ This coalition under Liam Cosgrave and Brendan Corish held power for just four years (Gallagher, 2009).

⁷ The Civil Service (Employment of Married Women) Act, 1973 abolished the bar against the continued employment of women who married. The Irish language was regarded as backward-looking and the change reflected a lack of confidence in the revival of the language.

⁸ This is explicated further in Geary (2009).

accompanied by a collective realisation of the local. Joining the EU gave rise to a new consciousness in the construction of Irish national identity, an identity that was both one step further away from its colonial past, and on a par with the other (larger) states of the EU.⁹ The foundational debates and questions that framed accession discussions clearly precipitate and shape both SSWC and the ideology of its founding members (Brown, 2004: 297, Ferriter, 2012: 8). This expression of interest generated national debate on a range of topics significant to the consciousness of the School's founders particularly in relation to the erosion of national identity, community values and cultural difference. '[T]he question as to how much Ireland's traditional identity could be retained [therefore, became] a major preoccupation of social commentators' (Brown, 2004: 297). A recuperative approach to reinvigorating vernacular cultural identity was a founding strategy of the School and the master-apprentice dyad, explored in detail in Chapter 3, remains central to this reinvigoration.

The establishment of a new board of tourism, *Bord Fáilte* in 1952, signalled a changed governmental attitude towards tourism, and by the time Ireland joined the EU, tourism was 'increasingly seen as an important factor in economic growth and job creation and as a way of strengthening rather than undermining national identity' (Cronin, 2004: 706). The Fianna Fáil government had perceived tourism as a degrading activity since 'the connotations of subservience attached to tourism were still too vivid for those who had rebelled against the subordinate role of the Irish under the earlier imperial dispensation' (Cronin, 2004: 706). The combination of increased tourism, greater travel opportunities (demonstrated by the opening of the B&I and Sea Link car ferries in 1968), free education, the establishment of a national television broadcaster (RTÉ in 1961), sustained emigrant outflows and cultural debates generated by EU accession, resulted in an increasing international awareness.¹⁰ This widening cultural and social outlook saw the removal of the GAA ban on foreign games and, according to Brian Kennedy, a greater demand for the Arts (Kennedy, 1990).¹¹ A new Arts Bill introduced

⁹ Ireland joined the European Economic Community as it was then known in the company of the UK and Denmark.

¹⁰ The free post-primary education scheme and free transport scheme for children living more than three miles from school were introduced in 1967 by Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley. Such revolutionary changes, combined with the raising of the school leaving age to 16, had a profound effect upon secondary education (Ó Buachalla, 1988). The new land-bridge ferry links substantially altered the structure of tourism in Ireland, heralding the era of the independently mobile tourist.

¹¹ For more on the GAA ban and Rule 21 see Cronin (1999).

in 1973 revamped the Arts Council committee with the declared intention of encouraging ‘greater regional and local development of the arts’ (Arts Council Annual Report, 1974 quoted in Kennedy (1990: 182)).¹² With the resulting appointment of Regional Arts Officers and eventually County Arts Officers (the first of which was appointed in County Clare in 1986), the new Arts Council of 1973 set out to remove the arts from the ‘high culture’ shelf by increasing accessibility and recognising its wider role and potential (Hazelkorn, 2001: 5). Traditional music, for example, was assisted by the Arts Council for the first time in 1976 and SSWC received its first grant from the Arts Council of £300 in this year (Arts Council, 1976).¹³ In tandem with this increased interest in the arts, a new wave of community-based organisations also came into being during the 1970s (Guerin and Powell, 1997: 101). All of these changes at both a material and symbolic level conform to ‘the astonishing transformation of Ireland’ referred to by Foster and inform and contribute in substantial and various ways to the arrival of SSWC in 1973 (Foster, 2007: ix).

The 1970s musical context

The foundation of Comhaltas in 1951, ‘the beginnings of organised revival’ in traditional music created an organisational and social framework for the promotion of Irish traditional music which developed through a network of branches and festive fleadh competitions as a means of reimagining and reconfiguring Irish traditional music in the present (Kennedy, 1990: 72). This branch network cemented not only existing musical practices but encouraged musicians in areas where previously there was little or no music, thereby increasing the visibility of and contexts for Irish traditional music performance. Originally an entirely grassroots organisation, it received minimal state support during its early years and its identity was fashioned by the voluntary efforts of its own members, many of whom were practitioners. Recognition by the State through funding in 1968 and subsequent state sanctioned institutionalisation, resulted in what Ní Fhuartháin refers to as a ‘significant shift’ in its organisation, leading to disaffection amongst some members who rued the loss of the

¹² The new Council had Colm Ó Briain as its director and included for the first time, women and professional artists.

¹³ This funding was received under the category heading of ‘Education’ and it more than doubled in 1977 to £700. Current SSWC revenue funding (as of 2011, the most recently available data from the Arts Council) stands at €80,000, down from a peak of €90,000 in 2009 (Arts Council, 2009, 2011a).

'original purpose of CCÉ in which they still had faith' (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 4, Vallely, 2004: 19). The urban locations of many branches and the contexts created by competition, resulted in a de-territorialisation of performance practices which in turn forged a national tradition of music-making under the nationalising category of 'Irish' traditional music.¹⁴ Allen Feldman describes a not dissimilar nationalising process fashioned by the agency of music collection stating that nationalising 'tunes under the category "Irish", removed the transcribed acoustic object, not only from its performed context, but from its local topographic context' (Feldman, 2002: 111). As he explains:

In this [...] framework much of the local association of place and person that a tune or song carried in its intergenerational diachronic and synchronic transmission is dropped by the wayside and [...] gets attached to a general history of the music of the nation-state; local memory becomes supplanted by an emergent [...] national memory (Feldman, 2002: 111).

Likewise, the initiation of the 'World Irish Dancing Championships' in 1970 cemented the categorisation of 'Irish Dance' at an international level and indeed altered the remit of its governing body *An Coimisiún* from a national to a global organisation (O'Connor, 2013: 15).

The label Irish traditional music creates an effective and seemingly musical way of re-imagining and re-presenting the entire national community. The rejuvenation of music performance through competition was a technique used by many revivalist organisations internationally. There is a perception however, that this valorised the national at the expense of the local. Neither were the competitive elements of the competitions (fleadhs) 'universally liked [due in part to] uneven and subjective adjudication standards at competitions' (Carolan, 2000). According to Ní Fhuartháin, from the late 1960s there was a distinct increase in the publication by Comhaltas of adjudication advice demonstrating an increasing institutionalisation of competition, crystallising its importance as a revivalist tool within Comhaltas structures (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 286). Codified practices produced via fleadh competition were blamed for destroying local styles and creating a national standard and the

¹⁴ Constitutionally Comhaltas declares itself as non-partisan and non-sectarian. For further discussion on the articulation of nationalism by Comhaltas see Ní Fhuartháin (2011: 137-141, 255-262).

festivalisation of the fleadh was perceived to be fraying the edges of traditional music. Gerry Smyth argues that competitions dominate Comhaltas ‘replacing socialisation and exchange as its principal *raison d’être*’ (Smyth, 2004a: 90). Typical of many sites of cultural production described by Paschal Preston, the Fleadh Cheoil had become a location for the ‘production and consumption of culture [combining] modernity’s typical processes of disembedding [and] individualisation’ and was in this way antithetical to idealised and authentic methods of Irish traditional music production (Preston, 2005: 73). Discourses of homogenisation and nationalisation identify also with interactions tied into the broader themes of commodification, industrialism and globalisation. Bohlman asserts that ‘modernisation encourages new ways of looking at old styles and different repertoires and thereby sets the stage for revivals’ (Bohlman, 1988: 124). Anxious to move away from a competition model, SSWC was established on a basis of transmission and music-making for their own sake, rather than in an environment structured by competitive elements. Conceptualising SSWC as a process of re-traditionalisation, people and place and more essentially people *in place* are foregrounded, thereby re-centring the periphery from a nationalising core. The literature on music revivals reveals the tensions that revivalist organisations indirectly create through their efforts. Competition rules and state-supported institutionalisation led to a growing perception that Comhaltas had ring-fenced some aspects of the creative tradition. Out of this tension SSWC created a platform for the transmission, performance and commemoration of Irish traditional music and continues to facilitate a discursive space in which solutions to this tension might plausibly emerge.

‘The heartland of traditional music:’ pedagogy¹⁵

Transmission and the master-apprentice dyad form the foundational core of SSWC and represent a response to the immediate music.1 context of the early 1970s.¹⁶ Prior to the 1960s, as Ó hAllmhuráin confirms ‘no serious attempts had been made by [Comhaltas]

¹⁵ Hughes and Ó Rócháin detail how the summer school provides access to the ‘heartland of traditional music’ (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993: 9).

¹⁶ Nationally, there is an increasing awareness about the role of education and a realisation that ‘music transmission is an integral part of the generational transmission of culture occurring primarily during childhood and adolescence’ (McCarthy, 1999:2). In an interesting parallel the *Irish Times* launched the country’s first education journal *Education Times* in 1973 (Ferriter, 2012: 309).

to generate revival within the domain of the classroom’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1982: 7).¹⁷ Ní Fhuartháin also notes a surprising lack of pedagogical initiative on behalf of Comhaltas at this time; particularly in comparison with the importance this role currently assumes (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 141).¹⁸ In her consideration of the first twenty years of Comhaltas from 1951 to 1970, Ní Fhuartháin identifies the lack of ‘systematic teaching within the Comhaltas branch network’ as a ‘curious omission’; one which is countered, however, by the emergence of other organisations demonstrating strong pedagogical remits during the 1960s (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 142, 143).¹⁹ One of the earliest of these, Cairde na Cruite, was founded in 1961 with the express intent of ‘promoting the Irish harp, encouraging harp tuition, and publishing harp music’ (McCran, 2006). The Armagh Pipers’ Club founded in 1966 deliberately chose to create an organisation outside of the Comhaltas model. As one of its founders, and active Comhaltas member Brian Vallely admitted ‘I was fanatical about developing the uilleann pipes and soon found myself at loggerheads with the non-music playing committee men [of Comhaltas]’ (Vallely and Vallely, 2012: 18).²⁰ Similarly, the Cork Pipers’ Club had been revived in 1963 and the inauguration of NPU in 1968 is what Fintan Vallely describes as a ‘clear line in the sand’ for those ‘who had a dominating aesthetic sense of what was “traditional”’ (Vallely, 2004: 19).²¹ According to Breathnach, ‘the idea of a *fleadh* ... without a public to get in the way of the music’ was instrumental to the foundation of NPU and Hughes and Ó Rócháin described the instigation of NPU as a ‘fresh approach to the study of traditional music [...] advocating the importance of

¹⁷ Teaching was however taking place and Ó hAllmhuráin notes that Jack Mulkere had been teaching since 1923, when he took his first class in Peterswell (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1982).

¹⁸ Their first active role in pedagogy took place, in Ennis in 1962, under the auspices of the VEC, lobbied for by Comhaltas members in Co. Clare (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 142). According to Ní Fhuartháin, the shift by Comhaltas towards pedagogical transmission during the 1960s was cemented by government funding, secured for the first time in 1968 (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011). This enabled the organisation to appoint a full-time member of staff (a *Timire Ceoil*) ‘to specifically address the issue of education and traditional music’ (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 143).

¹⁹ In fact she suggests that systematic teaching did not begin until after the establishment of SSWC in 1973 (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 143). As an interesting comparison, the Counties Antrim and Derry Country Fiddlers Association (CADCFA) although founded in 1953 also did not begin to teach classes until 1975, enabled by a Belfast Arts Council grant (Rachel Bleakly *The History of the Counties Antrim and Derry Country Fiddlers Association* BA diss., Queens University Belfast, 1998, cited in Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 143).

²⁰ The Armagh Pipers’ Club was responsible for producing the first (of many) tutor books of Irish traditional music *Learn to play the Tin Whistle* in 1972. They continued to choose to self-publish tutor books, despite the advances of a major publishing company, as this would have resulted in a tenfold increase in the retail price of the book, thus reflecting the non-commercial pedagogical impulses that directed the organisation (Vallely and Vallely, 2012).

²¹ The Cork Pipers’ Club, the first pipers’ club in Ireland, was originally formed in 1898. NPU, instituted to promote and preserve the uilleann pipes, now has an international membership.

learning for the sake of *understanding* rather than simply competing’ (Breathnach, 1986: 172, Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993: 7, italics in the original).

The unclear relationship between Comhaltas and pedagogy is highlighted by the ‘Festival Fáilte Week’ which took place prior to the annual Fleadh Cheoil weekend in Enniscorthy in 1967. According to Ní Fhuartháin, this week was organised ‘for commercial rather than cultural gains’ demonstrating the underlying element of profit underpinning the organisation of the Fleadh Cheoil and analogously perhaps how innovative SSWC and the concept of a summer school of Irish traditional music would prove to be just a few years later in 1973 (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011:167). Comhaltas received Government funding for the first time in 1968, and the ‘significant shift’ this caused in its organisation, as described earlier, and the contemporaneous foundation of NPU in the same year is noteworthy. This is reflected in Roy Foster’s observation of similar ‘rejection[s] of some old authoritarian formation’ occurring during Ireland’s transformation at this time (Foster, 2007: 37). Likewise Giddens notes that ‘most traditions are involved with power’ highlighted by the leverage of state funding in the late 1960s for the professionalisation of Comhaltas through the creation of a paid directorship (Giddens, 1999: 2). The foundation of NPU marks a return to a grassroots, pedagogically-led revival, questioning the modes and authority exercised by Comhaltas.²² The overlap in both personnel and ideology between NPU and the organisers of SSWC demonstrates an appetite for a different context for the transmission, commemoration and performance of Irish traditional music. By taking action and challenging the cultural spaces in which the transmission, commemoration and performance of Irish traditional music takes place, NPU and subsequently SSWC effectively challenged the dominant ideology of competition-based revival.²³

This period during the 1970s marks a time of significant change. Until this point, the deployment of Irish traditional music - whether for nationalistic purposes or on account of its sonic and social values – played out within a defined community of practice. The movement beyond this traditional constituency base embraced more widely the concept

²² In this way it reflects the foundation of the early twentieth century urban-based pipers’ clubs of Cork (1899), Dublin (1900) and Limerick (1904).

²³ Comhaltas themselves introduced a new type of festival, the *Fleadh Nua*, in 1970 and Nicholas Carolan suggests that dislike for the competitive elements of the Fleadh was most likely a factor in its foundation (Carolan, 2000).

of pedagogy, representing a significant change in the ethos of institutions such as Comhaltas. This ‘opening up’ of Irish traditional music to new constituencies through pedagogy is echoed by the ‘opening up’ of the tradition to wider audiences through the raising of monuments which is discussed in Chapter 4. Issues pertaining to perceptions of low status or lack of respectability in relation to the Irish music tradition (highlighted by McCarthy 1999: 184) begin to dissolve during this period. The commercial visibility and popularisation of Irish music which informs the next part of this chapter bears some responsibility for this, but other issues are also to the fore, not least the increased air-time afforded Irish traditional music by RnaG established in 1972 and the Folklore Commission re-siting to UCD in 1972.²⁴

On stage and commercial

During the course of the 1960s and 1970s, new audiences for Irish traditional music develop and consolidate, and music practices are both commodified and commercialised as a result. Seán Ó Riada, by placing local traditions in dialogue and on equal footing with ‘high’ cultural forms, contributes to a new community of listeners for Irish traditional music through his radio series *Our Musical Heritage* (1962), and through the modes of presentation of his work with Ceoltóirí Chualann (1961). Comhaltas also contributes to this process of new audience development at both domestic and international levels, particularly through concert tour programming. Their first North American tour takes place in 1972 and these tours play an important role in developing and cementing diasporic Irish music connections. According to PJ Curtis, ‘the early Seventies saw new musical liaisons being formed ... as traditional Irish music, contemporary folk, American and mid-European influences began to coalesce’ (Curtis, 1994: 24). The convention of ensemble playing is established by the emerging ‘supergroups’ led by Planxty who recorded their first album in 1972 and Curtis suggests that the new sound created by bands such as Planxty, followed by De Dannan in 1974 and the Bothy Band in 1975 bore significant responsibility for increasing international interest in Irish traditional music (Curtis, 1994: 24).²⁵ Harry

²⁴ Where it became the Department of Irish Folklore.

²⁵ *Prosperous*, Christy Moore’s second solo album is arguably the 1971 pre-cursor to Planxty featuring the line-up of Andy Irvine, Liam O’Flynn and Donal Lunny. Irish ‘Celtic Rock’ Band Horslips also recorded their first album *Horslips - Happy To Meet, Sorry To Part* in 1972 utilising traditional instrumentation and idiom. McLaughlin and McLoone draw attention to the use by Horslips of local

White argues that this development is a decisive invention rather than a tradition in itself referring to the ‘definitive aural signature of neotraditional Irish music’ represented by the Bothy Band and the Chieftains (White, 2009: 68). Breathnach also notes the earlier influence of the Clancy Brothers and the American-led folk revival in widening the appeal of Irish music to non-traditional home audiences (Breathnach, 1986: 171). The foundation of SSWC occurs both within and outside this commercial musical milieu. It is both a direct beneficiary of the new audiences attracted to Irish traditional music and an authentic repository for both experienced musicians and learners. Indeed attendees who are drawn to both Irish traditional music and SSWC through the emergence of these new supergroups go on to find themselves being taught by some of these musicians ‘whose records are a treasured possession at home’ (Breathnach, 1986: 174).

Irish traditional music and a cultural economy

By 1973, institutional intervention by the government, the Arts Council and Comhaltas operating at local, regional and national levels; the increasing mediatisation of Irish traditional music through radio and TV broadcast; the work of individual collectors; the success of the fleadh and the emergence of supergroups like Planxty, contribute not just to the safe-guarding of Irish traditional music but to a distinct increase in its popularity. This growth in socio-musical status results in a cultural product with commercial viability representing a strong marker of Irish cultural identity. Tracing this trajectory from revivalist impulses to commercial viability, Vallely reflects on the difficulties this can create explaining that

the logic of subsequent success for the revived music ... is that economic support passes to the rewarding but ruthlessly rigorous commercial rat-race, and guardianship becomes increasingly tied up with the institutions of the state’ resulting in ‘a transformation that gives rise to squabbles and splits, and runs the risk of alienating the dedicated from the substance of their artistic expressiveness (Vallely, 2005: 52).

place names, which they suggest was unusual at that time within a global rock format (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012: 65). Arguably this mirrors the impulse of reclaiming local sounds and places demonstrated by the foundation of SSWC in the following year, 1973.

Guardianship and cultural authority in this model are transferred not just to the state, but to the control of a capitalist market society, where in fact the public, through market forces become patrons of the arts (Preston, 2005).

This is not to dismiss the role of Irish traditional music in the cultural economy of earlier periods in Ireland or neglect its long-term ability to enrich people's lives and generate income. During the domain of the country house and crossroads dances, weddings and fairs, musicians were frequently reimbursed for their music, in money or in kind. However, the commodification and commercialisation of Irish traditional music as represented by the separation of its function from practice (the recording industry), new arenas for music transmission (music classes), and the increasingly professionalised role of Irish traditional music in the cultural identity of a tourist-dependant nation has created a more distinct Irish traditional music industry.²⁶

Economic transactions in which Irish traditional music is produced and consumed contribute to national GDP and the role of Irish traditional music and the traditional arts is now on the table for discussions of social, cultural and economic regeneration. Indeed since the early 1980s, the Arts Council, following the example of its counterparts in Europe, sought to justify State aid to arts organisation on economic grounds. Kennedy notes that hereafter, Arts Council press statements are sprinkled with terms like 'the culture industries, arts goods and private arts sponsorship' (Kennedy, 1990: 211). As summarised by Vallely, Irish traditional 'music as it is best known today - is now an industry as well as art form' (Vallely, 2005: 53). Preston suggests that the conversion of the arts (such as Irish traditional music) into a cultural product whilst a 'convenient amenity', creates at the same time a problem equal to or worse than the art form's original demise (Preston, 2005: 67). SSWC, however, peopled with both professional and non-professional musicians, makes no overt gestures to the commercial practices of the 'industrialised arts' (Vallely et al., 2013: 12). At the annual 'launch' event which takes place on the first Sunday evening of the School, a considerable number of Irish traditional music CDs, books and scholarship are launched, discussed and sold. Conceptually, SSWC offers a space in which the

²⁶ The Chieftains represent an early example of Irish traditional music commodification since they were assembled specifically in 1962 by Paddy Moloney (at the behest of Gareth Browne) to make a product - a recording - rather than to play live music (Glatt, 1997: 53). This is in contrast with the usual band model in which initial music-making practices are geared firstly towards live performance from which the recorded product consequently (if at all) emerges. The Chieftains, therefore, were torch-bearers in a new conceptualisation and approach to Irish traditional music as a commercial product.

production of CDs and books are privileged as acts of transmission, performance and commemoration under which their identity as commodities with commercial viability is subsumed. Such validation in the cultural rather than economic arena increases both the desirability and authenticating opportunity that arises from ‘launching’ at SSWC. Similarly the temporary shop at the School administered by NPU and at which items launched in any given year are available, was originally set up by Muiris Ó Rócháin in the early years of the School in order to promote and sell Irish language books in conjunction with *Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge*. This has developed into a venture with commercial benefits that the School handed over to NPU to operate and that way ‘the money goes back to piping’ and supplements their fund-raising efforts (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

Three festivals

Demonstrating the eschewal by SSWC of Irish traditional music as a ‘convenient amenity’, the following section undertakes a brief comparative analysis with two other festivals, the Wexford Festival Opera (WFO) and the Galway Arts Festival (GAF). Particular attention is paid to the original impulses that motivated these festivals and initiated the shape of their development pathways. A consideration of local factors and precedents that pertain specifically to the locality of Miltown Malbay follows, locating these ideas within the wider narrative of the School itself.

Each of these three festivals (WFO, GAF and SSWC) is unique and complex, where both inventive creativity and institutional constraint has given rise to varied and localised outcomes. A creative impulse is common to all three, as is the authorship of key personalities. This is demonstrated by the influence and manipulation of cultural production through the organisational and leadership qualities of that authorship. Stocks of capital are amassed through the development of place, community and the animation of local participation and social networks. Place itself endows each festival with what Harvey Molotch describes as a guarantee, carrying its own accumulated symbolic value (Molotch, 1996). All three places (Wexford, Galway, and Miltown Malbay) share peripheral, geographical locations, for which these festivals have attained international acclaim. Furthermore, the development of the particular sector of

the arts undertaken by each festival has a far-ranging extra-festival impact, both spatial and temporal. Indeed all three have ‘achieved longevity and [...] become permanent institutions and hallmark tourist events in their community’ echoing the constituent elements of a successful festival observed by Andersson and Getz (2008: 200) .

While the original artistic and community outcomes for each festival differed, one factor held in common by the three endeavours was that making a profit was neither a priority nor a goal. However, the staging of any festival requires some capital input. Indeed, the utilisation and exchange of different types of capital such as cultural, social and symbolic as well as economic, informed, enabled and to a certain extent decided the shape that these festivals would ultimately acquire. Crucially however, finance, particularly the pathway by which finance potentially procures a gate-keeping role, significantly influenced the three festivals’ development trajectories.

The Wexford Festival Opera, founded in 1951, was the brainchild of Tom Walsh, an entrepreneur, visionary and a lover of opera (Daly, 2004). The *raison d’être* of the WFO was to give new life to neglected opera, and therefore from the very beginning it perceived itself as operating within an international, rather than a local or even national opera sphere. Two themes that persist throughout Karina Daly’s 2004 account of the WFO are the extraordinary local, voluntary effort that supports the festival and the on-going crisis of funding (Daly, 2004). She highlights the key role of the festival’s animateur Tom Walsh, demonstrating how his management style engendered the support of the townspeople and the social capital that developed subsequently. The opera chorus, for example, was populated locally for many years and local residents and volunteers were offered free or reduced price tickets to dress rehearsals. A significant element of its cultural capital, which then fed into the marketing drive of the festival, centred on the welcoming nature of a small town with its narrow medieval streets and the intimacy of the main venue, the Theatre Royal. From its outset, the WFO utilised the professional services of the Radio Éireann Light Orchestra (and subsequently the RTÉ Concert Orchestra) and with the exception of the local amateur chorus, the remaining talent was professional and non-indigenous incurring a significant annual capital cost. In order to sustain its core activity – opera - both tourist expenditure and major funding sources were essential and Daly relates that post-1956 the organising council’s time was increasingly taken over with the issue of financing

the coming season and the necessity to attract more tourists. Paying bills rather than the production of opera dominated many of the council's meetings. This was not the pathway envisioned by Tom Walsh and as he declared in an interview for the *Irish Independent* in July 1963:

I'm not interested in tourism at all. I have enough on my plate trying to bring the opera. Let somebody else bring the tourists. I'm sure the Festival [will help] the tourist industry – how much or how little, is not my pigeon. I just want to put on opera (Daly, 2004: 26).

For primarily financial reasons, the festival did not take place in 1960 or 1966, a situation that was subsequently remedied by Guinness sponsorship. The metamorphosis of the festival from its original private, amateur nature into a public, professional organization is demonstrated through various changes; the employment of a professional Artistic Director in 1973, the introduction of the first professional chorus, the Prague Choir in 1995 and the purpose-built Wexford Opera House in 2008.²⁷

The Galway Arts Festival grew out of NUI Galway's Arts Society in 1978. With social, non-elite origins, it adopted an ideology of inclusiveness in creating a festival that would both serve and be served by the local population of Galway, fashioning an accessibility to the arts which would contest conventional notions of what constituted arts spaces. The GAF drew on the city's longstanding identity as a place with strong cultural associations, albeit marginalised from Dublin: the perceived centre of the arts in Ireland. It reaffirmed these associations, by marking Galway as a key cultural centre and helping to incubate many other, now well-established arts organisations in the city.²⁸ However, as Bernadette Quinn reveals, its ideology unravelled as it became more successful and its agenda became more complex (Quinn, 2003a).²⁹ An Arts Council grant facilitated the employment of its first paid administrator in 1989, to work alongside the festival founders. During the 1990s, the festival's ideology was problematised when a strategy was put in place to consciously target tourists in order to

²⁷ Bernadette Quinn maintains, however, that one of its most symbolic features continues to be the manner in which voluntary support sustains the festival (Quinn, 2003b: 66).

²⁸ For example the Galway Film Fleadh and the children's theatre festival Baboró.

²⁹ Points of contention included Irish language programming and reduced local cultural production (Quinn, 2003a).

expand audiences and generate more income (Quinn, 2003a: 73). The GAF subsequently found itself as the host of an international arts festival, a move which re-situated the reimagining of Galway as a cultural hub in the west of Ireland. As a result, the historical privileging of Galway residents was impaired leading to a distancing of the very Galway population the Festival originally sought to cater for. A manifestation of local disappointment with this change in direction was demonstrated in 2006 by the staging of *Project 06* an alternative contemporaneous festival intended to reconnect the needs of local artists and audiences.³⁰

The success of SSWC in attracting visitors to Miltown is not without precedent but rather is embedded in the consequences of earlier events. Following the foundation of Comhaltas in 1951, the first ever Clare county fleadh took place with great success in Miltown in 1957. Succeeding years saw the Clare county fleadh hosted by various other towns such as Kilrush and Scariff, however, Séamus Mac Mathúna documents that following 1957, regardless of the location of the fleadh, musicians ‘established a tradition of repairing to Miltown when the fleadh was over and spending the remainder of the week there’ (S Mac Mathúna, 1973: 8). The presence of ‘Piper Clancy’ at the 1957 fleadh after ending his exile in England, is considered by Mac Mathúna to be key to this annual Miltown migration (Ibid.). Marty O’Malley also pinpoints this fleadh as a key moment in defining Miltown’s popularity amongst traditional musicians, suggesting that people who visited Miltown that year returned frequently: ‘they started comin’ back and back ... They came weekend’s and played in pubs ... Queally’s, Marrinan’s, Hennessy’s, Friel’s, Mahony’s, Cleary’s, mostly’ (Marty O’Malley, quoted in Hughes and Munnelly, 1984: 91). Indeed, Hughes and Munnelly go on to suggest that this fleadh was the musical ancestor of the Willie Clancy Summer School (Ibid.).

Shortly before this first Clare county fleadh, the Government initiated *An Tostal* (translated as ‘Ireland At Home’) a short-lived attempt (from 1953-58) to extend the summer tourist season from Easter to the end of September by promoting a festival of Irish cultural activities. Established by the newly formed *Bord Fáilte*, the suggestion originated from the then president of Pan-American airlines (operating a newly opened transatlantic route into Shannon Airport), to attract, in particular, Irish-American

³⁰ This was succeeded by a Galway Fringe Festival since 2012.

visitors back to Ireland.³¹ As such, it signalled a new way of thinking about Irish culture by actively seeking to develop its external cultural profile and economic potential (Morash, 2002: 210). *An Tostal* consisted of pageants, parades, theatre, music and sporting events, and carried a strong religious undertone. Large gatherings occurred at places like Slane and Croke Park, but smaller festivities took place in towns and villages across the country, including under its umbrella some festivals which were already in existence.³² The title *An Tostal*, embodied a desire to draw a link to the ancient great festivals, such as Tailteann, Carman and Colmain (Zuelow, 2005). Whilst the success of *An Tostal* as a national and nationalising event was limited, its legacy did manifest itself in various local, tourist-oriented events such as the inaugural Spanish Point Holiday Festival, which originated in 1964.³³ This was initiated by the newly formed Miltown Malbay Development Association, a voluntary body which according to itself was ‘interested in anything that makes Miltown Malbay a more attractive place to live or work’ (Spanish Point Holiday Festival Souvenir Programme, 1969).³⁴ The early Spanish Point Holiday Festivals lasted for four weeks from mid-July to mid-August and deliberately set out to align the town with tourism, capitalising in particular on the beach at Spanish Point.³⁵ Mac Mathúna asserts that in 1967, the first time in ten years that there was no Clare county fleadh, musicians still flocked to Miltown, where the Spanish Point festival was in full flow and ‘the festival organisers ... made full capital of the music sessions and backed these up with ... organised music and set-dancing in the streets’ (S Mac Mathúna, 1973: 8). The highlight of the Spanish Point Holiday festival was the Darlin’ Girl from Clare competition which was modelled on the Rose of Tralee Festival, a reinvention of the Carnival Queen

³¹ *An Tostal* was repeated annually until 1958 and although not a commercial success, it forged numerous spin-off festivals which survived to become central elements in the national calendar of artistic events (Kennedy, 1990: 112). ‘The Gathering Ireland 2013’ which Ellen McWilliams described as a ‘cultural’ and economic call to arms’ shares its conceptual impulse with *An Tostal* (McWilliams, 2013).

³² Chris Morash traces the success of the Dublin Theatre Festival to its 1957 *An Tostal* origins (Morash, 2002: 210).

³³ The concept of a tourist industry in Miltown predates *An Tostal*. Local businessman Thomas Morony established the Atlantic Hotel in 1808 at Spanish Point and ‘races on the strand, here as at Lahinch, were among the novelties arranged for the delectation of a numerous and respectable clientele’ (MacLochlainn, 1972).

³⁴ Conceptual precedents for the Spanish Point Holiday Festival and SSWC also lie in the campaigns of Muintir na Tíre: a rural renewal movement set up in the 1930s to deal with ‘rural crisis’, and chronologically more pertinent the 1960s the ‘Save the West’ campaign; specifically set up to deal with the issue of western decline by transforming rural economies (Varley and Curtin, 1999).

³⁵ It included a variety of events such as dog racing, open-air céilís, monster fishing competitions, singing pub competitions, Tug Of War, marquee dancing and of course music and singing in the pubs every night.

competition at the Tralee Races. The Tralee Races were resurrected in 1957, under the *An Tostal* umbrella and the explicit purpose of the Carnival Queen competition was to entice the race crowd to spend an extra night in the town of Tralee.³⁶ Like the Rose of Tralee, the Darlin' Girl from Clare, utilised a song title (this time by Percy French) for its name.³⁷ In particular, the Darlin' Girl drew on its diasporic Clare Association connections in Britain and the US from which some of its Darlin's were recruited.³⁸ Rather like the Ballybunion Bachelor Festival (founded in 1970), the theme of matchmaking underscored these festivals; indeed Michael Cronin suggests an invisible line of continuity from the matchmaking tradition that would have been a central feature of the original Aonach Tailteann through to the Rose of Tralee Festival (Cronin, 2003: 397).³⁹

The musical pathways to Miltown opened up by the county fleadh of 1957 and the Spanish Point Holiday Festival represent significant precedents to SSWC in terms of their social capital legacy. The voluntary administration of the county fleadh and Spanish Point Holiday Festival created a focus for the building of community networks and the development of organisational capacity within the town of Miltown. With significant stocks of social capital already in place, this enabled the inaugural SSWC committee to direct their energy solely on harnessing the cultural and symbolic capital embedded in Willie Clancy himself. This is already demonstrated by the post-fleadh and indeed year-round visits to Miltown attributed in no small part to the presence of Willie Clancy. In turn, these visits are a result of Willie Clancy's individual engagement with Irish traditional music networks as outlined in Chapter 1 and in particular, his desire to reclaim the sound of local piper Garrett Barry and the way in which he articulated this, musically and verbally during his lifetime.

³⁶ The Tralee Races changed its name to a Festival in 1959 and the Carnival Queen contest metamorphosed into the Rose of Tralee contest guided by the required attributes of the song. Contestants originally had to be a native of Tralee to enter the competition. In the early 1960s this was widened to a native of Kerry, and by 1967 the requirement was to be 'of Irish ancestry'. It adopted the name of 'International Rose of Tralee Festival' during the 1970s.

³⁷ This was despite the fact that the song had no actual connection with West Clare. Unlike the Percy French song, *Are you right there Michael* which has a very clear connection to West Clare parodying the tardiness of the West Clare Railway, which itself had closed in 1961.

³⁸ It continued into the early 1970s and was resurrected for a number of years from the mid-1980s to 1990s as the International Darlin' girl from Clare Festival.

³⁹ Its original title was the Ballybunion Gay Bachelor Festival. In an *Irish Times* review of the festival in 1974, poet Michael Coady remarks that 'no this is not a gladsome coming together of Kerry homosexuals; like most Irish "festivals" it is, in fact, a conspiracy of publicans' (Coady, 1974). Coady's words in fact pre-empted its current rebranding as the Carlsberg International Bachelor Festival.

‘Festivilitia’

No exact model existed within the Irish music tradition on which to base SSWC. The Yeats and Merriman summer schools offered a generic template as academic precursors. Indeed the first Yeats school, in 1960, was itself the successor of an earlier (1957) *An Tostal* initiative: the Yeats Country Festival (Kearns and Taylor, 2003, Malone, 1996). Closer to home in Feakle, the Merriman Summer School, founded in 1967, adopted the term ‘School’ in its title precisely to differentiate itself from existing festivals, such as the Spanish Point Holiday Festival.⁴⁰ SSWC demonstrates a similar objective in deploying the term ‘School’ in its title. Based on a Scandinavian folk-school model, its original title was Scoil Éigse (Folk School) and Ó Rócháin described it as ‘the first attempt in Ireland to establish a school for traditional musicians’ (quoted in Quidnunc, 1973). Despite the festivalisation of SSWC, and the various appellations by which it is now informally described, the School has retained its original title, in which the word School continues to construct and embed both academic rigour and authenticity.

Ferriter notes the increasing popularity of festivals in Ireland during the 1970s referencing examples such as Listowel Writers’ Week, the Cork International Film Fleadh, the Ballybunion Bachelor Festival, Galway Races and Dublin Horse Show (Ferriter, 2012: 296). Indeed he re-quotes Fanny Feehan’s pejorative neologism ‘Festivilitia’, for what she considers to be a particularly Irish disease endemic in the early 1970s (Ferriter, 2012: 275). Whilst the format of the School draws on the literary summer school model, many who attend SSWC have little direct connection with the formal ‘School’ aspects and their engagement is with ‘Willie Week’ in festival-time.⁴¹ This was not always the case and Moylan recalls that in the early days it was ‘truly a “School” and could not have been described as a “festival”, as it has been in more

⁴⁰ Shane Malone notes the conceptual difficulty with the use of the term ‘school’ at this time stating that festivals and fleadhs were for music while ‘schools’ were for commemorating writers (Malone, 1996). Deaglán de Bréadún writing for the *Irish Times* reported that ‘Cumann Merriman was the root cause of what was humorously described as a new disease in Ireland – “the summer school sickness”’ (de Bréadún, 1988). Such a comment might contemporaneously apply to summer schools of Irish traditional music.

⁴¹ ‘Willie Week’ is one of many commonly used informal metonyms for SSWC. Further discussion of the name SSWC takes place in the introduction to this thesis.

recent times, to the dismay of the organisers' (Moylan, 2008).⁴² Indeed according to Turner, this binarism of formal-informal is common to the festival experience (Turner, 1982). However, the aesthetic and social functions of a festival, including its social identity, historical continuity and survival and what Alessandro Falassi describes as 'the signs of deep meaning underlying them' is self-evident, particularly through the development of its heterogeneous qualities and spaces (Falassi, 1987: 1).⁴³ As attendance has grown over the years, so have the intrinsic elements of festivity aided by the confluence of street sellers, various pop-up musical instrument shops and indeed the NPU shop servicing the needs of a traditional music audience. Mikhail Bakhtin and Victor Turner speak to the excesses that accompany festivity which at SSWC correspond in particular to perpetual music-making opportunities, associational revelry and in particular the consumption of alcohol (Bakhtin, 1984, Turner, 1982). In the liminal festival space of SSWC, mundane temporal or authoritative constraints are suspended, as it provides a legitimate excuse for indulgences in music-making and drinking facilitated by late opening hours and post-pub-closing sessions in houses, campsites, beaches and indeed any location that might temporarily be appropriated. Negative activities occasionally manifest themselves late at night and after extended opening hours. Of concern to the organisers is the potential for recalcitrant behaviour induced by liminal festival spaces or misconduct that might disrupt the purposes of the School and damage its reputation.

Festivals enhance both group and place identity and the benefits of the festive reconfiguration of the town of Miltown reinvigorate community-based cultural and social capital demonstrated by the intensity with which the success of the School is tied to place. Indeed, the location, Miltown Malbay, like so many other high profile Irish festival locations has become synonymous with the event itself (Goh, 2004: 3).⁴⁴ This intensity is frequently misunderstood. An economist commenting informally on this research lamented what he considered to be a lack of foresight displayed by the

⁴² James Kelly suggested that the emphasis on teaching and education mitigated clearly against the label 'festival' (James Kelly interview, SSWC 2009).

⁴³ Recent fiction from Hugo Hamilton includes vivid description of the heterogeneous festival qualities of SSWC (Hamilton, 2014).

⁴⁴ Gibson and Connell discuss other towns which have successfully established themselves as festival sites, such as Aldeburgh in England and how seasonal music performance can shape local economies (Gibson and Connell, 2005: 69). Deirdre Vaughan concurs, suggesting that for Miltown residents 'even those who are not musicians themselves can glow under the spotlight of what the school has created' (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013).

organisers of SSWC or other traditional music promoters in not setting up a franchise and replicating the School elsewhere. This was contextualised by the restrictive size of Miltown and the way in which it is stretched to capacity during this one week of the year. John Kelly remarked upon a similar conversation; ‘we had a guy here from some PR company or something, saying “could you take this franchise and use it someplace else?”’ John’s reply ‘It’s just impossible, it wouldn’t work’ understates the core synergies present in Miltown Malbay that this thesis will endeavour to uncover (John Kelly interview, SSWC 2009). The honouring of Willie Clancy through the naming of the summer school inscribes it with a social history, a trajectory that links the School back via Garret Barry to the music of West Clare in the nineteenth century. Space transcendence is embedded to the extent that relocation is not only implausible but the suggestion of it misunderstands the territorialised meanings with which Miltown, the place, imbues the School. Willie Clancy’s recourse to the past presents the conduit through which SSWC levers the latent authenticating power seated in Garrett Barry and confers this onto the School. The annual commemoration at the graveside of Clancy (described in Chapter 4) replenishes the symbolic capital that Willie Clancy represents. This is enhanced by the engagement of masters of tradition, starting significantly with the West Clare fiddle masters and the privileging of the uilleann pipes which highlight the process of re-traditionalisation central to the operation of the School. While the School appears to have unfolded in a completely organic way, the process of territorialised re-traditionalisation has constructed an organising framework that is entirely tied to and predicated on the location in which it takes place. Forty years of annual commemoration and repetition has created a brand name, woven into the fabric of Irish music communities and relationships worldwide. Such is the strength of the SSWC brand, it has transcended other agencies of memory to establish the Irish traditional music heritage of Miltown as a key signifier within the wider tradition.

Building local capital

Bernadette Quinn contends that ‘arts festivals, irrespective of their initial objectives almost inevitably develop tourist profiles over time’ (Quinn, 2006: 288). Unlike the GAF which deliberately chose a strategy to grow numbers, SSWC responded year on year to its own dynamic growth by increasing the number of teachers, broadening the

range of tuition and utilising bigger or additional venues, where available.⁴⁵ This has necessitated measures such as the importation of temporary structures (marquees and portakabins), and more recently availing of unsold apartments as teaching venues. At the same time, however, it has maintained its ties to the local domestic sphere, continuing to inhabit the living rooms of local houses as they were first utilised for piping lessons when the School originally began to expand. In doing so it creates its own tradition of continuity, maintaining an historical exchange of both cultural and economic capital with local householders. This contrasts sharply with the flagship capital investment projects championed by GAF (the Town Hall Theatre and Black Box in Galway) and WFO (the Wexford Opera House). It is also comparable to the building development projects of Comhaltas such as its headquarters *An Cultúrlann* in Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin and a number of local and regionally located Comhaltas centres.⁴⁶ SSWC however, in retaining both its spirit of voluntarism and the re-traditionalisation of music transmission as its focus, has developed neither office space nor state of the art art-spaces. Instead, it has intrinsically binded and bounded music transmission, commemoration and performance into the community facilities ordinarily present in West Clare.⁴⁷

While capital investment projects have not been a priority for SSWC, other tangible benefits have accrued to Miltown Malbay as a result of the School which resonate far and beyond its one week duration. Simon During suggests that ‘tourism helps produce and maintain national and local cultures themselves’ and this concurs with the impacts generated by the School for the longer term viability of Miltown itself (During, 2005: 102).⁴⁸ The annual hosting of SSWC in Miltown has grown community resources and facilities and developed a network of expertise and skills within the community.

Clearly economic benefits accrue to Miltown from the School, but cultural capacity

⁴⁵ Indeed Muiris Ó Rócháin insists that the School never set out to be popular, but rather was concerned with authenticity and integrity (Ó Rócháin, 2013: 102).

⁴⁶ The idea for a Comhaltas headquarters was first mooted in the 1960s, resulting in the purchase and refurbishment of *An Cultúrlann*. For further information on the location and purpose of these regional centres see Kearney (2013).

⁴⁷ The authenticating premise that this offers, particularly with regard to the community hall as a performance context is explored in detail in Chapter 5. References to meetings taking place in people’s houses or bars reveals how the infrastructural requirements of more formalised meeting spaces were overcome: see for example Talty (2013: 264), Kearns and Taylor (2003: 52). Harry Hughes noted that the only capital investment item owned by the School was a photocopier (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

⁴⁸ Simon During uses the particularly illuminating example of Stratford-upon-Avon to demonstrate this (During, 2005: 101-2).

building yields repercussive positive social benefits as well, as Arcordia and Whitford summarise:

Festival attendance builds social capital by developing community resources. The organizers who are responsible for the administrative aspects of the festival, whether they are paid workers or not, must interact with the local business and the general community to make arrangements about the festival. This interaction over the period of the festival's organization raises awareness of community resources and expertise, produces social links between previously unrelated groups and individuals, identifies possibilities for the development of the community's resources, and generally encourages a stronger interaction between existing community organizations (Arcordia and Whitford, 2006: 11).

What SSWC creates is a social economy that through the inclusion of local participation and territorial development activity reinvigorates the resource potential embodied in local people. During the week of the School the influx of high visitor numbers has significant corollaries for business and householders in the town.⁴⁹ Bed spaces are at a premium and during the lifetime of the School, home-owners have become adept at creating additional bed-spaces to rent out to visitors. This author's bean a' tí in the first year of field work, like countless other householders in Miltown, converted her house into a B&B for the ten-day duration of the festival.⁵⁰ An elderly widow, she expressed a mixture of both fear at having strangers in her house and relief at knowing that the week would 'fill the oil tank and cover the big bills that come in during the year' (Bean a' tí interview, SSWC 2009). Indeed for many householders the additional revenue guaranteed annually by this week has major repercussions that

⁴⁹ The owners of the Old Bakehouse Restaurant, one of the newer eating establishments in Miltown (which opened in 2005) estimated that they averaged 500 meals a day during the ten days of the festival in 2007 (Irene Burden and Eddie Keane, interview, 30 Aug 2008). The constant queue outside the door is evidence of its popularity.

⁵⁰ During which time the bean a' tí herself moved into her own back kitchen. These temporary rearrangements are part of the lived experience of Miltown and a sense of community support was palpable, evidenced by several callers to the house to check in on the bean a' tí and the calibre of her house guests. Finding accommodation for the School is difficult and invariably expensive as demand outstrips supply. Muiris Ó Rócháin described how some locals go on holidays and rent out their entire house for the week, and strategies for accommodating, feeding and watering attendees informs social discourse in Miltown for a significant part of the year (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

outlive the duration of the School.⁵¹ Likewise every pub, eating establishment and vendor within a ten mile radius of the School can expect brisk business during the week. Indeed during SSWC, many Miltown locals shop elsewhere in order to avoid the crowds created by the School, therefore the benefits of the School radiate in many directions as shopping centres peripheral to the School likewise benefit from increased traffic. The site preparation of various elements of the town which become the School and their subsequent return to normal use, creates brief, temporary employment for a variety of locals along with secretarial, administrative, stewarding and security positions. Harry Hughes estimates that approximately 55 people staff the school in an administrative capacity (as opposed to the artists engaged by the School). Some of these receive expenses for the time and expertise they invest or are remunerated in kind by way of meal tokens (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

The forty-year presence of the School has resulted in a strong Irish traditional music identity attaching to the town of Miltown. This attachment, engendered by positive interactions between people and place is encapsulated by the term ‘topophilia’; an idea developed by geographer Yi Fi Tuan and explored in an Irish traditional music context by Tim Collins (Tuan, 1974, Collins, 2013: 31-37). As a result, Miltown has developed a profile as a haven for Irish traditional music, attracting musicians to the locality beyond the one-week duration of the School.⁵² Muiris Ó Rócháin commented on the number of people who had bought property in the area as a result of the School;

A lot of houses were bought here by people who would be sympathetic to music, who’d come here to hear music, so they actually created a nucleus of a

⁵¹ Local newspapers report on the financial contribution of the School to the local economy: for example ‘Record Attendance for Summer School’ *Clare Champion*, 9 July 1982 and ‘Willie Brings £3 Million to Miltown’ *Clare Champion*, 17 July 1998. A number of independent surveys also record the contribution and costs involved in running the School; for example (Goh, 2004, Mescall and Cuddy, 2004).

⁵² The duration of SSWC is extended into the following week by those who choose to stay on for a few additional days to enjoy the relative peace and quiet following the notoriously busy and congested final weekend. The desire to remain within the liminal space of the festival site is a common post-festival feature and there are cultural capital stocks to be earned by being part of the post-festival discourse, not unlike Christy Moore’s account of spending seven days and seven nights at Sherkin Island Festival in 1978 when ‘it was only a one-day festival’ (Christy Moore *One Voice*, 2000, quoted in Ferriter, 2012: 289).

society themselves, so you've music here all the year round (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁵³

This reflects Connell and Gibson's research into the positive additionalities created by what they label as 'music tourism' such as regeneration (house-buying) and the 'economic and cultural roles [music tourism plays] in reshaping particular geographies' beyond the seasonal nature of tourist activities (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 250).⁵⁴ Clearly the experience of visiting Miltown outside of festival time sees it revert to its more usual status as a small, rural and peripheral town.⁵⁵ Muiris Ó Rócháin was however, quick to draw attention to several events that had commenced in the town which he felt were a direct result of an inherent predisposition towards Irish traditional music generated by the School. He reported on an informal annual gathering of mainly Dublin-based musicians at Miltown during the week after Christmas and the relocation of the annual Johnny Doran weekend to the Bellbridge Hotel in Spanish Point in 2007 (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁵⁶ John McDonagh notes, 'many rural communities, small towns and villages struggle to remain viable and are unable to compete with those areas endowed with good infrastructure, public transportation and communication networks' (McDonagh, 2002: 1). Instead, SSWC provides a pathway that harnesses Miltown's peripheral disadvantages through the development of what has in fact become a cultural tourism product. A significant percentage of cultural production at the Galway and Wexford festivals is singularly directed towards and financed by tourism interests, thereby displacing the original objectives of both festivals with tourism objectives. Instead of facilitating local or artistic needs, the organisers of these festivals find themselves in the role of architects, redesigning the festivals to follow economic streams. However, while economic benefits accrue to many sectors of Miltown's population as a result of SSWC, tangible economic outcomes are not pursued by the organisers of the School itself. As such SSWC

⁵³ This corresponds to a wider recognised trend in which people desire to engage with vernacular culture at the level of community. See for example (Markusen, 2010).

⁵⁴ It also resounds with 'creative cities' literature; the creation of places in which people want to live, work and visit and the social, economic, and community development health benefits that result (see for example Florida, 2002; 2005).

⁵⁵ Relating an analogous experience of visiting a remote Scottish island Malcolm Chapman describes his experience of attending a week-long course to learn Gaelic in which each night was filled with ceilidh dancing, singing and drinking. 'One of the teachers there ...expressed some concern that we were in danger of getting a totally false idea of what Gaelic life was like: "It isn't like this", she said, "normally nothing happens for weeks on end"' (Chapman, 1994: 33).

⁵⁶ An annual Concertina Cruinniú was instated in Miltown Malbay in 2012.

operates as a model for sustainable cultural tourism, demonstrating clearly what Christopher Ray describes as ‘local actors interpreting exogenous policy through the prism of local knowledge and local agendas’ (Ray, 1997: 169). The symbols of cultural uniqueness offered by the School have brought economic development to a peripheral locality, embraced the ‘forces of globalization’ yet avoided the threat of ‘cultural dilution’ (Ibid: 168). Regardless then of how the School conceptualises itself, its offerings equate to a valuable cultural tourism product and a model for how organised local communities might conceivably mobilise cultural resources in in order to stave off processes of rural decline.⁵⁷ An American student attending fiddle classes at the School (a classically trained violinist with what she described as a ‘passing interest’ in Irish traditional music) admitted that coming to SSWC offered her an opportunity to engage with people in a much more meaningful way than if she was ‘just a tourist on holiday’ (student interview, SSWC 2009). She went on to describe how the classes provided an intimate context in which she could get to know people and make new acquaintances. Gaining insight into the cultural practices of Irish traditional music was an additional bonus. A similar type of participation was reiterated amongst other members of the older student cohort interviewed. Likewise socialisation within an Irish music-making context was also a factor for parents with children attending classes. Parents interviewed during fieldwork placed a value on witnessing their children developing relationships within this shared community of practice that they considered to be intrinsically as important as their children’s acquisition of musical skills (parent interview, SSWC 2009).

Simultaneously, SSWC caters to a significant constituency who do not attend classes but come to witness and partake in the heterogeneous aspects of festival that SSWC provides. These attendees who number musicians and music aficionados in their midst might not consider the label ‘tourist’ as a category that might be validly assigned to them. Herein lies the ultimate success of SSWC, its consistent cultural integrity enables all attendees to imagine themselves not as tourists, but participants in an authentic experience. The masters of tradition just like all non-local attendees are also engaging and consuming *Miltown* at the same time as they perform it whether in class, at sessions, at concerts or at the beach (Urry, 2002). The eventual employment of paid

⁵⁷ For a contemporary explication of accelerating decline in peripheral rural areas as evidenced by population loss and services closure see for example (Crowley, 2013).

artistic directors at both Galway and Wexford is in contrast to the voluntarism which sustains SSWC and its adoption of a primarily non-commercial approach.⁵⁸ At SSWC, the cultural imperative continues to control the economic one, starkly demonstrated by just how little the structure of the programme appears to have changed in its forty-year history.⁵⁹ Maintaining the integrity of its original cultural imperative grounded in strong ties to place and community feeds back into the perceptions of place-specific authenticity which encase the School and Miltown itself.

Internationalisation

Wider cultural flows impact the School and create implicit corollaries for the maintenance of cultural authority. Barbara O'Connor and others have argued that 'global capitalism controls cultural production', and Picard and Robinson note that festivals are informed by a need for communities to re-assert their identities 'in the face of a feeling of cultural dislocation' brought about by globalising and other forces (Picard and Robinson, 2006: 2, O'Connor, 2003: 123).⁶⁰ Ireland's entry into the EU in 1973 clearly signals an engagement with the global market place. However, if the revival of Irish music, under the aegis of the Gaelic League and later Comhaltas, is perceived as the invention of a national tradition against the denationalising influence of neighbouring Britain, the Willie Clancy Week, as a response, situates itself locally within a global cultural society.⁶¹

When the WFO looked to attract an international audience, SSWC was already networked internationally via its strong diasporic connections (44 per cent of its audience was from overseas according to a report by Fiona Goh in 2004). It taps into a system of musical cosmopolitan interactions, particularly the Irish emigrant musical milieus of many British and North American cities. Bobby Casey, a lodestone of West Clare fiddle style, returned from London every year to attend the School. James Kelly

⁵⁸ For a discussion of voluntarism in a rural community development context see Rogers (1987).

⁵⁹ This resonates with the central theme of the edited collection *Reinventing Ireland: culture, society, and the global economy*, in which Peadar Kirby states that 'economic growth alone does not make a successful society' (Kirby et al., 2002: 35).

⁶⁰ See O'Connor (2003), McLoone (2008); and McLaughlin and McLoone (2000).

⁶¹ McLaughlin and McLoone concur with this idea suggesting that 'the imperializing presence now is global capitalism, manifested in cultural terms by the United States ... [and that f]urthermore, global capitalism today works not by 'homogenizing' world culture but rather through niche marketing' and the marketing of 'difference'' (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012: 6).

(son of one of the original masters, John Kelly Senior) makes an annual trip most years from the United States to teach at the School, combining his West Clare pedigree with his international status as an exiled musician. His journey across the Atlantic demonstrates the level of commitment invested by musicians in the School and at the same time reconfigures his own status within the tradition. At a national level, a variety of master musicians and the entirety of NPU converge on Miltown Malbay for the week. Willie Clancy, a returned Irish emigrant himself, embodied a particular cosmopolitan ontology. He chose to travel both to avail of global labour markets and pursue his individual musical interests through the experience of musical interactions within a de-territorialised Irish music setting in Dublin and London. Ultimately, not only does Clancy remain anchored to an Irish music community, he remains anchored to the community of Miltown Malbay and chooses to return home. As such, Willie Clancy represents an imagined ideal for all diasporic musicians and even those with no diasporic claim, to consider the possibility of eventual return. Irish traditional music inculcates a sense of nostalgia for return and the School represents an opportunity for all musicians to return 'home' for one week. Such is the global popularity of learning Irish traditional music, genealogical provenance is becoming less and less relevant, as demonstrated by non-diasporic attendees at the Willie Clancy Week. The diversity of nationalities attracted to Miltown, and the growth of other substantial international Irish music summer schools (Catskills Irish Arts Week, Milwaukee Irish Fest, Australian Lake School of Celtic Music etc.) reflect an increase in mobility and subsequent pursuance of vernacular, if not necessarily local, culture. Geographer Edward Casey encapsulates the impulse which compels some of these apprentices to travel to Miltown when he suggests that 'from being lost in space and time (or, more likely, lost to them in the era of modernity), we find our way in place' (Casey, 1993: 29). The expression of place during the School at Miltown is both central and centring to the experience of learners. 'In today's world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you "want to be" ... but who you are' (Cook, 2000:5). For the international cohort who attend classes at SSWC it provides translation through the servicing of an intercultural experience (Picard and Robinson, 2006: 5). Indeed as globalisation speeds up the deterritorialisation of culture and prefigures the advent of site-unspecific summer schools such as those at Milwaukee and the Catskills, the added-value of site-specific summer schools such as SSWC increases as the meaning of place contributes to its authentication.

The School has attracted an international audience since its inception and while this cohort has not been deliberately targeted, international approval is a marker of success.⁶² The welcome they receive mobilises further attendance which is then reiterated as symbolic by the organisers and is a contributory social vector in valorising the importance of local narratives embedded in the School.⁶³ SSWC presents Irish traditional music in context and in history in place, in an accessible way which is particularly salient for those who have no direct connection to the past which is being represented. Learners observe first-hand the dispositions of more experienced musicians. SSWC embodies a space in which rules are inscribed, but unstated, and become incorporated by attendees through a somatic rather than conscious experience. Whereas Ireland's national soccer team is explicitly constructed and meant to represent the 'nation' and players are selected on account of their genealogical connections to an enclosed territory, there is no equivalent enclosed territory dictating who might play Ireland's national music, and the local inflection offered by SSWC ensures that anybody, regardless of geographical origin can potentially join in and become a member. Indeed Corcoran suggests that with increasing consumerism, 'ethnicity is increasingly seen as a form of tradable currency – a cultural palette from which Americans (and indeed the Irish) can pick and choose symbols and signifiers to form their own bespoke identities' (Corcoran, 2007: 244). Van Houtom and van Dam describe this as a post-modern obsession with traditions, images and identities (Houtum and Dam, 2002). In such scenarios the borrowing of an identity through participation in music-making is increasingly attractive and available. The cultural, social and symbolic capital acquired by learning at SSWC enables return visitors to re-enter summer school space at a different register, thereby increasing the attraction of return. These bodily acts and the consequent creation of symbolic capital; 'the most valued of the forms of capital', demonstrates the added-value of learning at a summer school over learning from other media such as CDs or on-line tutorials (Probyn, 2005: 54). However, while basking in the sunshine of attention demonstrated by attendance, and reaping its capital

⁶² A report carried by the *Irish Times* after the second school stated that 'Professor Yurchenco and some of her students from the Music Department of the City of New York University, were among the overseas visitors who attended the Willie Clancy Memorial Summer School ... last week' (*Irish Times* 30 July, 1974).

⁶³ An awareness of the importance of this cohort is perhaps demonstrated by the fee for the School appearing in dollars as well as Irish pounds from 1988 onwards. The fee in English sterling is added in 1996 and the practice ends in 2012 when the fee appears only in Euros.

benefits, the narrative of the school continues to adhere to a traditional ethos, one which valorises authenticity, which in turn feeds back into and satisfies the ‘authentic’ experience enjoyed and expected by all cohorts, regardless of origin. The current indomitable status of Irish traditional music is not a music in need of preservation, yet the authenticity trope, the discourse of an unattainable ‘other’ is paramount to its current popularity and the potential access to the unattainable ‘other’ in its raw, untechnologified and rural state is a key attraction of SSWC.

Gatekeepers and sponsors

One of the most important factors that has sustained the integrity of the School is the clear reluctance demonstrated by its organisers to assume any alliances for purely commercial reasons, most notably the non-acceptance of ‘inappropriate’ sponsorship. This is not to suggest that the School does not need or court funding and sponsorship. Muiris Ó Rócháin described an offer of sponsorship in exchange for organising a set-dancing competition from ‘a man from the Bank of Ireland’ (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). During the interview Ó Rócháin reiterated his reply to the sponsor’s offer - ‘competitions isn’t our forte’ - before relaying the man’s disbelief that the School would refuse money rather than compromise its principles (Ibid.). In the year 2000, SSWC accepted sponsorship from Guinness on the proviso that there would be no external signage and that any Guinness marketing material would, like the consumption of its product, remain inside public houses. Ó Rócháin expressed his dismay at arriving back to Miltown from Francie Donnellan’s funeral prior to SSWC in 2000 to discover big ‘Guinness welcomes you to the festival’ signs on all the roads leading into Miltown (Ibid.).⁶⁴ Contemplating the visual absence of drinks sponsorship at SSWC prompted Frank McNally to comment in an *Irish Times* article that it is ‘not so much a festival as an anti-festival’ wryly noting that ‘when the organisers say they have “the harp” on board this year for the first time, it’s classes in the instrument they mean, not the lager (McNally, 2007).

⁶⁴ SSWC continues to accept sponsorship from Guinness (now Diageo), but its terms have been clearly renegotiated and there are no signs of the aggressive marketing practices that might be found at other festivals present at SSWC (Harry Hughes interview v. Nov 2013).

The running costs incurred in organising a ten-day festival of this size and calibre are substantial. However, only a very small amount of this is diverted to marketing due in part to the high circulation of non-economic capital generated by the School and as Ó Rócháin recognises; ‘the personal recommendation of former students’ (Ó Rócháin, 2013: 103). Instead, SSWC has grown on a word of mouth basis, tapping into pre-existing worldwide, diasporic musical networks through which the School’s maturing reputation circulates. During the forty-year period spanned by this research the School operated successfully without a dedicated website, and the sum of its printed outputs continues to be a one-page double-sided programme of events and a number of posters that are sent to fleadh and festivals in the months preceding SSWC.⁶⁵ This type of low-key marketing and advertising corresponds to what Brenda Murphy describes as ‘a particular type of in-group membership’ and in contrast she outlines the expensive marketing campaign waged by Guinness to maintain an Irish identity and evocation of home (Murphy, 2003: 50). Clearly SSWC does not have the international visibility enjoyed by Guinness, yet arguably without any marketing campaign it has embodied the same ‘complex and commercially potent element of Irish identity worldwide’ (Murphy, 2003: 50).

The annual funding and sponsorship income received by the School is utilised primarily to reimburse, accommodate and feed the masters (and mistresses) of tradition for their teaching and performances. However, beyond the economic realm, musical exchanges take place between these master musicians and indeed between learners and masters in the informal milieu of the Miltown sessions representing an intangible, priceless, unstaged cultural cache, core to the success of the School and central to its cultural economy. Musicians are not financially reimbursed for playing at sessions at SSWC and neither are these sessions staged explicitly for tourist consumption, rather they exist within a system of reciprocity between a community of musicians. Kaul gives considerable insight into the system of reciprocity occurring at sessions describing it as an exchange of ‘gifts’ which take on the form of ‘tunes, folk historical knowledge about tunes and musicians, drinks ... and conversation’ (Kaul 2007:704).

⁶⁵ The School has advertised with the local *Clare Champion* since its inception. It now places small-scale adverts in a number of relevant publications such as *Irish Music Magazine*, the *Journal of Music and Living Tradition*. Harry Hughes acknowledged that none of these publications were in existence during the first twenty years of the School: the earliest of these, *Irish Music Magazine*, was founded in 1995 (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

The session space also creates opportunities for both socio-cultural affirmation and personal transformation through its celebration of Irish music-making. During an interview with Kinvara publican Olga Connolly, one of the organisers of the Cuckoo Fleadh in Kinvara, County Galway, she discussed the expectations held by people attending a festival such as the Cuckoo Fleadh.⁶⁶ In particular she spoke to the anticipation of all-day-long music sessions and the financial burden carried by festival promoters in organising and paying musicians to ensure that this might happen. She compared this to SSWC:

People go away for ten nights; they will play for free morning, noon and night. I don't know whether they even get a drink, maybe they do or whatever. It's just unbelievable' (Olga Connolly interview, Dec 2009).

SSWC guarantees the liminality of festival time and space (not necessarily guaranteed by the Cuckoo Fleadh) in which the usual rules of 'work' i.e. paid gigs are suspended; superseded by an intangible process of cultural exchange made possible by the particular dynamics of location, personnel, timing and community uniquely situated in Miltown. These are the dynamics that other festival organisers find themselves trying to create, stage and pay for, inevitably resorting to commercial sponsorship for that funding. SSWC guarantees the intangible source of value embodied within the creative process of performance and provides the relational context that according to Bourdieu gives meaning to an artistic work (Bourdieu, 2007 (1977)). The value and meaning of any session arises in direct relation to other musicians and sessions. The aura and spontaneity present in the non-monetary cultural transactions at SSWC hovers outside of the commodification of Irish traditional music. The vast majority of Irish traditional music sessions held in pubs throughout Ireland during the year are underscored by an economic transaction between bar owner and musician. In the heterogeneous spaces of SSWC sessions, reciprocity is foregrounded, strategies of commodification are (relatively) absent and the results equate to a sense of authenticity reflective of an older concept of music as 'social practice'. Unpaid music sessions at SSWC therefore signal

⁶⁶ As well as being an Irish music aficionado, Olga is a native of Miltown Malbay and regular attender at SSWC. The Cuckoo Fleadh is a significant date on the Irish traditional music calendar. Currently designated as a 'traditional music and community based arts festival', it is held annually over the May bank holiday weekend in Kinvara, County Galway since 1993. <http://www.kinvara.com/cuckoo> [accessed 10 October 2013].

the presence of people playing ‘for the love of it’ in which music as social practice is re-privileged and valued as an activity that is worth investing and spending time on.⁶⁷ This contravenes the rules of capitalism by temporarily suspending the power relationships and the basic arrangements that govern contemporary, social and economic life. Furthermore, it is key to SSWC’s liminality in which the rules of everyday life are broken or discarded.⁶⁸

Creating a template

Since 1973, other week-long summer schools of Irish music inspired by the Willie Clancy model are now claiming, reclaiming and re-traditionalising music-makers and music practices of other areas.⁶⁹ Continuing throughout the summer weeks like quieter second cousins, they provide a haven from the intensity of the Willie Clancy Week, and the majority are also located along the western seaboard.⁷⁰ Imitations of the SSWC template demonstrates that its success equals not just a heightened promotion of indigenous cultural production but a potential way to leverage revenue via additional visitor numbers as summer schools strike an alliance between cultural objectives and the economic realm. The school which bears the most resemblance to the Willie Clancy Week, at least in terms of structure and number of students attending workshops, is the annual Scoil Éigse week-long summer school convened by Comhaltas, directly preceding Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Scoil Éigse like the Fleadh is a moveable feast, located in whichever town the Fleadh is taking place in any given year and elements of competition are embedded as scholarships for the week are awarded to prize-winners at provincial level competitions who have qualified for a place at the Fleadh Cheoil. While there is some overlap in the constituencies that attend both these Schools, Scoil Éigse does not attract the same coterie of annual pilgrims who faithfully attend the Willie Clancy Week. Due to the temporality of Scoil Éigse’s

⁶⁷ There is an interesting contrast here with some of the older fiddle players encountered by Feldman and O’Doherty during their 1970s fieldwork in Donegal who had given up ‘fiddling’ viewing it ‘as a misspent use of valuable economic time’ (Feldman and O’Doherty, 1979: 25).

⁶⁸ The role of sessions in the performance of authenticity is interrogated further in Chapter 5.

⁶⁹ Muiris Ó Rócháin spoke of his role in an advisory capacity at the onset of a number of these summer schools (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

⁷⁰ Examples include the South Sligo Summer School in Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí Summer School in Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal and the Joe Mooney Summer School in Drumbshanbo, Co. Leitrim. Indeed the Arts Council commented in its 1994 Annual Report on the absence of an Irish traditional music summer school on the east coast or in the midlands (Arts Council, 1994: 58).

location which shifts every two to three years in accordance with the Fleadh's mobility, its ties with any one place are limited. The anonymity of Scoil Éigse fails to enunciate the specific response to individual and collective desire engendered by the man himself, Willie Clancy, and it lacks the focus conveyed by his name. The locational gravitas of ritual repetition is absent, and as a result, its social capital is lower. The premise for hosting the Fleadh is based on the ability of a town or city to submit a winning bid that demonstrates the physical capacity of the town and its local committee to host such an endeavour. As such, practical and infrastructural elements frequently over-ride musical ones in the decision-making process and engagement with place and investment in the historicity of music-making in place can be subsumed under the immense organisational task at hand. Historical music-making practices embedded in the forty-year plus ritual repetition of SSWC radiate around the School's figurehead infiltrating even the most heterogeneous of spaces during the week. By comparison, Scoil Éigse's minstrelsy prevents it from acquiring such locational gravitas. Its location in an urban centre large enough to accommodate the Fleadh, prevents its masters and apprentices from colonising spaces in the manner in which Miltown is entirely colonised by the sounds and sights of Irish traditional music and musicians during the Willie Clancy Week. SSWC, Scoil Éigse and indeed the Fleadh share a number of commonalities, but the re-traditionalisation of music practices in a singular location has garnered an enduring reputation for SSWC and an unprecedented allegiance amongst the community of practice of Irish traditional musicians. The growth of summer schools modelled on SSWC effectively demonstrates how a new cultural element – intense week-long workshops - represents a desirable and authentic learning space for Irish traditional music. The success of the summer schools is demonstrated by their incorporation both into the Irish music tradition and into the on-going vitality of rural Irish towns to the extent that over time, they become incorporated into and perceived as manifestations of local culture. A baseline of authenticity emerges through this process of re-traditionalisation in place and Irish traditional music takes on a new role as the public face of local culture, providing new meanings for local identity.

‘When God said, “Let there be music”, he added, “and a rake of Claremen”’⁷¹

Mythology, nostalgia and imagination are central to constructions of place and inform the success of SSWC and the place-specific perception of musical authenticity. Irish traditional music discourses are informed by configurations of music-making seated within pre-existing geographical tropes that range from the performance rubric of ‘West Clare style’, right through to the more wide-ranging precepts of ‘County Clare – the home of Irish traditional music’ and the more symbolic ‘myth of the West’.⁷² The sleeve notes of the *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary* DVD (2013) state that ‘the love for Irish traditional music is endemic in County Clare and its people since time immemorial’. This statement reiterates and indeed fulfils by repetition the widely upheld belief that County Clare is ‘the home of Irish traditional music’. This articulation echoes Ciarán Mac Mathúna’s obituary to Willie Clancy written forty years earlier, which not only asserts the trope of County Clare’s musicality but embeds Willie Clancy firmly within that county trope when he states that ‘West Clare is synonymous with Irish traditional music, and Willie Clancy was the personification of West Clare’ (C Mac Mathúna, 1973: 11). Indeed these are but a few of the myriad examples that follow the westerly direction of a mythical Irish traditional music weathervane and the continuing success of SSWC is implicit in influencing the direction in which it continues to point.

The idealization of the West as a cultural heartland is a legacy inherited by twentieth-century Gaelic revivalists. Equating rurality with an essential Irish identity, they re-imagined rural locations in the west as havens from encroaching modernity and repositories of indigenous Irish culture (Nash, 1993, Connolly, 2003). The traditionalising musical narrative of County Clare has developed within this myth of the west. It is a narrative that advanced in particular from the 1940s onwards when music collectors like Séamus Ennis, Ciarán Mac Mathúna and later, Tom Munnelly specifically began to collect, record and broadcast musicians from County Clare.⁷³ The

⁷¹ County Clare’s moniker as ‘the home of Irish traditional music’ spills over into the semi-fictional account of music-making written by Woods and McNamara (1996: 78).

⁷² For a discussion of the ‘myth of the west’ see Gibbons (1984).

⁷³ Séamus Ennis collected in County Clare in 1945 for the Irish Folklore Commission and in 1949 for RÉ. Ciarán Mac Mathúna began his collecting in Clare in 1955 for RTÉ radio and subsequently television. Tom Munnelly began collecting in County Clare from 1971 and relocated there in 1978. The subsequent broadcasting of collected materials contributed to the legacy of County Clare as a site for Irish traditional music.

evidence assembled by these collectors was subsequently broadcast, bringing musicians from County Clare to prominence and national attention.⁷⁴ Paradoxically, these broadcasts re-inscribed the ideal of the musical west into the national consciousness often at the expense of other regional performance genres.⁷⁵ As this ideal is preserved through music practices, the myth becomes self-fulfilling and the west of Ireland then becomes an idealised and authenticating site for music performance.⁷⁶ Such a construction of the West and its concomitant production of territorialised authenticity, offers significance and sustenance in the realm of the subjective and the creative rather than in an objective sense. Rational thought is subverted in the perpetuation of an idealised, romanticised myth, a myth which many musicians are guilty at some point of willingly or indeed longingly subscribing to. The county of Clare itself creates a symbolic boundary easily defined geographically and within which the functional status of Irish traditional music is elevated further.⁷⁷ The equation of rurality with true Irishness re-imagines a town like Miltown as a place apart, at a remove from modern industrialising society. In reality, factors such as Miltown's inadequate transport connections and infrastructural deficits should mitigate against its success as the location for a summer school. Instead, however, these factors add to a romantic construction of the area in which a traditional Irish culture and way of life survives that contrasts sharply with urban life. People are drawn to SSWC because of the place-myths that frame and comprise Miltown and the village-level size of Miltown represents a refuge from the hectic pace of everyday life from which it is imagined to be distanced both spatially and temporally. The musicianship and personal life story of Willie Clancy solidifies this narrative, which then supports and resounds within the teaching framework of the School and confers cultural authority onto all aspects of the Willie Clancy Week. However, as outlined in Chapter 1, Willie Clancy was far from immune to the attractions of nostalgia and the imbrication of these

⁷⁴ Clearly other factors informed this as well. According to Ní Fhuartháin, Clare was a county that maintained a high rate of participation in Fleadhanna from 1953 onwards (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 293). Similarly the popular success and renowned rivalry between the two Clare Bands the Tulla and the Kiltenera augmented the status of County Clare and Irish traditional music-making.

⁷⁵ This is discussed further in Feldman and O' Doherty (1999).

⁷⁶ According to Ó hAllmhuráin a strong teaching legacy instigated first by Jack Mulkere in 1972 and continuing with his pupil Frank Custy ('the Mulkere-Custy saga'), is another substantive element in explaining the abundance of Irish traditional music in Co. Clare (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1982: 7).

⁷⁷ The arrival of Clare FM and the immediate presence of a three-hour, nightly, Irish traditional music programme *The Mist-Covered Mountain* both contributes to and realises this conception of music in County Clare. Indeed, the 'first official presence of Clare FM anywhere' was at SSWC in 1989. Recordings were made and material collected during the week to be used in programming when the Station went on air for the first time in September of that year (Áine Hensey interview, SSWC 2009).

mythical nostalgic tropes are central to his musical ontology. Appadurai draws attention to the economic benefits of nostalgia and while nostalgia for the past as embodied by the School has no economic imperative, its role in the School's success does have significant positive economic consequences for Miltown's cultural economy since SSWC both perpetuates and subscribes to the myth as it claims, reclaims and re-traditionalises music-making practices (Appadurai, 1996: 76).⁷⁸

Discursive constructions of the 'myth of the West' and County Clare's 'home of Irish traditional music' metonyms are not without contestation. One of the dissenting voices in these generalising narratives belongs to none other than Willie Clancy himself. Responses given by Willie Clancy during two different RTÉ radio interviews in the two years directly preceding his death (1971 and 1972), reveal Willie Clancy's worldview on music both in County Clare and Miltown Malbay.⁷⁹

Michael O'Donnell: Tell me Willie, have you ever wondered why Co. Clare has so many musicians - both now and in the past? Has it ever struck you there's any particular reason for it?

Willie Clancy: I didn't ever accept that, y'know, really. I mean a lot of people say but I don't think so at all. I often thought that I wished we had as many good musicians in Clare as there are in Sligo or Donegal or Galway. But I suppose people from outside the county feel the other way about it!⁸⁰

Breandán Ó Cíobháin: There's a very strong musical tradition of traditional music in County Clare, but apparently, there would appear to be an extra-strong pocket of it around Miltown Malbay. How come?

Willie Clancy: I dunno ... maybe you're not altogether ... that might be supposed, generally, but 'tis just as strong in several other places.⁸¹

⁷⁸ The formation and role of nostalgia and Appadurai are explored further in Chapter 5.

⁷⁹ My thanks to Peter Browne for providing both audio copies and transcriptions of these two radio programmes.

⁸⁰ Taken from an interview in the traditional music section of the daily features and current affairs programme *Here and Now* for RTÉ Radio. Conducted by Michael O'Donnell and broadcast on 17th October 1971.

⁸¹ His final interview for RTÉ Radio with Breandán Ó Cíobháin recorded in Ennis in November 1972.

Willie Clancy's musical palette was informed by encounters at the Fleadh and Oireachtas and music-making contexts both at home and abroad, in tandem with the journeys made by many musicians to him in Miltown. While he desired to emulate and recover the music of Garrett Barry and West Clare, he had significant researched knowledge and experience to understand the extent of an extra-Clare spectrum of music, hence this clear reluctance to subscribe to the myth-making suggested by the two interviewers. However, his efforts to concretise the musical legacy of this West Clare community through recovering aesthetic references to Garrett Barry did establish a pedigree re-sounded by the senior West Clare fiddle players, which continued to be articulated firstly during the West Clare fiddle classes (which began in 1989) and since 1999 in the Archive Room.

Centring the periphery

From a cultural economy perspective, these imagined but sustaining ideals have clear benefits for the West. The very places that suffered due to their peripherality are now in a position to capitalise on the conceptualisations of purity accredited to the periphery. According to the 1966 census, and noted by Joe Cleary, the urban population of the Republic of Ireland exceeded the rural population for the first time (Cleary, 2004b: xiii). The urban traditionalising narratives of Comhaltas, and indeed, the recording industry, depicted depopulating rural areas as at the margins, socially, culturally and musically. According to Cleary, 'the marginal culture's destiny is to emulate, it does not inaugurate, initiate or invent' (Cleary, 2004a: 5). Conversely, however, Philip Bohlman evinces the accrual of power that occurs at the periphery or edge (Bohlman, 2012). At the time of the Willie Clancy Week's inception in 1973, both Miltown and Irish traditional music shared a common quality, that of peripherality. Drawing on McCann, Bohlman makes the point that 'the centre is not a permanent, unchanging place, rather one that dynamically takes shape and undergoes constant change' (Bohlman, 2012: 189). Miltown Malbay, the site of the School, embodies both the symbolic location of 'the west' and the concept of anchoring a national tradition back in 'the local'. In recognising the peripatetic anxiety of dislocated music-making, it saw itself as a firm centre of tradition and invited others to engage productively with this

centre.⁸² Gathering Clare masters of traditional music in Miltown to share their embodied cultural capital explicitly enunciates the local through style and physical location providing what John McDonagh describes from a rural development perspective as the necessary ‘intrinsic quality that make these communities stand apart’ (McDonagh, 2002: 97). Arguably SSWC represents a rural and cultural development trajectory that has remained within the control of both the local community and the community of practice of Irish traditional musicians, clearly demonstrating that the symbolic significance predicated on the authenticity of tradition residing in peripheral locations like Miltown Malbay has the potential to deliver both musical and socio-economic sustainability.

Drawing on the success of the national revival of Irish traditional music, spearheaded by the Gaelic League, piping clubs and Comhaltas, the Willie Clancy Week re-traditionalises the local, by moving cultural production, once perceived to be peripheral, back to the centre. Accordingly, the periphery-centre boundary of Irish traditional music converges in Miltown as attention shifts to the constitutive structures and relations of a small town in the animation of Irish traditional music transmission. ‘The west’ is re-constituted as central, with Miltown, the musical epicentre of the west. The recent addition of Scottish Gaelic classes to the School’s repertoire demonstrates its culture force by nurturing other marginalised cultural aspects of Gaelic culture and the development of cousinhood with like-minded organisations working in the perceived fringe (such as *Colmcille*). Through the popularity of SSWC, the identity of Miltown has been transformed into a location that continuously re-inscribes Irish music-making practices into its history as invocations of music-making extend far beyond its annual one-week duration.⁸³

⁸² Within this framework, an interesting parallel can be drawn between the establishment in 1973 of SSWC and in 1974 the first siting, or perhaps, re-traditionalisation of *Oireachtas na Gaeilge* to the Gaeltacht (*Cois Fharráige, Conamara*) (Mac Aonghusa, 1997). The *Oireachtas* is an annual festival of Irish language and culture which had taken place exclusively in Dublin until that point.

⁸³ For a discussion of the comparative possibility of locating a Summer School in Dublin in the 1970s see (Commins, 2013: 123-4).

Celebrating the national through the local

The centre-core dilemma resides in Willie Clancy himself. Joep Leerssen observes that national characters often emanate from small-scale communities (like Miltown Malbay) and SSWC represents the ‘ultimate locus’ for the celebration of Irish traditional music through the commemoration of a figure who remains rooted in the local but has accrued national status (Leerssen, 2007: 338). Resulting discourses that conflate the national with the local, juxtaposing core and periphery are not only paramount but confer authority onto the School. This is exemplified in the contextualisation of a tune related by Junior Crehan during the 1996 fiddle recital in which a national narrative is reduced not just to a familiar location but to the origin of a tune.

We’re to play a jig now. Emigration was the greatest curse of Ireland, especially in West Clare, the Wild Geese went to France and a lot of them were killed and they came back in a ghost ship to the Peninsula in Clare and they played a jig. ‘Twas called the West Wind. We’ll try it (Junior Crehan, SSWC 1996, fiddle recital).

Throughout the world, local scenarios are construed in relation to larger universes of interaction and Junior Crehan skilfully collapses the national into the local through the art of storytelling and performance. West Clare, whilst geographically peripheral to many, is the locale at the centre of the universe of Junior Crehan’s life. However, the expression of this centre, during the enclavic space of the fiddle recital, reaches the international audience of the School, re-centring the periphery through performance as such stories resound, not just throughout the community hall in Miltown Malbay but in the memories and digital recorders and archive recordings that continue to exist, temporally, long after the event.

Stars and saints

An *Irish Independent* article in the summer of 2001 announced that the forthcoming U2 concerts at Slane Castle expected to attract some 80,000 people would be ‘only the second biggest music event in Ireland this weekend’ (Dillon, 2001). According to the

article, a larger audience, at an estimated quarter of a million people, would be attending the Fleadh Cheoil in Listowel. Willie Dillon's hierarchical worldview covers slips somewhat when he qualifies his good-willed incredulity at the Fleadh's attendance with the disclaimer 'even though there are no "stars" taking part' (Ibid.). According to Dillon's musical worldview, and the media that he represents, stars rarely exist outside of the popular music domain, a view which is endorsed and reinforced through the medium of his article. This opinion is not however shared amongst the traditional music community. Speaking about Willie Clancy, Kieran Hanrahan notes that as a youngster growing up in Ennis 'we were familiar with his fame. He was a radio star on the pipes' (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013). People constructed as 'stars' within other popular realms also number as visitors to the Willie Clancy Week every year; a fiddle playing Brendan Gleeson, a fiddle learning Jeremy Irons and Arlo Guthrie (to mention just a few).⁸⁴ According to Muiris Ó Rócháin, however, 'everybody is treated equally' (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁸⁵ At a more subtle level, Muiris Ó Rócháin insists that 'all musicians that come to Miltown are stars ... but nobody is given star treatment ... there are no press conferences or red carpets' (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). Willie Clancy's star qualities, evident before his death have developed in stature in tandem with the dissemination of his name through the School to the extent that they now assume mythical characteristics. Indeed the devotion perpetrated through the organ of the School has assigned Willie Clancy with saintly qualities and fulfils Nagy's description in which 'the saint was distinctly a local hero, the celebration of whose life and miracles added to the prestige and power of a territory [and] community' (Nagy, 1997: vii).⁸⁶ Ó Giolláin reiterates this traditional relationship between saint and a particular territory and indeed the indelible link that has developed between Willie

⁸⁴ Jeremy Irons featured in the TG4 series *Faoi Lán Cheoil* about eight celebrities who endeavour to learn a musical instrument over a period of six months under the expert tuition of a renowned musician. He is filmed attending Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh's class at SSWC 2007. Arlo Guthrie's visits to Ireland and Mickey Wilson's pub in Miltown in particular are embedded in Miltown discourse. Arlo Guthrie appeared at Sean Malone's Markethouse pub in Miltown in September 2012 during the 'Woody Guthrie Tribute Weekend' dedicated to his father (Ó Muircheartaigh, 2012).

⁸⁵ The author found herself sharing a B&B with American actor and director Charles Haid (of Hill Street Blues fame) at SSWC 2010. His connections to the School were through his friendship with the Chieftains.

⁸⁶ During an RTÉ radio interview with Breandán Ó Cíobháin in 1972, Willie Clancy noted that Garret Barry 'was the St. Patrick of music as far as people in west Clare were concerned' (*RTÉ Radio* 1972).

Clancy and Miltown Malbay through SSWC contributes to the musical canonisation of this West Clare piper (Ó Giolláin, 1998: 208).⁸⁷

Conclusion

The death of Willie Clancy in 1973 was the ‘founding event’ on which a particular representation of Irish traditional music was brought to the fore, creating a new symbolic space in which the now monumental history and ideology of SSWC could grow. This chapter has traced the development of the enunciative authority of the School during the period 1973-2012 through a very particular programme of ‘eventing’ managed and facilitated by these self-ascribed gate-keepers. By creating a non-competitive music-making space, the School provides an umbrella under which practices, collectively labelled ‘Irish traditional music’ comfortably take shelter. In exploring and contextualising the origins of SSWC and comparing it to other festivals, this chapter explores the School’s and the local’s negotiation of the economic realm in light of the market value carried by what is perceived to be indigenous.

The circulation of different forms of capital is integral to any festival, however, the organisation of SSWC has taken careful advantage of, nurtured, and developed stocks of cultural and symbolic capital, reinvesting them each year and thereby averting the potential for any one funding body or sponsor to exert a gate-keeping influence over the School’s content. These stocks are built on a cultural authority, which in turn is predicated on the symbolic significance of the authority of tradition residing in the peripheral location of Miltown Malbay on the west coast of County Clare. John O’Flynn reiterates Adorno’s assertion that ‘all aspects of music production and consumption are socially mediated’ and draws renewed attention to the concept of nostalgia for the west and the importance of place in constructions of musical authenticity (O’Flynn, 2009: 11). As SSWC inverts and subverts the periphery-centre dialectic, the School continues to both lead and reflect musical dynamics as it weaves its way through the fabric of Irish music communities and relationships worldwide. SSWC has changed the trajectory of a peripheral rural town, creating in Miltown

⁸⁷ This canonisation is solidified by the return of Willie Clancy, in bronze, to the Main St of Miltown Malbay in November 2013. A legacy as much of the School as Willie Clancy himself his physical presence further augments his symbolic significance to Miltown, to West Clare, to uilleann pipers and to the community of Irish traditional musicians worldwide.

Malbay a distinct cultural economy, linked through representations to musicians, tourists, and indeed Milowners themselves (Gibson and Connell, 2003). As both the production and consumption of culture becomes more highly individualised, the relevance of SSWC increases and continues to attract a diverse cultural cohort. While the organisation of SSWC is embedded in the renewal of 'older traditions', its approach remains wide-angled and outward looking. Rooted in the local its outlook has always been global, and has embraced international interactions, just as international attention was given and received by Willie Clancy himself. The location of the School in the 'West' and its growth into a 'festival' embed the School within a culture economy framework underscored by issues of cultural authority. The next chapter will offer some reflections on the master-apprentice dyad, the axis of the processes of transmission that occur at SSWC.

CHAPTER 3

Transmission

'to promulgate laws'

The Ard-Righ ... called upon his Arch-Druid, or Chief Ollamh [who] ascended a mound and read the laws which he had enshrined in beautiful poetry. This latter was repeated by the lesser ollamhs, druids and bards distributed through the multitude, till all present were familiar with their legal rights and duties, the history of their country, the glories of their king, and the war-like deeds of 'the Illustrious Dead' (Nally, 1922: 19-20).

This chapter investigates a core foundational impulse of SSWC, 'to promulgate [the] laws' of Irish traditional music by facilitating its transmission (Ibid.).¹ It locates the workshops and classes at SSWC as sites of both innovation and tradition by interrogating the concept of transmission from both a conceptual and organisational viewpoint. The chapter isolates elements that re-traditionalise processes of transmission through the re-creation of new intimate learning encounters between students and master musicians. Classes/workshops run for three hours every morning for six mornings (Monday until Saturday) from 10.00am until 1.00pm, predicated on the concept of oral transmission and utilising the master-apprentice dyad. The master-apprentice dyad is a specific relationship which is enacted within the enclavic space of the School and contains a process of deliberate and enacted transmission. This compares with other more organic and assimilative processes perceived to occur in the heterogeneous spaces of the School. What both spaces (enclavic and heterogeneous) provide for is re-traditionalised transmission in the spatio-temporal plane of SSWC.

The site of enquiry for participant observation fieldwork was located at the fiddle school and fiddle recitals of SSWC in 2009 and 2010.² Attendance at fiddle classes as a

¹ The word law in this instance deserves a relaxed interpretation. The oral transmission of these laws by repetition at Aonach Tailteann carries the most significance for this Chapter.

² Participant observation constitutes the principal ethnographic tool employed for gathering primary data for this chapter. This was complemented by interviews with tutors, students and organisers and an examination of archival materials that pertain to this aspect of the School. Both the ITMA and OAC house field recordings of the School. At the ITMA the *Breandán Breathnach Collection* contains reel-

participant observer took place during the six morning workshops of 2009. The fiddle classes attract the highest attendance of all the instrument classes and take place at the local secondary school, St Joseph's, coastally situated at Spanish Point, a mile outside the town of Miltown. Providing the highest concentration of classrooms in the Miltown vicinity, the secondary school is a fitting location to house this element of the summer school and it becomes the locus of the fiddle school during SSWC.³ Participant observation was undertaken primarily at the classes of James Kelly, but also additionally included sitting in on classes given by Tommy and Siobhan Peoples and Martin Hayes. James Kelly's class was chosen for manifold research purposes; he now represents one of the few direct links to West Clare amongst the current tutors through his father, John Kelly Senior and he holds an enduring musical and familial relationship with the School.⁴ A long-term resident of the United States, James Kelly's role as tradition-bearer is enacted through performance and teaching to an international audience. He currently lives in Florida and perhaps on account of this distance has developed a highly reflexive discourse on his own music-making and that of his father's. During research undertaken at SSWC in 2010, participant observation was concentrated in the activities of the Archive Room, the occupants of which, not unlike James Kelly provide 'access to a usable past, providing both a living link to a golden age and a model for the future'; a theme which will be re-visited later in this chapter (Ó Giolláin, 2005: 11). While a deconstruction of these classes provides the core material for this chapter, the historical context of the master-apprentice dyad and the concept of oral transmission is also examined and the processes by which the school has built physical and cultural capacity on these key ideas is determined. It traces the growth and development of the workshops over the span of the school, giving particular insights into the fiddle classes wherein the main body of ethnographic research took place. Finally, this chapter ponders the underlying negotiation of the tradition-modernity binary as it impacts on the processes of tune acquisition and considers how processes of transmission both constitute and symbolise SSWC.

o reel recordings of the School from as early as 1974 and RTÉ field recordings from 1977. The first video recording of the fiddle recital housed by the ITMA is from 1988. The ITMA themselves began consistent video recording of the fiddle recital from 2001 onwards.

³ In 2009 and 2010, St Joseph's also housed a set-dancing class, the singing workshops and *Duchas an Cheoil* 'An introduction to Irish music' class.

⁴ John Kelly Senior is also renowned for his association with Seán Ó Riada and Ceoltóirí Chualann, and indeed his presence conferred an important element of authenticity on Ó Riada's efforts.

Unpacking the transmission of Irish traditional music

In order to contextualise and signify the role of transmission in the School, brief consideration is firstly given to Irish traditional music transmission more generally and the concept of the master-apprentice dyad in particular. Cowdery classifies three kinds of Irish traditional music learning; familial, formal teaching outside of the family and the more recent development of classes sponsored by cultural organisations such as Comhaltas (Cowdery, 1990: 9-10). All three categories map onto current teaching practices and recent research by John O’Flynn amongst young traditional musicians confirms the vitality of family connections in the continuation of music traditions (O’Flynn, 2011). Families and familial roles are enshrined within SSWC (and are discussed further in Chapter 5). Formal teaching outside of the family correlates to the wide availability of private tuition offered throughout Ireland and beyond. Various cultural organisations encompass a pedagogical Irish traditional music remit including Comhaltas, NPU, regional pipers clubs, institutions such as *An Gaelacadamh* and a variety of music schools throughout the country that teach both classical and traditional music, for example *Maoin Cheoil an Chláir* and the Athenry Music School.⁵ Cowdery refers indirectly to SSWC as one of the various ‘temporary’ schools which provide instruction and performances for a limited time (Cowdery, 1990: 14). This description understates the emerging range of summer (and indeed all year round) schools which from the late 1980s onwards facilitate not just music classes but a context for engaging in music as social practice for their duration.

Hugh Shields and Paulette Gershen give short shrift to the role of the formal education system in Ireland in furthering traditional music, suggesting instead that summer schools such as SSWC provide Irish traditional music with ‘its most effective educational contexts’ (Shields and Gershen, 1999: 386). Likewise the MEND report suggests the provision of Irish traditional music in the Irish school curriculum is incomplete; its success dependent primarily on individual teachers (Heneghan, 2002). Marie McCarthy’s comprehensive survey of music transmission in Ireland concurs and

⁵ A quick glance at the classifieds section of any local or regional newspaper reveals a variety of adverts for individual lessons in Irish traditional music on an assortment of instruments and these teachers may or may not have direct links to cultural associations. *An Gaelacadamh*, founded in 1978, teaches Irish traditional music and dance through the medium of Irish throughout Connemara (Quinn, 2008). *Maoin Cheoil an Chláir* opened in Ennis, Co. Clare in 1994 and was the first music school in Ireland to teach both classical and traditional music (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2011: 132).

affirms the overall inadequacy of music provision within the Irish education system (McCarthy, 1999). She highlights some of the difficulties of transmission within the state-school setting, declaring that ‘the school as a conservative, sociocultural institution, and music as a dynamic cultural expression [are] in many ways diametrically opposed’ (McCarthy, 2013: 227). Renée Crawford interrogates further the concept of learning (any style of) music in a school setting and proposes that it ‘is not considered to be authentic by students, in that, it does not relate to real-life experiences’ and does not ‘identify the nature of valued knowledge’ (Crawford, 2014: 51). As such then the growth of music transmission at summer schools takes place ‘outside state structures, beyond state-controllable time’, and indeed the summer school as a response acknowledges the inherent difficulties of squeezing an oral tradition into a national curriculum (Vallely, 2004: 24). Despite the use of school type venues and the institutionalisation of teaching at SSWC, the re-traditionalisation and embedding of learning within the heterogeneous spaces of the town circumvents this issue. It is surprising therefore that McCarthy gives little more than a perfunctory mention of SSWC (or summer schools in general), despite the influential and integral role they have come to play in the transmission of Irish traditional music, doing perhaps a disservice to the accepted model of immersion and intergenerational learning that they have created (McCarthy, 1999: 180). Class-room based learning at SSWC is authenticated by the relaying of real-life musical experiences to students by their tutors. This continues as their teachers engage in performance practices within the enclavic space of the community centre and the heterogeneous spaces of the session. In turn, students themselves create their own meanings as they move from taught enclavic environments to their own individual and group practices in the heterogeneity of the session spaces that they find and create within Miltown during the School.

Oral Transmission

The concept of oral transmission forms an integral attribute of Irish traditional music. However, contexts in which music learning and performance takes place have changed enormously during the latter half of the twentieth century as has the role of oral transmission in the learning process. Music is less frequently taught (or learned) with a view to providing for dancers and the avocation of competition by revivalist

organisations privileges different aspects of music, particularly instrumental technique, repertoire and tune-types.⁶ Literacy and modern recording technology are commonly enlisted to support learning, in which recorded music, DVDs and on-line tutorials increasingly entrust human memory to technology and the written word. The performance of Irish traditional music as a part of everyday social practice is now mainly embedded in perceptions of an authentic past

traditional music was passed on as part of the socialisation process, supported by a cohesive system of values that imbued the learning process with social meaning and cultural relevance (McCarthy, 2013: 221).

Appositely, then, the development of classes at the Willie Clancy Summer School, re-engages with oral transmission in the rich context of the master-apprentice dyad (re)constructing discourses that articulate both musical and non-musical elements of transmission, accessing intangible and embedded practices in a re-traditionalised context and structuring events and discourse at SSWC.

The master-apprentice dyad, a pedagogical method within this socialisation process is therefore a precedent to SSWC's workshop situation and justification for its teaching structure. According to Lucy Green, transmission refers to any kind of teaching (intentional or otherwise) 'which involves the transmission of tastes, values, practices, skills or knowledge from one person to another' (Green, 2011: 1). The ITMA states that oral transmission is conceived as a process 'in which song and instrumental music is created and transmitted in performance and carried and preserved in the memory, a tradition which is essentially independent of writing and print' (Carolan, 1996). This definition is problematised by the fact that print matter has existed within and alongside the tradition for over 200 years. It does however provide a useful working definition and informs the aspects and use of literacy and written notes within the processes of oral transmission in the context of SSWC. John Moulden asserts that the 'paradigm' of oral transmission without the intervention of any other media 'is a figment' (Moulden, 1997: 73). Instead he sees 'traditionality as a phenomenon which can be observed and

⁶ Michael Tubridy summarises the impact that not having to play for dancers has on musicians: it 'releases them from a lot of constraints. They do not have to pay the same attention to phrasing, and they can put in notes and decorations wherever they will fit' (Tubridy, 1991).

which functions as a dialectic, a tension between oral and written, between fluid and fixed' (Ibid). The advent of print culture and modern technology has created a host of new learning contexts devoid of some of the local, social or cultural exchanges perceived to belong to more original contexts. However, a closer examination of agencies and processes of transmission extant in these older contexts reveals a range of methods pendulating between the active agency of teaching and learning iconicised in the 'master-apprenticeship' approach, right through to more subtle, passive modes of transmission prevalent in organic music-making that constituted the normal seasonal routines of everyday rural life. Whilst SSWC has utilised the master-apprentice dyad as the cornerstone of its transmissive practices, the heterogeneous parts of the School equate to these more passive modes of transmission. Contexts for learning carry cultural significance, and attendance at SSWC lends itself to elements of osmotic absorption as participation and observation informs the habitus of all attendees. The added dimension of 'place' (discussed further in Chapter 5) and the immediacy of participation and interaction with place augments and changes learning processes. The embodiment of the master-apprentice experience, located in a significant and 'local' place, constitutes an unrivalled authentic learning practice.⁷

Modes of transmission

The imagined concept of oral transmission is that of tunes learned only by ear and fixed in memory through an aural portal. However, since the onset of the very earliest manuscripts of Irish music through to the current array of digitally available databases of Irish tunes, this essentialised concept of oral transmission in a media-less environment has all but disappeared. The advent of the written and recorded note has transformed and reconstituted the oral transmission milieu. O'Neill's *Dance Music of Ireland Collection* in 1907, the largest and most popular source of Irish dance music

⁷ An example of the importance of place is demonstrated by the Online Academy of Irish Music (OAIM). In keeping with Gerard O'Neill's conception of Ireland as an eRepublic, the OAIM exemplify the concept of a digital community of practice of Irish traditional music (O'Neill, 2010: 20-23). Established in 2009, it markets the concept of streaming music lessons 'directly into people's living rooms and kitchens via the internet' and creating a virtual 'global community of Irish music lovers and learners' <http://www.oaim.ie> [accessed 15 August 2013]. However, by 2013 the OAIM also offered 'retreats', week-long, intensive, place-based 'Irish music holidays'. The provision of such retreats demonstrates how the very best online engagement falls short on the experiential engagement with place and social practice. Despite the way that distance is reduced by the online facilities of Skype and smart phones, there still exists a qualitative distance (that no doubt many emigrants could speak to) that does not replace the enactment of place and territorialised performance practices.

(until the arrival of the first *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* published by Breathnach in 1963), and the development of commercial recording technology in the United States from 1916, presented newly accessible sources from which traditional players might learn (O'Neill, 1907, Breathnach, 1963). O'Neill's collection was 'mined' for new tunes, as musically literate players learnt from 'the dots' and then passed these tunes orally to other players. The degree to which O'Neill's collection infiltrated repertoires is exemplified in both music and narrative. Peter Browne suggests that the majority of the dance tunes played by Séamus Ennis on the CD *The Return from Fingal* are sourced from Francis O'Neill's printed collections (Browne, 1998: 303).⁸ Various other narratives submit that O'Neill's book was utilised for learning tunes: Father PJ Kelly for example, during an interview with Kieran Hanrahan, states that flute player Stephen Moloney of the original Ballinakill Céilí Band frequently utilised O'Neill's book as a means of sourcing tunes.⁹ Likewise, Seamus Connolly refers to musicians such as Paddy O'Brien, Jack Coen and Larry Redican meeting up in each other's houses in 1950/60s New York and learning tunes from the O'Neill collection (Ní Chaoimh, 2010: 256).

Beyond the rational sources that print and recordings represent, other methods of transmission are also present in Irish music narratives. The otherworld figures as a transmissive source for Irish traditional musicians and belief in the existence of a parallel world that takes shape quite literally between the jigs and the reels provides a common trope in discourses on transmission and serves to separate musicians from the 'ordinary'. Francis O'Neill relates the inspirational encounter between blind harper Turlough Carolan (1670-1738) and the 'good people' at a rath close to Carolan's father's house.

This rath or fort was the scene of many a boyish pastime with his youthful companions; and after he became blind, he used to prevail on some of his family or neighbors to lead him to it, where he would remain for hours together,

⁸ *The Return from Fingal* is a compilation of field recordings from the RTÉ archive made between 1940 and 1980 and published posthumously in 1997. Séamus Ennis was an exceptional figure amongst musicians, who exercised a major influence not just on uilleann piping but on twentieth-century Irish traditional music, song and dance, and is discussed further in Chapter 4.

⁹ This interview was broadcast on RTÉ *Céilí House*, 25 March 2006 and is available here: http://www.rte.ie/radio1/ceili-house/generic/2010/01_27/346612-archive20063 [accessed 1 November 2013].

stretched listlessly before the sun. He was often observed to start up suddenly, as if in a fit of ecstasy, occasioned as it was firmly believed by the preternatural sights which he witnessed. In one of these raptures he called hastily on his companions, to lead him home, and when he reached it, he sat down immediately to his harp and in a little time played and sung the air and words of a sweet song addressed to Bridget Cruise, the object of his earliest and tenderest attachment. So sudden and so captivating was it, that it was confidently attributed to fairy inspiration (O'Neill, 1987 [1913]: 71).

Similarly Tarlach Mac Suibhne (c.1818 – 1916) the 'Donegal piper', reveals how he 'came to be the best Union piper of [the] day in that part of the country' by plucking up the courage to visit a nearby rath in Gaoth Dobhair and making an appeal to the King of the Fairies (O'Neill, 1987 [1913]: 289-90). Further stories in O'Neill reveal that Mac Suibhne believed, or at least 'let on' to others, through his music and storytelling that he was one of the 'fairy folk' himself (Ibid: 290-92). Seamus Heaney refers to fairy stories as 'fairy tale glamour', in which such stories 'conjure up a potent sense of the long ago and endow the ... [tune] with a kind of legendary history' (Heaney, 1993: 34-5). Rionach úí Ógáin notes that the bestowal of musical talent as a gift (as in the case of Mac Suibhne) rather than something which is acquired through practise is a common trope and finds various instances where connections are drawn between the supernatural and excellence in performance.

The musical genius is placed on a higher level than the ordinary musician and the legends about music received from the fairies explains within traditional terms of reference what cannot be explained in terms of logic (uí Ógáin, 1992: 213).

Sean Donnelly concurs with this explanation of fairy associations with musicianship. He stated that it was often the case that a young apprentice would move away from home to learn from a master for a period of several weeks or months. This absence and subsequent return with newly acquired skills, conformed to ideas held at that time that he had been 'away with the fairies' and returned as a piper (Sean Donnelly interview, Jan 2010). Likewise Donegal fiddler Johnny Doherty 'was constantly relating stories about tunes that derived or were produced from contact with the other world of spirits,

ghosts, fairies, and nature' and the musical world of Junior Crehan is replete with references to fairy lore including the inspiration to compose (Feldman, 2002: 97, Munnely, 1998).¹⁰ This assigning of musical prowess, be it compositional power or instrumental technique to a ready-made 'other' was a common way to deal with the extraordinary. Angela Bourke explores the use of fairy legends to deal with the ambiguous and the marginal and how this makes them important cognitive tools for the explanation of events frequently difficult to comprehend in a rational or otherwise culturally acceptable mode (Bourke, 2003).¹¹ Ita Crehan, daughter of Junior, correlated her father's invocation of the fairies as an effective way to draw attention away from his own individual musicianship, thereby conforming to cultural norms of humility (Ita Crehan interview, SSWC 2011).¹² This assigning of talent to an 'other' is perhaps one way of dealing with exceptional talent by shifting the intensity of the gaze away from the self and onto a causative other.¹³ The reiterated narratives of Willie Clancy share similar qualities. In this case Clancy used the Irish language to deflect his own musicianship; in a much quoted comment that he would treasure the ability to speak Irish over musical ability, he demonstrates a humble diminution of his own musicianship that reflects Junior Crehan's similar deflection of ability onto the fairies.¹⁴ It also demonstrates a deeper awareness that no one person, however talented, can possess or master the entire tradition. Self-modesty, however, as part of the ontology of the performing musician is problematised by the very nature of performance, particularly where increasingly the performance takes place in public, on stage or at the behest of an audience (rather than just 'passing the time' (Glassie, 1982)).¹⁵ Reciprocity to the fairies therefore has served as a useful tool for musicians in their performance narratives. For contemporary musicians (now that fairies have all but disappeared off the spectrum) its replacement is sometimes or inevitably a more pronounced presentation of the role of the self in performance. This has implications for what Ita

¹⁰ For an explanation of the fairy inspiration for 'the Luathradán's Jig' see úí Ógáin (1992).

¹¹ See other examples in *The Otherworld*, úí Ógáin and Sherlock (2012).

¹² Tom Munnely discusses this further in the context of song performance (Munnely, 2001).

¹³ According to Vallely the attribution of music to the fairies enabled musicians to conceptualise music as a 'spiritual gift or national resource to which no individual had exclusive rights' suggesting this as a possible reason why some 'musicians did not lay formal claim to what they had composed' (Vallely, 2014)

¹⁴ The inscription beside the new statue unveiled to Willie Clancy in Miltown Malbay reads 'Is í an Ghaeilge an ceol is ansa liom - the Irish language is the greatest music of all' taken from an interview with Willie Clancy which appears in *Dal gCais* (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972: 111).

¹⁵ Henry Glassie also discusses the 'wide realm of transaction' that exists between public and private spaces in relation to performance (Glassie, 2006: 381).

Crehan observed as an undesirable growth of ‘egos’ amongst Irish traditional musicians attending SSWC. Ita, at a loss to explain where this has come from opined ‘that’s something that wasn’t handed down’ (Ita Crehan interview, SSWC 2011).¹⁶ The absence of other available sources on which to confer mastery is a potential explanation.

Locating the master-apprentice dyad

The master-apprentice dyad is tied to an ideology that transcends current musical practice, reinstating it into the courts of earlier bardic times. According to Junior Crehan;

We apprentice musicians tried to learn from the masters of the craft, and it was not an easy job because their art was fine and polished. Like all musicians I had my masters about whom I can say, ‘They taught me a lot’, and the two people who most influenced my music were the Caseys from Annagh, John (Scully) Casey and his cousin, Thady (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1977: 75).

In this example, Junior Crehan deploys this lexicon of masters and apprentices to locate his own musical craft in bardic times when talented musicians were reserved a ‘special place’ in society. In the same interview he recalls domestic visits by travelling musicians and how on their arrival ‘these houses became courts of music where local musicians played with the visitor and tunes were swapped about and handed on, and that’s how music lived among our people’ (Ibid.). Similar linguistic traits are used by Seán Reid who also referred to country houses as ‘courts of music and dancing’ (Ó Rócháin and Hughes, 1975: 93). Junior’s unequivocal use of the term apprentice re-embeds the master-apprentice concept from earlier traditional contexts, giving insight into the professional code through which he viewed his own musical acquisition. This is quite different from romantic notions of the ‘folk’ in which music is spontaneously absorbed and suggests an element of professionalism that is not often emphasised in discourses of Irish traditional music. It harks back to eighteenth-century *cúirteanna filíochta* and it is perhaps these which inform Junior Crehan’s musical sensibility. The

¹⁶ This concurs with Munnelly’s assertion that ‘self-esteem can be perfectly justified, but ostentation is anathema to the traditional audience’ (Munnelly, 2001: 195).

same trope is present in literature such as the fantastical *Cúirt an tSrutháin Bhuí* from the ‘itinerant rhymer’ Colm de Bhailís (1796–1906) of Garomna, Connemara (Robinson, 1996: 184, see also Denvir, 1996). In this poem, he describes in extravagant terms a temporary shelter from the rain made by the poet from sticks and clods of turf, elevating it to a glorious dwelling that is the envy of Queen Victoria. Tim Robinson alludes to ‘the disproportion between these people’s material circumstances and their life-capability’ and this same idea applies to the musicianship and lexicon of Junior Crehan in which house dances and céilí’s were in fact representative of the higher courts of previous generations, invocations of a glorious golden age and aristocratic past (Ó Giolláin, 2005, Robinson, 1996: 187-88). Marie McCarthy refers to the master-apprentice context, as being well established in the Irish music canon by the nineteenth century; ‘master teachers were identified in the immediate community or in a neighbouring community and pupils were sent to them for lessons. In other cases, these masters were itinerant and travelled around to the pupils’ houses (McCarthy, 1999: 101). Musical masters influence the tradition by the emotional impact of their musical personalities expressed through performance, compositional or pedagogical ability and their stylistic contributions are important shapers of Irish traditional music. Feldman and O’Doherty suggest that the master musician is able to

engrave his own distinct identity on the repertoire through superior technique and inventiveness. The tradition of the virtuoso, possibly an inheritance from the ancient harpers, coexisted with the communitarian function of the music. It was this ethic of musical individualism that provided many players with a self-perpetuating impetus to continue playing in the face of social indifference (Feldman and O’Doherty, 1979: 26).

O’Neill’s *Irish Minstrels and Musicians* suggests the existence of a variety of master-apprentice relationships and recounts various cases of those with a physical disability, such as blindness, being dispatched to a master for piping lessons in order to learn a skill and a means by which to support themselves later in life (O’Neill, 1987 [1913]).¹⁷ Thomas O’Hannigan (b1806, Cahir, Tipperary) for example ‘having become blind at

¹⁷ There is a clear precedence for this in the harping tradition and Arthur O’Neill’s memoirs, for example, are replete with both masters and students of the harp who are blind. The Memoirs of Arthur O’Neill (dictated in 1810 to Thomas Hughes, Edward Bunting’s copyist) were published for the first time in 1911 as part of Charlotte Milligan Fox’s *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (Milligan Fox, 1911).

the age of eleven ... served an apprenticeship of four years to various Munster pipers' (O'Neill, 1987 [1913]: 203).¹⁸ Mayo master and pedagogue, Paddy Walsh (no date of birth given) 'taught his art to many pupils who came from near and far for instruction on the pipes' (Ibid: 206). Likewise, William Carleton's writings include references such as the child blinded by smallpox who is taken 'to the best fiddler in the neighbourhood, with whom he is left as an apprentice' (Carleton, 1840: 53). Details are scant on the exact nature of these lessons and apprenticeships. Donnelly doubts the existence of piping schools like those in Scotland but does suggest that pipers held the status of skilled tradesmen and were financed by a diversity of patronage systems (Sean Donnelly Seminar NUIG, 29 Jan 2010).¹⁹

Over the years, notable pedagogues have earned this 'master' status through the influence not just of their own musicianship, but their role in fine-tuning the tradition as they transmit it to others. Their influence is wide-ranging and particular, dependent on context and contact. For musicians such as Pádraig O'Keefe and Jack Mulkeré their active and localised pedagogical status over-rides that of performance such is the notoriety attached to their practices of musical transmission. Alternatively, the translation of Coleman's style is centred entirely on the international imitation and assimilation of (primarily recorded) performance. Michael Coleman was reputedly taught by Johnny Gorman, the great Roscommon piper and after moving to America by Michael Anderson (Sean Donnelly Seminar NUIG, 29 Jan 2010). Garrett Barry (the nineteenth-century piper who influenced Gilbert and later Willie Clancy), was apprenticed to Frank Cleary, a Limerick piper, who lived in Ennis (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972). The variety of contexts in which the master-apprentice relationship might occur and the qualities that individual masters present is perhaps most succinctly captured by Breathnach's description of Séamus Ennis:

Ennis has never conducted a class of piping or given systematic coaching to any pupil but at the annual meetings and other special occasions [...] he is prodigal in performance: he meets all requests for particular tunes, is ever willing to

¹⁸ This echoes apprenticeships undertaken by blind harpers in earlier generations. Carolan, for example, in the seventeenth century was given the opportunity to learn the harp by his patroness Mrs Mary McDermott Roe (Trimble, 1979)

¹⁹ The most famous of which, the MacCrimmons, founded a school in Skye to which pipers from all over Scotland were sent (Gardner, 1925)

demonstrate difficult movements and to reveal trade secrets; in the excellence of his piping, in style and technique, he sets a headline and a challenge for the younger generation and in that way may be justly credited for the rapid progress and the high standards many of them have achieved (Breathnach, 1978: 137).

SSWC caters for all forms of transmission. It privileges the master-apprentice dyad in morning classes which in turn facilitates subsequent performances by these masters and others in the wider heterogeneous spaces of the School in which imitation and assimilation take place. The continued use of this appellation ‘master’ as in the master-apprentice dyad, or indeed the accolade ‘masters of tradition’ continues in Irish traditional music discourses, where it now respectfully equates to musical knowledge and experience, rather than constructing multi-layered or hierarchical identities within a community of practitioners.²⁰ Indeed Ó hAllmhuráin ascribes it to the School advocating SSWC as ‘an international master’s forum for Irish traditional music’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 169).

The master-apprentice dyad at SSWC²¹

The immersive model of concentrated daily classes in Irish traditional music at SSWC taking place in a non-local place (for the many people who travel to Miltown for the School) and in a learning environment that consists mainly of strangers, created a new paradigm in Irish music transmission in 1973. ‘It would have been my very first workshop, the very first time sitting in with musicians from other places’ is how Oisín Mac Diarmada described his first year of attendance in 1986, echoing the experiences of many attendees (Oisín Mac Diarmada interview, SSWC 2010). Through annual repetition, and the growth in other summer schools inspired by its model, SSWC has developed and normalised the agency of such a concept. During the lynchpin of the Willie Clancy Week - the master-apprentice dyad - the School re-traditionalises the

²⁰ There is an inherent gendered problematic with the term as it clearly excludes (or perhaps subsumes) ‘mistresses’ of the tradition.

²¹ As noted previously, the term ‘master-apprentice’ is problematic at a gender level, although descriptively appropriate in describing the early years of SSWC. In 1982, the tenth year of the School, just four out of the 46 musicians listed to play at the recitals (and therefore comprising the main body of tutors) in the brochure were female. The absence of mistresses of tradition and female pedagogues speaks volumes, the gradual shift which has yet to achieve a balance deserves further attention (the ratio in more recent years is 2:1).

process of transmission by privileging the cultural authority of its masters. It also re-traditionalises the concept of patronage, by providing food, accommodation and expenses to the ‘masters of tradition’ in return for their teaching skills. No Irish traditional music precedent exists for the participative nature of SSWC’s workshops and its arrival presents a key marker of difference to its festive musical predecessor; the Fleadh Cheoil. Competition is the keystone of the Fleadh and a revivalist tool formally introduced at the Feis Ceoil and Oireachtas in 1897.²² Commenting on the changes wrought by competition at the Feis Ceoil Éamonn Ó Gallcobhair observed that ‘the touch stone of good performance changed from traditional fidelity to aesthetic worth, a far-reaching change with inherent implications’ (Ó Gallcobhair, 1952: 212). Whilst the Fleadh programmed non-competitive events such as pageants and displays and music sessions sprang up in its informal spaces, the workshops at SSWC were the first such endeavour to re-traditionalise a space for ‘traditional fidelity’.

Stemming from a consciousness of loss; both of original contexts, and ‘master’ musicians, SSWC accesses the innate potentiality residing within the master-apprentice relationship. Ó Giolláin’s use of the term ‘re-traditionalisation’ usefully describes the mythic connections to ‘old times’ embedded in the processes of transmission, realising symbolic and cultural capital (Ó Giolláin, 2005: 17). The present day re-creation of this dynamic, in a west of Ireland context, utilises key tradition-bearers, performers and teachers. These ‘masters’ are core to both the perceived authentic continuity of tradition and a valid explanation for its on-going popularity and creation of cultural capital. Interrogation of this capital at the symbolic level demonstrates deep and intimate links to the economic level, informing the commercial success of the School. Willie Clancy, a highly accomplished uilleann piper and master musician, was also a self-professed life-long learner of traditional Irish music, and the School promulgates Clancy’s own recognition of the increasing de-traditionalisation of processes of music transmission. The original idea ‘to make the musicians the focus of a school of traditional music and to expose as many people [...] as possible to their influence’ remains its keystone, as the success of the school and particularly the workshops, parallels the national and international success of traditional Irish music (Ó Rócháin, quoted in Kearns and Taylor, 2003: 51). Since immersion is the experiential cornerstone at SSWC, Wenger’s

²² The impacts of competition on musical performance practices are discussed in Chapter 1.

'communities of practice' offers a conceptual framework through which to examine the variety of learning experiences that constitute this immersion process (Wenger, 1998). Quite appropriately, Wenger's research originated in the study of knowledge-transfer in a master-apprenticeship relationship. He dismisses the commonly-held assumption that learning is an individual process achieved as a result of teaching. Instead he theorises learning as social participation, not just (as in this case) through engaging in a music workshop, but through the active participation in a social community (for a week in West Clare) and the construction of an identity (as a traditional Irish musician). The process of learning Irish traditional music (outside of the School) is accompanied by an increasing awareness of the system and a community of practice to which it is tied. Engagement with this community of practice extends beyond the mechanics of learning an instrument, but includes other social and symbolic actions that reside in the performance of Irish traditional music. This corresponds to the musical continuum onto which Hammy Hamilton charts his own musical acquisition and the point at which the 'emphasis began to change from learning music to learning about music' (Hamilton, 1996: 158). This is satisfied by the symbolism and meaning imbued in learning from a master at SSWC and entering into a narrative of 'continuing tradition' rather than learning or playing tunes in isolation or purely for their own sake (Turner, 1975: 152). Therefore attendance at workshops (and attending/playing at a lecture or session afterwards) constitutes both an action and a form of belonging. Whilst many learners may start the week with a product-oriented outlook that surmounts to learning tunes, the eventual outcome located in process is less straightforward or simple to define. And whilst the tangible elements of the workshop reside in the learning of a tune, or a particular style of ornamentation, this constitutes only a small part of knowing. The greater part of knowing what Irish traditional music means involves active participation in the social community of learners and musicians. Convenient to this line of reasoning, the structured learning element of the school takes place in the morning, leaving the remainder of the day open for more concentrated social participation. The workshop, whilst primarily a site of learning, is a catalyst into a world of music-making, necessarily facilitated by the proximity of other musicians with precisely the same aims for the week. Learning at a workshop results in further participation in music-making, whether this takes place in the kitchen of a rented house, a nearby vacant field, or the pub session.

The fiddle workshops

The long queue for registration on Monday morning that extends outside the door of St Joseph's School is a familiar scene on the first morning at the various workshop locations of SSWC. The lack of online pre-registration, if somewhat anachronistic, is part of the traditional method of the School and sustains its 'face-to-face' ethos.²³ The registration process is a brief, uncomplicated affair. Each student's name, abbreviated address and fee is collected in exchange for a receipt and badge that will entitle free admission to all the official activities of the week and reduced price to the nightly céilís. At the fiddle school registration, the final question asked of the newly enrolled students is 'are you a beginner, intermediate or advanced'?'²⁴ The answer determines the dispatch of students to various rooms for the process of 'grading' and dividing of students into thirty different classes. These 'grading rooms' represent thresholds to the acquisition of learning at the School and constitute 'a host of musical potential, eager for moulding' (MacConnell, 1977). These rooms are a constant flux of opening and closing fiddle cases, as students are invited to sit down and play a few bars, asked questions about age (where appropriate), number of years playing, and ability to play certain types of ornamentation. Experienced 'graders' endeavour to match students to masters according to ability and style whilst also achieving equity in class-sizes. Anxious parents hover behind their children before they relinquish them to a week-long period of immersion, about which countless 'life-changing' testimonials exist. Some of the more mature students display a degree of self-consciousness and articulate their discomfort at having to play 'from cold' first thing on a Monday morning in front of strangers. With instruments barely out of their cases, many of the potential students/parents worry that the tutor for the rest of the week is determined by this one performance of just a few short bars.²⁵

Unsurprisingly, requests to attend specific tutors are common. A student may wish to return to a particular tutor they encountered in previous years, or to be in the same class

²³ It is also possible to register at the community hall on the Saturday afternoon between 2 and 6pm, however, many people do not arrive until after this time.

²⁴ These terms are relative. Máire O'Keefe (grader of the 'advanced' musicians) admits she finds the category 'advanced' to be somewhat of an anomaly - as such a player would hardly need to attend classes. However, use of the term in this context continues (Máire O'Keefe interview, Dec 2009).

²⁵ Every effort is made to ensure this process is as non-intimidating as possible for attendees (and their parents) and graders are on hand to explain and reassure.

as friends. One of these ‘graders’, Máire O’Keeffe notes a particular (often international) cohort who covet one of the ‘big name’ tutors who have a professional, international reputation (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009). Returning home after being tutored in Miltown for a whole week by a musician with the reputation of Martin Hayes or James Kelly generates kudos for the learner.²⁶ Ironically these ‘celebrity’ players often achieve this status by international visibility via performance and teaching in the home countries of these very students. However, as Máire O’Keeffe points out, in making such requests, this cohort lose out on the opportunity to learn with some of the less well known ‘hidden gems’; musicians, equally talented who, for one reason or another, have circumvented the commercial route (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009). Miltown offers one of the few opportunities to access these teachers in this scenario.

After observing the grading room and arriving at James Kelly’s classroom, the author noted several (mature) students, who, with prior knowledge of how the system worked had bypassed grading and gone directly to the room of their desired tutor. Both of these students were return attendees, demonstrating just one aspect of cultural capital or insider knowledge that repeated attendance accrues. As a result, the class was oversubscribed. This was resolved by a ‘helper’ who popped into the classroom to do a head-count and noting the high number of students (there were approximately twenty at this point) advised that two other tutors had particularly small classes if anyone would like to move. James actively encouraged anyone that felt inclined to leave to do so, jocularly declaring ‘my heart will not be broken if you go’. Mobile text messages were furiously sent and received (amongst the younger cohort) as friends in different classes negotiated their current situation arrived at via the grading process and/or the whim of their parents. Three students left immediately. During the first hour of class James signalled that discourse about music and technique would inform the transmission process as much as actually music-making. Within this hour, and across all fiddle classes, judgements were made as students decided to keep or swap teachers. After the morning break, back at James’ class, several more students had disappeared, and two more had arrived. During the morning, a fellow student encountered difficulties with

²⁶ O’Shea observes the potential accrual of status attached to even a short trip to Ireland by musicians: particularly if they return with ‘anecdotes about festivals and sessions and the famous musicians with whom they played’ (O’Shea, 2008: 98).

the bridge on her fiddle. In response James summoned his brother John Kelly (who runs the fiddle section of the summer school, a role he inherited from his father John Kelly Senior) who immediately gave the student a loan of his own fiddle so she could continue with the class. Her broken fiddle was repaired during the break, by fiddle-maker and repairer, Gerry O'Connor, also a tutor at the school. With minor disruption, she was back playing her own fiddle by the end of the morning. Most students stay put in their assigned class, engaging with their designated tradition-bearer for the week. Others feel they are in above their heads, desire a greater challenge or perhaps a different learning style and lateral movements to the rooms of other tutors are acceptable. By mid-week a circadian rhythm is established and intense morning bursts of daily learning and immersion become normalised.

'Playing away'

During the morning workshops, over one hundred individual tutors impart their skills, insights and understanding as well as repertoire and technique in classroom settings, opening a point of access to their cultural capital for learners in a context that is both traditional and modern. Its traditionality lies in the privileging of the concept of oral transmission in which the aural and visual imitation of the master constitute the primary methods of transmission. However, this traditional explication is swathed in the trimmings of modernity. For example, this concentrated burst of learning is timetabled to fit with the leisure-time schedules of both its participants and tutors, taking place in the first week of the Irish school holidays every July. Digital recording technology supersedes complete reliance on memory in order to remember tunes and while the orality of the learning experience is central, mediation of this experience through a variety of modes is both commonplace and encouraged: tunes committed to memory during the week, will also be saved as texts, through the use of written notation, and recording technology. This enables students to revert to the master's detail in the afternoon hours during the week of tuition and more importantly, in the months long after the week has passed. These devices capture more than just tunes since contextual elements are invariably recorded. Recourse to the past is therefore preserved and refigured by digital technology as subsequent listenings offer fresh interpretations and

therefore new horizons of understanding with the potential to facilitate and influence future performances (Ó Laoire, 1999, Ricoeur, 1991).

The early years of the school drew extensively on a group of highly regarded, senior, West Clare tradition-bearers. Bobby Casey (1926-2000), Junior Crehan (1908-1998), John Kelly Senior (1912-1989) and Joe Ryan (1928-2008), fiddle players from different parts of west Clare, have come to be regarded as pivotal figures in the history of the School.²⁷ All of these musicians, with the exception of Junior Crehan, were no longer resident in County Clare but made the annual pilgrimage to the school, legitimating the School's and their own West Clare legacy in doing so. The classes of those first years did not offer the clear pedagogical role that teachers at the School today assume, rather it involved the masters 'playing away' predicated on the basis of learning by imitation. Handing out notes for the tunes conveyed was uncommon and despite displacement into a classroom environment, the process was entirely one of tunes and stories, transmitted orally. Máire O'Keeffe describes their method of teaching as 'playing tunes and talking about them' and suggests that this approach was closer in manner to performance;

they would have taught the way they learned themselves ... playing away a given tune in its entirety and continuously repeating it until students managed to pick it up and join in (Máire O'Keeffe interview, Dec 2009).²⁸

Oisín Mac Diarmada described the learning impact that this 'playing away' had on his music;

It wasn't as if Bobby, Joe and John were telling you that you had to do this that and the other ... you'd assimilate a lot of what they were doing into your playing ... and just the level of expression that they had in their music, was something that wouldn't really leave you. The detail that was there, they

²⁷ Vincent Griffin from east Clare has also taught at the school since its inception.

²⁸ John Joe Tuttle, described his own informal experience of learning music in Miltown in similar terms. He references the pedagogical role that Michael Downes played in his music acquisition as such 'you played along, and you'd pick up the style then ... if you made a mistake they corrected you' (John Joe Tuttle interview, SSWC 2010).

and not a ‘mere mouthpiece who repeats slavishly what he has learnt’ (Lord, 1962: 184).

The status afforded to these ‘masters of tradition’ is not self-ascribed, but predicated instead on a recognition of the past. However, the constitutive power of the masters, still rests in the hands of ‘the group which authorises it and invests it with authority’, that is, the organisers of the school and the community of practice of Irish traditional music (Bourdieu, 2007 (1977): 21). Interestingly, while each of these West Clare masters demonstrated their own clearly developed personal style, by virtue of their place of birth and therefore one hundred per cent traceability, their combined idiolects contributed to the performance rubric ‘West Clare style’.³² A review of the LP *Ceol an Cláir* [sic] published in *Treoir* 1979 unintentionally problematises the label ‘West Clare Style’.³³ A recording which features all the original West Clare fiddle teachers of the School; Bobby Casey, John Kelly, Joe Ryan, Junior Crehan and additionally Patrick Kelly from Cree (who passed away in 1975), its review expresses the difficulty of characterising in any general way the different stylistic idiosyncrasies present in the music of these musicians:

On this L.P. we have recordings of fiddling by five west Clare musicians, demonstrating not only the main characteristics of their regional style, but also [...] an interesting variety and diversity within the broad outlines of that fiddling tradition. All of the five fiddlers whose music we hear on this record are very close to the mainstream of their native fiddling tradition, yet each has a personal or inherited trait that singles his music out and makes it quite distinctive (*Treoir*, 1979: 10-11).³⁴

This review succinctly symptomises the paradox created by an overarching label such as ‘West Clare style when the personal traits of individual musicians makes their music

³² For a parallel discussion of some of the difficulties inherent in the label ‘East Galway style’ see Commins (Commins, 2008). Collins (2013) interrogates regional style through the lens of space and place, developing a new theoretical framework within which to engage with Irish traditional music (Collins, 2013).

³³ Released by *Comhaltas* in 1978.

³⁴ John Kelly himself comments on the ‘different accents’ present in his own music compared to that of Junior Crehan or Bobby Casey (Taylor, 2013: 11). Conscious of the broader musical lifeworlds that both himself and Casey inhabit in Dublin and London respectively he asks Bobby at the fiddle recital in 1975, for example, to play ‘in the style of his father’ rather than the style that Bobby has himself developed (Taylor, 2013: 15).

'quite distinctive'. Yet still apparent is the invisible sonic glue that binds the styles of these musicians irrevocably together. At the heart of this dilemma is the process of creative tradition. Pat Mitchell grapples with the same paradox in describing the music of Willie Clancy

Although Willie had a great love and respect for tradition, his innate musicianship would not allow him to simply replicate what he heard in his locality; each tune, while remaining faithful to the West Clare style was given his own personal stamp (Mitchell, 2009).

The ascription of the performance rubric 'West Clare style' and its articulation in a class-setting introduces for these players a responsibility to the music-making of future generations to ensure that they learn appropriate regard for past generations. Implicit in the musical authenticity stakes of West Clare (or indeed any musical style) is a tension that exists between the sonicity of the past and the acoustics of the future. Within this tension is the perception of West Clare style as geographically rooted in an untainted past and the positioning of these masters as inheritors of that past. The articulation and labelling of West Clare style is a contributory factor to the construction of place through performance, which in turn is a factor in developing a healthy cultural economy since the evolution of a discourse on regional style and identity supplies what Edward Bruner describes as 'performed difference' (Bruner, 2005)(Bruner 2005: 91). As these masters engage in the process of re-traditionalisation, they simultaneously become gate-keepers to the sound of the future. The imparting of practical knowledge is essential to the teaching process as well as informing a broader system of cultural capital transmission.

Leerssen argues that 'in the context of postcolonial thought, it was realized that in a situation of colonial domination, a primordial cultural authenticity was irrevocably compromised and unattainable, and that a sense of identity among the subaltern group would always involve the traces of the exoticism that the hegemonic colonizers had imposed' (Leerssen, 2007: 341). This in some way helps to explain both the desire for a designated regional identity such as 'West Clare' and the reality that (as demonstrated by the West Clare masters) they all possess 'different influences and strands', and that 'otherness is not only resisted or marked off, but also incorporated and internalized'

resulting in the institutionalisation of a West Clare musical identity (Leerssen, 2007: 341). The intertwining of identity and otherness is now a generally accepted concept under the appellation of ‘hybridity’ and both explains and contradicts the concept of local styles. The original act of bringing learners to West Clare, to learn from the masters, engendered a realisation that the degree of collective cohesion binding the masters’ style of playing was in actual fact limited. In a living tradition, where the art of variation is extolled, why indeed would anybody play the same. Paradoxically then, the individual performances that fashion the fiddle recital in fact exemplify hybridity.³⁵ Concomitantly there is a clear coherence in that they celebrate the vast provenance and diasporic reach of Irish music and thus represent an ‘empowering deconstruction of the fetishization of purity and authenticity’ (Leerssen, 2007: 341). The very institutionalisation of West Clare has come about through these vast interlinkages of practices, behaviours and ideas as echoes of migratory routes and roots bounce off the walls of the fiddle school.

In performative contexts, a fundamental method by which the cultural capital and authority of a master is disseminated resides in their introductions and storytelling narratives, particularly as these relate to tune acquisition and the regime of naming and remembering (and indeed forgetting) tunes. The ultimate story resides in the provenance of any given tune and the master’s own placement in that tune’s lineage. James Kelly’s class narrative strongly acknowledged the presence of his father and other key tradition-bearers. Drawing on this genealogy and the particular discourse with which masters engage during transmission, re-inscribes the master’s authority as they place themselves into the bigger story. For example, before teaching the reel ‘Last Night’s Fun’, James recalled how it was popularly played by his father and others along with another tune which he played, but could not recall the name of. James told his class that when he was a young boy of ten or eleven years old, ‘it got a great going over . . . I remember being in the room listening to that and I thought I was in heaven’ (James Kelly class, SSWC 2009). This example of youthful immersion and access amplifies the authority that he both bears and represents. Sharing these stories

³⁵ Bhabha posits hybridity positively as dynamic and enriching: a progressive challenge to essentialism. Occupying a ‘third space’ hybridity therefore enables other positions to emerge which in the context of the fiddle recital is central to the creation of new cultural meanings for other stylists (Bhabha, 1990, 1994).

corresponds to Mauss's principle of reciprocity which captures the dynamic that takes place in the workshop scenario. As James Kelly, like the other 'masters' at the School gives of his knowledge and talent, he receives in return reaffirmation of this cultural authority by his students (Mauss, 1969).³⁶

During the week, James Kelly's classroom received visits from other masters of tradition who were visiting Miltown but were not engaged in teaching commitments for the entire week and called in to play tunes and reminisce about both players and earlier memories of the School itself. Vincent Griffin and Sean Keane were two of these callers and it was revealed in the resulting discourse, that both men had taught James at various times, further substantiating his lineage.³⁷ Another visiting tutor to the class was American-born fiddle player, Jesse Smith. In conversation with James, he placed himself into a musical lineage by referencing their shared connection to renowned fiddle player and teacher, Brendan Mulvihill.³⁸ He prefaced one tune 'Give us another' composed by John McFadden, by associating the musical provenance of McFadden to the Francis O'Neill cylinders.³⁹ These cylinders contain some of the earliest recordings of Irish traditional music, and their referencing validates an authoritative yet seemingly effortless engagement with the tradition.⁴⁰ This recourse to past masters is recognition of the authority of tradition and an acknowledgement of both belonging to and representing it. Throughout the one hundred plus workshops taking place at the school, the embodied memories of its teaching masters are transformed, by story and anecdote, from the personal to the public domain. In providing this opportunity for the telling and retelling of stories, the school facilitates the transmission of living memory into cultural memory. It also facilitates what Paul Ricoeur cites as 'the duty to remember' the relationship between the past, present, and future, where this concern for the past

³⁶ This reciprocity informs workshops across the School. Inherent in Terry Moylan's obituary to SSWC dancing master Joe O'Donovan is the reciprocity that Joe expected of his class: the ability to 'go out and dance in the real world - the world outside the workshop and to that end he 'expected us to internalise the steps and movements of the set for the rest of our lives - not just long enough to dance it that day or that week' (Moylan, 2008).

³⁷ Both Vincent Griffin and Sean Keane attended the early summer schools. Griffin is a fiddle player from Feakle in east Clare. Sean Keane was a member of Ceoltóirí Chualann and still plays with the Chieftains.

³⁸ Brendan Mulvihill, son of Martin Mulvihill, a fiddle player from Glin, Co. Limerick.

³⁹ John McFadden, a fiddle player from Co. Mayo was recorded by music collector Francis O'Neill in Chicago in 1907. Further information on the O'Neill cylinders is available at <http://archives.irishfest.com/dunn-family-collection/History/ONEill-Cylinders.htm>.

⁴⁰ Hammie Hamilton remarks on a related phenomenon in the way that musicians 'quote the early Irish-American 78 r.p.m. recordings as an authority for playing a certain version of a tune, or a combination of tunes' (Hamilton, 1996: 15).

manifests itself through the transmission of meaning of the past to the next generation. The masters of tradition uphold an obligation to be responsible to and for previous musicians (Ricoeur, 1999: 9). In the brief instance outlined here, a casual preamble to performance reveals a deep signification, thick with cultural content, meaning and explication. These metanarratives create a bridging text for attendees that tie the past to the present and tradition to modernity through story, legitimising the latter with the former.⁴¹

Articulating transmission: ‘Up down up ... magic magic’

It is neither possible nor desirable to describe the methods of thirty plus teachers in the fiddle School. Insights gleaned from participant observation and interviews with numerous tutors and students confirm that many of them operate highly individualised styles of teaching. However, what is consistent is the privileging of process over product and the ethos of the School embraces the process that unfolds during the week a process of learning, of retrieval and re-traditionalisation. Indeed Finnegan pinpoints the fact that it is ‘the *processes* [in the] formation and manifestation [of traditions] rather than just the traditions as given *products* – [that] become an interesting subject of study’. (Finnegan, 1991: 114, italics in the original). Tangible products such as tunes learned, the satisfaction of enjoying a concert or a session are also present, but it is the participation in the social practice of the total environment of the School and everybody’s role in it which is valorised.

During the week spent in James Kelly’s class he revealed a thorough analysis of his own playing down to the slightest movement of the bow. His discourse was littered with verbal instructions relating to physical techniques for the improvement of tone production and consequently playing techniques: advice such as ‘relax the shoulders’, ‘stop the bow’, ‘lighten the fingers on the string’. The experience of Martin Hayes’ class and observation of archival footage of his classes from previous years suggests a similar self-awareness and attention to detail. Ornamentation is a key signifier of both

⁴¹ The importance of these narratives is exemplified by a parallel story in *Acallam na Senórach* a twelfth-century manuscript from the Fenian Cycle in which Caoilte and Oisín enlighten St Patrick about the deeds of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and the Fianna reinstate the importance of these older values and culture for the present day (Nagy, 1997). The importance and utilisation of metanarrative is discussed further in relation to performance in Chapter 5.

interviewed were asked directly by a member of the School's committee to teach, whilst others were approached by the deputies who manage each instrument section and few decisions are made without consultation between deputies and committee (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).⁴⁴ Martin Hayes remembered that he was back in Ireland from America making a TV programme with Tony McMahon and that Tony had advocated to Muiris that he teach at the School (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013).⁴⁵ The number of tutors employed is based on figures for the previous year and it is not unknown for tutors to be roped in literally on the day if numbers are larger than expected. Recalling one of the early years of the School John Kelly remembered, 'I was up the street in Friel's pub, I think, at eleven in the morning and the word went out that I was needed to do a class' (John Kelly interview, SSWC 2009). What is significant here is that the Willie Clancy Week continues to attract musicians of a calibre that can be called upon to teach if needed and seamless acts of surrogation occur. A common thread that appeared in the discourses of many of the tutors interviewed is the difficulty of reconciling music engagement practices, for example, a good session, with the responsibilities demanded by standing at the top of a class at ten o'clock in the morning for six mornings in a row. On this very matter, Breannán Ó Beaglaoich admitted that his own comportment at SSWC had altered since he had started attending the School as a tutor. When you're teaching at SSWC 'you have to be in bed by twelve, so I do all my damage before eleven!' The good will expressed by tutors is an important contributor to the capital stocks of the School and it is couched in traditional terms of reciprocity and neighbourliness, creating its own community-oriented value system.

The early tutors of the School were established by virtue of their West Clare connections or prior relationships with Willie Clancy and Miltown Malbay. As the School advanced in years, so too did the ages of the original tutors and together with an increase in student numbers, the proverbial net in which to find teachers was cast wider. The valorisation of authenticity, expressed through pedigree is a consistent trope

⁴⁴ The piping school is run as a discrete unit by NPU, the fiddle school is organised by Eamon McGivney and John Kelly, flute by Mick Hand, tin whistle by Mick O'Connor, concertina by Noel Hill, button accordion by Joe and Ann Conroy Burke, singing by Ian Lee and Brian Mullen, harp by Kathleen Loughnane, harmonica by Mick Kinsella and banjo by Ciarán Hanrahan. There is no overall deputy for the dance classes (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

⁴⁵ Tradition-bearer Tony Mac Mahon (b. 1939) is a Clare native and button accordion player who learned from and is credited with bearing Joe Cooley's legacy.

in the selection of tutors. The strong presence of families (for example the Kellys and O'Connors) whose offspring attended and now teach at the school maintains a core of consistency. For a number of tutors, their first experience of the school was as a student. The story of whistle player Bríd O'Donohue, a native of Miltown Malbay who attended the early years of the school as a teenager and was called upon to teach due to an upsurge in numbers in 1975, is animated in Tony Kearns and Barry Taylors' *Touchstone for the Tradition* (2003: 69-70). Similar stories prevail such as fiddle tutor Denis Liddy who first attended with his siblings in the mid-1970s and now teaches annually at the School. Intergenerational exchange continues as the children of Bríd O'Donohue and Denis Liddy, like those of numerous other tutors, also attend classes.

The tutors, along with the committee and school deputies, are the primary figures who govern the 'field of cultural production' at SSWC in which value judgements relating to music aesthetics are made (Bourdieu 1993). These fields of cultural production; workshops, recitals, the graveside ceremony represent the symbolic spaces in which the negotiation of cultural authority occurs. Bourdieu maintains that the structuring of this field is influenced in two particular ways: on the one hand, the compass of cultural production is tied to wider external factors such as global flows and government policy over which little control is possible; on the other hand, these fields are shaped by the principles of the legitimating group who acquire their cultural capital by the enunciation of cultural values and shared discourses within the same cultural field (Bourdieu 1993).⁴⁶ The selection of tutors, lecturers and performers takes place from within an organic consortium of musicians who demonstrate these shared values and symbols through discourse and performance practice and become known to each other through discourse and performance practice.⁴⁷ Effectively this self-selecting group of musicians determine what performances are valid and privilege performance practices and teaching methods that mobilise the past in the context of the present. The fulfilment of the majority of these roles within the School by practitioners reduces the discord

⁴⁶ Following Bourdieu, the term 'cultural capital' is used throughout this essay to express the social value of the skills and dispositions embedded in cultural competence and experience (Bourdieu, 1986).

⁴⁷ Fintan Vallely notes that he was asked to teach at the School after the publication of his tutor for the flute, *Timber* in 1986 (Vallely, 2007: 374).

created in other revivalists scenarios where the ‘experts’ are non-practitioners, occupying instead roles such as revivalists or collectors.⁴⁸

Tutors are not required to undergo training or pass an entrance exam and there are no explicitly stated qualifications or job applications. Instead a sense of informality prevails and the model for teaching is based on the generosity of Willie Clancy and the first masters of the School. This eliminates any ideas that Irish traditional music transmission is something learned at college or that only trained teachers should teach music, thereby informing the re-traditionalising process.⁴⁹ In this way, it removes the concept of pedagogy as a ‘taught’ concept, embedding it instead as part of the handing down of tradition.⁵⁰ Regardless of provenance or status, the masters and mistresses who teach at SSWC each provide informed links, both symbolic and real, to earlier sources of music-making and therefore authenticity. All types of knowledge, social history, folklore and tradition are accessed. The learning contexts of Junior Crehan and Willie Clancy, as referenced earlier in this chapter, demonstrate the myriad ways in which tunes were acquired and in turn this compendium of methods is available at SSWC. Receiving an invitation to teach at SSWC therefore confers a legitimising status onto a musician as a tradition-bearer and master of tradition, making SSWC a source of cultural authority which exists beyond the temporal duration of the School itself.

The attraction that learning Irish traditional music holds is intimately linked to the social processes of its transmission.⁵¹ However, an additional part of this allure romanticises the innate role played by music in the everyday lives of rural residents in Ireland and the re-incantation of this role is provided through the forum of SSWC. Tutors invariably utilise tunes as a medium of transmission. Each tune however carries its own history, a history that varies with individual players as they release it into a new environment. In the workshop situation, both opportunity and time is available to teach more than just the notes of a tune. Classes at SSWC provides a potential space to create

⁴⁸ Georgina Boyes discusses this, citing an example in which Maud Karpeles insists from her own research that a group of traditional dancers from Herefordshire are performing a particular dance ‘the wrong way round’ (Boyes, 1999: 41).

⁴⁹ A significant amount of the tutors who teach at the School are in fact also school teachers.

⁵⁰ This is perhaps what Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin refers to when he talks about Micho Russell’s ‘unschooled natural intelligence’ (Ó Suilleabháin, 1998: 76).

⁵¹ For a parallel argument regarding the role of informal learning in popular music see Green (2006).

tune pictures; a personalised history of a tune incorporating the histories of other performers in its line of transmission.

Conceptualising the workshop as a text enables an exploration of the workshop experience utilising the ideas of Ricoeur. Each attendee arrives with a preconfigured knowledge of Irish traditional music based on previous listening and learning experiences which also informs expectations of what they will learn. Part of the process of re-traditionalisation is based on the attendees pre-understanding of some of its symbolism and temporality. This combines with the tutors ability to grasp their students reality and create new horizons of understanding, enabling him/her to access their preconfigured version of the tradition through the processes of discourse and mimicking inherent in teaching music. The teaching of tunes provides the teacher with a medium through which to locate their own personal journey and place within the tradition. This discourse reveals a worldview onto social and musical insights and conventions, which in turn, embeds the engagement of the students both culturally and historically creating what Ricoeur would describe as new horizons of understanding, transforming the future performance of the tunes learned during the week, and the students own relationship with the tradition (Ricoeur, 1991).

Seamus Sands went some way to articulating this transformation of understanding when he suggested to students that tunes ‘taught here this week, you remember for the rest of your life, not just because they’re nice tunes, this is about much more than just tunes, because you remember where you learned them and who you learned them from’ (Seamus Sands, archive room performance, SSWC10). This transformation does not only occur on the part of the student however and James Kelly articulated the teacher worldview; ‘you’re a work in progress in your life, and you’re trying to develop what you do to become a better teacher’ (James Kelly class, SSWC 2009). For James, teaching each year at SSWC reconfigures his understanding of how to teach and hand down the tradition, annually shifting his own hermeneutic arc. The boundary then between the transmission of music and the generation of knowledge about music is somewhat unclear. Tim Ingold suggests that very little difference exists between ‘learning culture and creating culture, since the contexts of learning are the very crucibles from which the cultural process unfolds’ (Ingold, 2008: 117). Many teachers at the School have come through the School itself, therefore the School ultimately

provides a space for practice and training in which masters fine-tune their future contributions not just to the School, but the community of practice of Irish traditional music

Teaching styles

Lucy Green has written at length on the subject of musical meaning with regard to research in the classroom. She considers in particular the dialectic between ‘inherent’ and ‘delineated’ meaning. (Green, 2006: 103). By inherent she means the ‘ways in which the materials that are inherent in music – sounds and silences – are patterned in relation to each other’ which in an Irish music context might translate, for example, to tune-types, rhythm, articulation and ornamentation (Ibid.). The other aspect she refers to is ‘delineated’ meaning which refers to the ‘extra-musical concepts or connotations that music carries [...] its social, cultural, religious, political or other such associations’ (Ibid.). Delineated meanings within Irish music are manifold, dependent upon individuals and context, and map onto the concept of cultural capital. The personal stories and memories elicited by certain tunes and the common knowledge of particular tune sets engendered by iconic 78 rpm recordings are just two examples. Attendees at SSWC workshops acquire both sets of meanings; the inherent meanings are delivered through the process of acquiring a tune, a product, while the delineated meanings correspond to intangible aspects wrapped up in discourse, interactions and socialisation in place during the course of the week that are much more difficult to explicate. SSWC itself produces a delineated domain and additional meaning is tied into the authenticity perceived to reside in the School which relates less to the musical product (the tune) and more to the authenticity of the musical learning practice; in other words it is less about ‘musical authenticity’ and more to do with ‘music-learning authenticity’ (Green, 2006: 114). Authenticity in Irish traditional music is socially constructed as people give music, place, other people and indeed themselves an identity and authority by attributing Irish traditional music with particular social, cultural and ideological characteristics. Ultimately authenticity in Irish traditional music exists only in as much as people imagine it to exist.

Susan Friedman suggests that '[people] know who they are through the stories they tell about themselves and others' and this encapsulates the approach of both James Kelly and Martin Hayes and the delineated meanings they engender through discourse in the transmission process (Friedman, 1998: 8). A significant part of both James and Martin's classes are devoted to narratives about tunes and insights into the tradition and musical and personal identity. A less talkative approach is integral to the personality of Tommy Peoples, yet meaning is still delineated through the intensity of the experience and his foregrounding of composition in the creative process. Not all students value equally the delineated meaning and the emphasis on discourse that is presented by tutors such as James Kelly and Martin Hayes. One student interviewed preferred not to attend Martin Hayes' class as she felt that he talked too much and didn't teach enough tunes. This rehearses the dichotomy between discourse about music and actual music-making distinguished by Charles Seeger, which has implications far wider than the School. It is significant however within the School context, to observe how it influences the perception of masters by their apprentices and crops up in the narratives of attendees assessing what constitutes a 'good' teacher (Seeger, 1977).

Joining the dots

Today, numerous factors influence the processes within a workshop scenario in any learning experience. At SSWC, the concept of oral transmission is still privileged: the majority of tutors conveyed tunes phrase by phrase, using a listen-repeat-back technique. However, most teachers surveyed provided some type of *aide mémoire* for the notes of the tunes taught, either by prepared hand-outs, or via use of a classroom-board.⁵² James Kelly had a thick folder of tunes written out in manuscript, which gave him options to respond to both the prior knowledge and whims of the class. Sitting beside her father with pen in hand, Siobhan Peoples acted as his amanuensis and transcribed Tommy's newly composed tune while he was teaching it to the class and then handed out photocopies of her manuscript to the class at the end of the morning.

⁵² This is not an entirely modern phenomenon: McCarthy refers to nineteenth-century practices 'when the master and pupil met for a lesson, the master would often inscribe a tune in the pupil's book to help him recall it after the lesson in the master's absence (McCarthy, 1999: 101). Indeed Pádraig Ó Keefe famously devised his own tablature notation, 'the Code' to represent the sequence of notes in a tune which dates from the early twentieth century (Cranitch, 1996).

Carson explains the fundamental core of oral transmission when he suggests that users of manuscript ‘take the tune as read whilst a traditional musician plays the tune as heard’ (Carson, 1996: 11) The quotidian learning experiences of many students prior to attending Miltown is not one sensitised to learning by ear. For some students ingrained in the practice of learning from reading notes, the adjustment is just too much, and students have been known to demand written notes from the very beginning of the transmission process. Máire O’Keeffe explained that some of the earlier teachers simply did not give out notes, however, they were content with the idea that the tune would be taped, so that the process still remained in the realm of oral transmission.⁵³ McCarthy points to the fact that learning traditional music, whilst still perceived as being a more informal type of learning, has ‘become “schooled” or institutionalised in some instances and has assumed many of the instruction characteristics of formal education’ (McCarthy, 1999: 16). Despite the fluid way in which teachers are engaged by the School, the ritual of repetition has institutionalised a particular style of learning at SSWC. As tutors engage annually with the school, their methods become increasingly reflexive as they repeatedly articulate and explain their music. As a result their playing style passes from the subconscious to the conscious. Over time, the workshops have evolved from the ‘playing away’ style rooted in the concept of oral transmission of its earliest masters to a more reflexive self-conscious and hybridised teaching style that incorporates oral, written and recorded transmission methods. There are no formal syllabi or course outlines for either students or teachers and the organisers have no strictly preconceived expectations of the tutors, thereby reducing the likelihood of disappointment and facilitating a broad range of teaching styles.⁵⁴ As a result, each class is taught in the way that each teacher knows best how to teach and the degree of manoeuvring facilitated at the start of the week (referenced earlier in this chapter) ensures that the expectations of the majority of attendees are satisfied. Therefore, undertaking a workshop with James Kelly or Tommy Peoples or indeed any tutor at Miltown, presents one of many unique experiences. The absence of a selection process for tutors or a syllabus facilitates the honouring of oral transmission as a revered cornerstone and rejects the institutionalisation of any one ‘correct’ method, enabling a fluidity of styles to develop, influenced by how the tutors themselves

⁵³ Producing what Walter Ong would refer to as ‘secondary orality’ (Ong, 1982).

⁵⁴ This does not apply to the piping section of the School and NPU have held meetings for teachers of the School specifically to improve tuition standards (*An Piobaire*, 1985).

learned or were taught. The resultant differences in approach re-traditionalises the informal atmosphere associated with older music-making settings and consolidates the traditionally diverse range of experiences to be encountered at the school.

Archive room - ‘the listening of your ear’

A key feature of SSWC is the particular attention paid to the current elder-statesmen/women of tradition and a respect for their capacity as storehouses of indigenous knowledge. This concept is enshrined in the Archive Room at the fiddle section of the School, an initiative which developed in the late 1990s as the original tutors became more senior in years and the role of teaching for a full-week, became for them, increasingly onerous. Promoting them to the Archive Room sustained their participation in the school, facilitating a space in which the entire cohort of attending fiddle students might experience their musical styles and knowledge. The activities of the room were initially recorded by the ITMA (hence its name) and recordings of the early years of the Archive Room provide a valuable insight into the music and discourse of some of these older players.⁵⁵ The sessions are shaped by a combination of conversations and performance under the curatorial guidance of fiddle player Máire O’Keeffe. Two classes at a time are invited to join the room for an hour, with class tutors joining these older source fiddle players for a number of solo and group performances.

The Archive Room operates at a number of levels and has come to fulfil and embrace a variety of functions within the School. At a symbolic level the entire School attempts to fill a vacancy created by the absence of an original, what Roach (as described in Chapter 1) describes as ‘surrogation’ to fix the network of relations that constitutes the social fabric of a culture (Roach, 1996: 2). In the Archive Room an on-going process of

⁵⁵ A recording from the first ‘Archive Room’ in 1999 featuring Bobby Casey from Miltown Malbay and London, Joe Ryan from Inagh and Meath, Paddy Canny from Feakle and Tommy McCarthy from Kilmihil and London (on concertina) is available here: www.itma.ie/digitallibrary/playlist/clare-musicians-wess-1999 [accessed 5 January 2014]. Due to limited resources the ITMA no longer records the entire week, however, this duty is now undertaken by the School itself, facilitated by Máire O’Keeffe. The concept of the Archive Room at SSWC has since been replicated at other festivals, for example the Frankie Kennedy Winter School in Co Donegal introduced a daily ‘Music Archive’ event in 2012/13 in which the performance of music and song was combined with informal conversation about the life and times of a featured musician: www.itma.ie/digitallibrary/playlist/music-archive-ikws-2012-2013 [accessed 5 January 2014].

surrogation takes place as the vacancies left by previous musicians are recalled, celebrated and creatively renewed. At a practical level it operates as a living archive, a mimesis of the archiving process and has come to constitute an integral part of the fiddle school. The Archive Room acts as a repository of cultural diversity where respect for seniority and for the styles held in older hands is privileged and technical ability is outweighed by knowledge and links to both the past and to ex-teachers at the school. With the passing of time and the inevitable death of the more senior players, additional measures have been utilised within the Archive Room to preserve echoes of their memory. Photographs of the ‘elder statesmen’ adorn the walls of the room, providing an ‘an ongoing point of aesthetic reference’ that encourages discourse amongst those present that remember their music-making; recalling sets of tunes they played and particular tune-types that they liked (Feldman, 2002: 106).⁵⁶ This personification of the tradition through the use of images helps current students to imagine their own individual musical re-territorialisation of West Clare as they map their learning process onto this musical continuum. The repertoires of musicians such as Junior Crehan and Bobby Casey are reified in the room and these in turn feed into new repertoires created in performance. As tunes are remembered and forgotten, new tunes are added to old ones and the creative process unfolds before both the students and practitioners.⁵⁷

During fieldwork at the School in 2010 participant observation was located each morning in this room (see photograph, Appendix 3). The daily stalwarts of 2010 consisted of fiddlers Vincent Griffin, Ben Lennon, Kathleen Smith, Peter Mackey and John Joe Tuttle. John Joe, constituting the only ‘local’ in the room purveys what Stewart Hannabuss might describe as an ‘elusive authenticity’ (Hannabuss, 2000: 362).⁵⁸ Provenance as a vector of authenticity ties John Joe into the historical narrative in which the School is situated, making him an authentic actor within the contemporary

⁵⁶ Clear parallels exist between this and the motivation behind Feldman and O’Doherty’s ‘Northern fiddler project’ of the late 1970s and SSWC (Feldman and O’Doherty, 1979).

⁵⁷ These activities bring to mind practices such as those described by Junior Crehan in an interview in 1977 wherein he reminisces on the role of older people at crossroads meetings; ‘the old folk sat on the wall, enjoying the music, step-dancing and set-dancing, and telling stories of times they had known and things they had done. The old people were our critics, historians and custom keepers’ (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1977: 72).

⁵⁸ Since Ben Lennon joined the ranks of the Archive Room, it has taken on an additional name; ‘The House of Lords’ since Ben is affectionately referred to as ‘Lord Leitrim’ (Máire O’Keeffe, personal communication, 1 March 2014).

experiences of music-making. The stylistic features of his performance reside in the process of surrogation as he fills the territorial musical vacancies created by the West Clare fiddle players of the past and via his knowledge of Willie Clancy. Likewise Kathleen Smith provides surrogation for Joe Ryan as her longstanding musical relationship with him reveals a quiet authority on his musicianship and insights into his repertoire.⁵⁹ Peter Mackey, a native of Armagh, has visiting links and a knowledge of Miltown that predates and coincides with the school. In 2010, Ben Lennon and Vincent Griffin represent the elder statesmen of Irish music and hold longstanding teaching associations with the school. Older people embody a significant repository of experience, their stories and tune introductions are amplified by age since they ‘experienced an earlier period in time when values and behaviours were different’ (Burholt et al., 2013: 9). Story-telling and remembrances, particularly those stories which Ben Lennon imparts about his own father, reveal insights into the lifetime of a previous century. His indigenous knowledge, like all those present in the Archive Room, is authenticated by his own longevity. The space presented by the Archive Room garners respect and enables the sharing and ultimately the legitimisation as traditional of this knowledge.

The Archive Room provides the opportunity for archiving not just to professional archivists such as the ITMA, but to the students themselves, who are encouraged to record what they are witnessing. In this respect it instils the value of collection and contributes to an on-going cycle of collection that traverses the school.⁶⁰ As a result, the room is replete with a sea of digital phones and recorders capturing tunes and stories. Ben Lennon, as he regaled different groups of students throughout the week with stories of music-making in his younger days, commented several times on the need in his youth to remember and learn a new tune; ‘you see all these tape recorders and cell phones ... at that time you had nothing to depend on other than the listening of your ear’ (Ben Lennon, Archive Room, SSWC 2010). Musicians therefore share not just their local reservoirs of tunes, but social memories built up from a lifetime of

⁵⁹ Joe Ryan originally from Inagh, Co Clare became a musical neighbour of Kathleen Smith when he settled on the East coast.

⁶⁰ During his delivery of the Breandán Breathnach Memorial Lecture at SSWC 2009, Nicholas Carolan reminded the audience that ‘we are all collectors’ and that ‘collecting is a broad-spectrum activity, much wider than just the efforts of a few great collectors’ (Carolan, 2009).

playing and their recollections interpretively reconstruct particular local and individual practices mediated in the context of the present.

Resonances of a country kitchen or house dance are engendered as the Archive Room creates a community, however temporary, which re-traditionalises the intergenerational transfer of knowledge forming a centre of social activity within the school. The constant turnaround of tutors who bring in their classes and then join the core group creates an ever-changing dynamic and sparks new remembrances and tunes rather like the country house dance which Ó hAllmhuráin conceptualises as ‘a school where the traditions of music-making, storytelling and dancing were passed on from one generation to the next’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2005:17).⁶¹ This re-traditionalisation from kitchen to classroom is likewise interspersed with a tea-break which facilitates further intergenerational socialisation for the mainstays of the Archive Room as described in Chapter 1. Feldman and O’Doherty observed in their fieldwork ‘the estrangement of the older rural musician’ that has accompanied the increasingly professionalised commercial performance medium of Irish traditional music (Feldman and O’Doherty, 1979: 29). The Archive Room therefore creates a sanctuary for older musicians; facilitating a recontextualised social experience, a space in which to play and discuss tunes unhindered by the potential discomforts of more commercial performance contexts often viewed to be the milieu of younger performers.

Conclusion

This chapter centres the workshop as the location of both innovation and tradition at SSWC, by isolating elements that ‘re-traditionalise’ processes of transmission through the re-creation of new intimate learning encounters between students and master musicians. The introduction of the workshop concept, a new paradigm for Irish traditional music in 1973 and its acceptance and assimilation into the tradition, demonstrates how inherently resilient, adaptable, and transformative Irish traditional music is and continues to be. The master-apprentice dyad, re-traditionalised to the location of Miltown for a week-long summer school, demonstrates how creative

⁶¹ Máire O’Keeffe also makes the point that it is a break for the younger cohort from the concentrated intensity of teaching and provides ‘the smallies with a change of scenery’ (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009).

renewal of the tradition becomes incorporated into and realised as a manifestation of local culture and tradition, particularly as it is embedded in place and in the resources, skills and knowledge of the local. Realising the inherent importance of the local, from Willie Clancy to the West Clare fiddle tradition-bearers and providing space in place legitimises their performance and transmission, re-instating the status of the master and providing ‘an alternative to a view of history and culture as the work of “great men”’ (Ó Giolláin, 2000: 76). The classes offer an organised informality; the enactment of traditional engagement with modernity. Circumventing the rigid binary of tradition-modernity, the processes of transmission at these classes actively support the traditional, yet accept the contemporary realm in which they take place. It is in the facilitation and satisfactory outcome of minor events; the self-selection of tutors, the loan of an instrument and the rapid repair of a broken one that the community-orientated integrity of the School and its capacity to operate as a model of self-sufficiency is revealed. Operating to a set of unwritten guidelines; there are no rules ‘for rules sake’, only an underlying ethos to facilitate the optimisation of every visitors experience - learner and tutor alike (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013). The grading system creates an organising structure on which to manage 300 potential students and prevent the chaos that would ensue were it not in place. However the ultimate goal is to satisfy every cohort and the accompanying self-selection optimises the satisfaction of the greatest number of students. This informal accommodation of difference welcomes strangers to the SSWC kitchen table, makes them feel at home, and is core to the success of the student and ultimately the School, demonstrated by high return rates and growth in attendance. Notwithstanding the magnitude of organisation required, the informal atmosphere created by this method of performing the School each year, informs the concept of re-traditionalisation in rural west Clare. This results in what might be classed as ‘good customer relations’ in marketing speak, but furthermore, such community orientation informs the development of symbolic, social and cultural capital by establishing and maintaining the reputation of SSWC thereby contributing to its significant economic success. The end result is a fusion of horizons, as the traditional horizon and the modern horizon are fused in a seamless way, the modern elements are clearly present, yet the context seems traditional (Gadamer, 1989). It is constructed, but only in the way that all human activity is constructed. The provision of notes at the end of or during a class and the facilitation of recording tunes is a clear example of how tradition and modernity engage with one another at the School.

Learning by ear as an assumed paradigm during the early years of the School gives way to increased levels of literacy in both attendees and masters and is gradually accompanied by an assumption that notes will be provided (at least by the end of the learning process). This demonstrates how hybridised elements (such as written out notes) become accepted as part of the tradition during the lifetime of the School and the pragmatic reality of musicians to engage with what they believe to be appropriate behaviour and values around the music.

In re-traditionalising the master-apprentice dyad, SSWC provides an authenticating space, in which the cultural authority of the masters of tradition is acknowledged and access to them is (re)created. It is this access to an authentic site in which cultural authority resides that has both local and international appeal. A primary site of authenticity, the graveside of Willie Clancy and commemoration is the subject of exploration in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Commemoration

'to do honour to the illustrious dead'

Away back in the nebulous mists that envelop the outer edges of chronological history - almost two thousand years before the birth of Christ – the Tailteann Games were primarily instituted as a tribute in honour of the illustrious dead (Nally, 1922: 11).

This chapter reflects on the commemoration of Irish traditional music and musicians. According to Nally 'the institution of an Aonach, at any particular place [...] arose from the burial there of some great or renowned personage' (Nally, 1922: 16). Conceptualised at a macro-level, SSWC evokes the great Aonachs which took place at the burial site of the 'illustrious dead' and the entire town of Miltown Malbay is realised as a site of celebration to the 'renowned personage' Willie Clancy. Containing two interrelated parts, the chapter begins with a micro level deconstruction of the annual ritual enacted at Willie Clancy's graveside at the beginning of SSWC each year. Secondly, it addresses the monumentalisation (that is the placing of statuary and monuments) in honour of Irish musicians, taking its lead from the first monument raised to Willie Clancy situated by his graveside.¹ The temporal and spatial significance of this monument raised in 1974 is discussed in the context of the broader sphere of commemoration in Ireland. It attends to the variety of different (extramonumental) ways in which Irish traditional musicians are commemorated before tracing this development of monumentalising Irish traditional musicians in particular.

The graveside tribute

Graveside tributes have long been part of the cultural framework of Irish ritual practice. When Senchán Torpéist and his fellow tradition-bearers are asked by Morgan to tell the story of the Cattle Raid of Cúailnge, they are forced to admit that it is not in their

¹ This monument, a bronze relief portrait plaque of Clancy playing the pipes was created by sculptors John Behan and James McKenna.

memory and Senchán only obtains it when he goes to the grave of Fergus Mac Róich, one of the heroes of the story who comes to life to recount, orally the story. The significance of Senchán's visit to the grave, symbolising both a return to the originary source and the privileging of oral transmission is echoed by the first and then subsequent visits to Willie Clancy's graveside each year at SSWC.²

A ceremony held at Willie Clancy's graveside at Ballard cemetery was one of the opening events of the first summer school in July 1973, an act of both public mourning and commemoration, a mere six months after his death. Visits to Willie Clancy at Miltown in the years prior to his death, were commonplace, references to which occur in biographies and anecdotes of numerous musicians. Some of these were prominent members of NPU and the Armagh Pipers' Club, others less well known and of more obscure origins. Fintan Vallely reminisces about travelling by bicycle all the way from Armagh to visit Willie Clancy in 1966, whilst Moylan speaks with unreserved warmth of his last visit only months before Clancy's unexpected death; 'I well remember the hours spent just enjoying that company. The music and songs were almost a bonus' (Moylan, 2003, Vallely, 2007). A sense of continuity, therefore, is reflected in this visit to Willie Clancy during the first School, albeit to his graveside. However, even this first posthumous visit is carefully planned, the order of events and personnel involved clearly prescribed as conveyed by the School's brochure for that year: The 'Speaker' was listed as Seán Reid, a 'Pipe lament' was given by Peadar Ó Lochlainn and 'Wreath laying' the duty of Séamus de Brún (see Appendix 4).³ The brochure for the second year announced the 'unveiling of plaque at Willie Clancy's grave'. As the years progress, the role of this event evolves through repetition as does the on-going process of surrogation with the music of different pipers who perform at the graveside substituting the music of the buried piper (see photograph, Appendix 5). Its initial function as a life-cycle rite is transformed through annual repetition into a ritual at

² See Nagy for further discussion on oral transmission in pre-Christian and medieval Christian Irish society Nagy (1986).

³ Seán Reid was a dedicated promoter and facilitator of pipers and piping and one time leader of the Tulla Céili Band. Peadar O'Loughlin (whose name appears in its Irish language version on this particular School brochure) is a renowned flute, fiddle and pipe player from Co. Clare. Séamus de Brún was President of Comhaltas at the time and an authority on sean-nós singing. Seán Reid's memorial address at the graveside, three years later in 1977, is published in *An Piobaire* (Reid, 1977). As can be seen from this brochure, the name 'Scoil Éigse Willie Clancy' was used in the first year. The School adopted the name 'Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy' from 1974 onwards.

which participants rehearse symbolic actions transforming Willie Clancy from mere piper to hero.

Dancing on the graves of heroes

The following is a fieldwork diary excerpt, an ethnographic description of the annual graveside tribute that took place at Ballard cemetery on Sunday 5 July 2009 at 3.00pm. It illustrates a number of points for discussion and reveals the choreography of the event, the genealogy of participation, its sonic enactment and some of its performative elements.

I arrive to a full car park at Ballard cemetery five minutes after 3.00pm. It's a windy, changeable day; the sky alters dramatically every five minutes as torrential downpours intersperse with brilliant sunshine. I debate whether or not to bring my camcorder. I decide against it, not wishing to appear intrusive or disrespectful at a burial ground.

I pick my way between graves and headstones through the cemetery. Willie Clancy's grave is over at the back wall of the cemetery. I count a gathering of approximately sixty people, arranged in a semi-circle facing Willie's grave, variously standing and sitting awkwardly on other graves, trying to dodge headstones in order to get a clear view of proceedings. With the exception of a few local faces and the American gentleman staying at my B&B, I don't recognise any of 'the audience'. Musicians preparing to perform are lined up along the back wall, cases resting on a stone wall and on the grass, umbrellas at the ready. I notice a portable loud speaker system (from the way it distorts Muiris' voice), microphones and stands. An assortment of chairs and stools border the grave. I'm slightly shocked by the abundance of photographers. Whilst the majority of attendees have cameras at the ready, three 'professional-looking' photographers wield large cameras and shamelessly clamber up and over walls and graves, crossing in front of and over people both living and dead. I listen to Muiris' bilingual introduction and laughing at my own camera naivety, dash back to the car to retrieve my camcorder, accompanied by the

strains of James Kelly playing the ‘Plains of Boyle’. Back at the car park, a minibus lands up at speed and a bunch of young musicians exit hastily, they are prompted to hurry up by an accompanying adult and I walk behind them back to the graveside. When they are later introduced to play I discover they’re part of the McPeake group from Belfast.

Large gatherings at burials are commonplace in contemporary Ireland and cemeteries are repositories of ritual. It is less usual, however, to witness such assemblies at a graveyard when a body is not being interred, and unlike the great Aonachs which took place at such sites, graveside visits in contemporary Ireland are most commonly familial and/or solitary.⁴ In tandem with the development and growth of the School, the unfolding events at the graveside ceremony carry a sense of the everyday and ordinary which masks what is in fact an orchestrated performance which has a ‘sense of social action, [...] with intention and social consequence’ (Santino, 2009: 17). The physical difficulties inherent in the site both limit and lend themselves to the development of its ensuing choreography. As Rowlands and Tilley explain; the architecture and placing of monuments ‘acts on people. It structures where and how they can move, bodily posture, and so on’ (Rowlands and Tilley, 2006: 508). The ‘audience’ play an ambiguous role as they listen to the bilingual address of the School Director Muiris Ó Rócháin and selected musicians. Their performative engagement in the enactment of a ritual as it, and themselves, is being captured and recorded on camera, is that of spectator, yet it legitimises the uniqueness of the experience for those who partake. Whilst musicians play with and to Willie Clancy, the presence of a (limited) sound system ensures that the private session is also a public performance. As the years unfold and musicians pass on, the process of surrogation ensures that new musicians partake in this ritual performance and the ceremony then, metaphorically visits each of these departed musical associates. For many attendees it provides a unique opportunity to attend an outdoor concert presented by some of their musical heroes.

The genealogy of participation is determined primarily by geographical and instrumental credentials. The honour of playing at the graveside is bestowed upon a considered few who represent in various ways, real and imagined links to Willie

⁴ Clearly exceptions exist, particularly in the case of political figures: demonstrated for example by the annual visit to Wolfe Tone’s grave at Bodenstown, Co. Kildare.

Clancy himself, the uilleann pipes and West Clare. In 2009, the first solo was executed by James Kelly, whose father John Kelly Senior of Kilbaha, West Clare was a musical friend of Willie Clancy and played an integral role in the organisation of SSWC. The gravitas of James Kelly's presence at the grave and his musicianship is further legitimated by the pilgrimage from Florida that he makes on an annual basis to teach at the School. On this particular occasion, piper Jimmy O'Brien Moran, known for his articulation of Willie Clancy in both music and words, plays 'Loch na gCaor', a tune that resonates strongly with Clancy's legacy. The symbolic role of the piper is key to the event and clearly a piper of pedigree is an essential prerequisite, a role and honour filled on previous occasions by Peter Brown, Seán Óg Potts, Dan O'Dowd, Séamus Ennis and Peadar O'Loughlin amongst others. The McPeake family group play an unusual selection of tunes in sharp stylistic contrast to what precedes it, with changes of time signature, a waltz and prominent harmonies.⁵ According to Muiris' introduction, the McPeakes have been coming to Miltown since the 1950s and they have been welcomed warmly as annual visitors ever since. This demonstration of loyalty and continuity prefigures the honour of playing at Willie Clancy's graveside.

The enduring validity of repetition at the graveside each year is part of the performative praxis of community remembrancing performed afresh each year (Leerssen, 2001: 219). The graveside oratory offers a key annual moment of opportunity at the beginning of each School to re-state the synthesis of cultural and musical ideas that informed its creation, reinforcing and renewing an unwritten mission statement. Muiris' oration of praise for Willie Clancy also advances Clancy's approval of the beliefs and ideologies of the present proceedings conferring authority onto the activities not just at the graveside but throughout the forthcoming week. Muiris performs the role of mediator, transmitting an unspoken acknowledgement from the grave, from the expert that lies within, whose sonic legacy is without question. The oration oscillates easily between Irish and English, a bilingualism that pervades the School and privileges the Irish language at official School events.⁶ At the site of the graveside, the Irish language takes on the attributes of a sacred language. Paul Connerton draws attention to the way

⁵ These are in fact a mainly unrelated group of young musicians who learn at the McPeake School of Music in Belfast.

⁶ At the graveside ceremony in 2011 (during Muiris Ó Rócháin's illness and in 2012, the first SSWC following his death) the process of surrogation is seamlessly enacted: continuity through oration and bilingualism is maintained without break as Muiris' place is substituted by his son Séamus Ó Rócháin.

in which many of the world's religions draw on the authority inherent in sacred languages which separate them from the profane language of daily discourse (Connerton, 1989: 66). The authority invested in the Irish language adds a dimension of linguistic exclusiveness entirely appropriate to the re-enactment of ritual.⁷

As the clouds grew darker, the final finale of tunes was kept short. In this group performance in which West Clare is privileged, James Kelly is joined by his brother John Junior and John's daughter Aoife on concertina. Bríd O'Donohue on tin whistle sports impeccable credentials as a niece of JC Talty (a contemporary and friend of Willie Clancy), a former student and now teacher at the School. As a Miltown Malbay native she represents, as such, the only true 'insider' to partake in the musical tribute. The unfolding choreography; the initial speech in praise of Willie followed by solo and group performances, the prior arrangement of chairs and microphones and the noticeable presence of professional recorders, reveals the constructedness of the event and dispels any ideas of spontaneity. However, for the majority of attendees who regularly consume music in the mediated spaces of concert halls and public houses, this is nothing unusual. Part of the rationale for visiting the Willie Clancy Week is to partake in a 'real' experience and this is as real as it gets.

The graveside ceremony at Ballard rewrites and re-embeds Willie Clancy into Miltown's local history, reimagining a more central place for him in doing so. The foregrounding of this event on the School's brochure each year, draws attention to a powerful mode of continuity as it invites an audience to observe friends and selected musicians as they pay tribute to Willie Clancy in a 'symbolic embodiment of loss and renewal' (Roach, 1996: 14). Through the enactment of this ritual, the School does not simply imply continuity with the past but explicitly claims such continuity, signifying a return to the source (Connerton, 1989: 45). In 1990, at the eighteenth school, the wording in the brochure changes from 'graveside visit' to 'musical tribute'. This signifies both the passing of many of Clancy's contemporaries who were visiting the grave of their old friend and opens it up to the widest possible constituency. The label 'musical tribute' is suggestive of a performative element, an opportunity to 'hear great music being played in the outdoors' and dispels any religious undertones that might

⁷ Further discussion of the role of the Irish language at SSWC takes place in the next chapter.

deter visitors to the event (student interview, SSWC 2009). Reclaiming notions of identity, continuity and tradition it draws its legitimacy from the calibre and genealogy of invited guests who in turn imbue the event with significance and confer authority on the School. Furthermore, the enactment of this ritual amplifies the creation of cultural capital by the summer school.

According to Witosek and Sheeran ‘the graveyard is the omphalos of Irish culture, where two worlds meet’ (Witoszek and Sheeran, 1998: 154). Celebration at the graveside invokes the spirit of Willie Clancy, linking contemporary Irish traditional music-making, with the qualities and traditions that he represents. ‘Life springs from death ...’ Patrick Pearse solicited the authority of the dead generations in his graveside panegyric for O’Donovan Rossa on 1 August 1915; the power and symbolism of his words culpable in the mobilising of a subsequent rising.⁸ The graveside ceremony reinvigorates the imagined music of an ancient Irish past, mediated by SSWC into the present. The combination of elements; location, man and instrument, coalesce at this memorial, framing future myths and truths about Irish traditional music.

Applying Turner’s tripartite processual scheme (adapted from van Gennep) of separation, liminality and reintegration to SSWC, the ritual of the graveside tribute symbolises the threshold of liminality; the transition into a ritual world at a remove from everyday conceptions of time and space (Turner, 1969). Hence, the graveside tribute, symbolising this ritual separation is integral to the successful re-enactment of the School each year. Directly prior to the tribute, physical preparations of the summer school site signal the first processes of separation. Many of the spaces used by the School (discussed in Chapter 1) maintain their usual roles until the Friday before the School commences. Their re-designation into summer school spaces begins with the temporary erection of a variety of signage; for parking, accommodation, room numbering, and the internal rearrangement of furniture in classrooms, front rooms, sports halls and dressing rooms, in anticipation of the creation of spaces dedicated to music transmission. Miltown Malbay’s community hall, home to a plethora of activities throughout the year, is re-assigned as the School’s ‘hub’. It hosts the enrolment office

⁸ The significance of Pearse’s graveside oration in the development of nationalist remembrance through galvanising support for the Republican movement and the future Rising is discussed by McBride (2001).

which opens at 2.00pm on the first Saturday signifying the departure point for ritual progression into the liminality of summer school space. The smooth alteration from secular to ritual space demonstrates the embodied knowledge and social capital developed over forty years that directs and facilitates these local infrastructural transformations. The ritual of the graveside tribute on Sunday afternoon continues this separation from the everyday flow of activities. The physical rawness of its outdoor, exposed location, beyond the comfort zone of an interior launch or lecture, symbolically crosses the threshold into the ritual world at a remove from normal time and space. The accoutrements of a PA system and other (somewhat minimalist) furniture signal preparations for an event that is out of synch with usual cemetery business. The performance at the graveside presents a visceral inhabiting of the living tradition, marking an interval of timelessness which suspends the flow of normal social life.

For this researcher, despite annual attendance at Miltown since 1996 (ranging from a single day to the entire week in any given year), the 2009 School was the first experience of attending the ‘Musical tribute at Willie Clancy’s grave’ the second official event on the first Sunday of the week (after ‘*Aifreann i nGaeilge*’) as marked on the brochure. Just a short distance (a fifteen minute walk for those without a car) and unbeknownst to the bustle of the town, the actions at this sacred site give ‘the illusion [... that] mundane time was suspended’ (Connerton, 1989: 43). Subsequent questioning of consultants for this research revealed that this researcher was not singular in her absence from this event. A significant cohort of musicians and casual visitors attend Miltown to play in sessions or soak up the musical festival atmosphere of its heterogeneous spaces and an awareness of this ceremony or indeed any interaction with events on the official programme are often non-existent.⁹ This demonstrates the variety and intensity of the meanings available at the School and proves that participation, or not, at the graveside pilgrimage does not detract from the School’s meanings in its continuum in time and space. Of those questioned about the ceremony, a minority cohort expressed an awareness of the event but had never made it a priority. More than half of the tutors questioned had never attended, citing an already onerous teaching and

⁹ This concurs with Liam McNulty’s assessment of the tribute during the early years of the School ‘ócaid bheag a bhí ann i gcónaí. Measaim go raibh suim níos mó ag daoine bheith ag bualadh lena gcáirde ar an mbaile, nó ag seinnm ceoil, ná bheith sa reilg’ (Liam McNulty, personal communication, 5 April 2011).

music-making commitment as exclusionary to any other ‘extra-curricular’ activities. Several musicians who first attended Miltown with their parents confirmed their attendance as children, but had not attended since coming to Miltown independently as adults. Indeed a number of families were observable at the graveside. From those interviewed and from observations at ceremonies during (and since) the proscribed research period, it would appear (with the exception of the ‘old guard’) that the international contingent and first-time attendees were amongst those most likely to attend the commemoration. As an historic site, the graveyard experience facilitates their interaction ‘with the genius loci of the heritage site, and the place of identity’ an experience not deemed necessary by more experienced musicians whose genius loci is elsewhere, at the session or in performance in the relative (dis)comfort of the pub (Hannabuss, 2000: 354). Despite the low level of attendance relative to attendance at the School, the graveside ceremony plays a significant role in reinforcing the legacy of Willie Clancy both sonically and metasonically, and consequently the reception of Irish traditional music in twenty-first century Ireland. Public participation in this ceremony and indeed the macro-commemoration represented by the School is a recognised means of stating and affirming social positions and relationships within the tradition. Visitors (or pilgrims according to Turner) can make a viable connection between their contemporary musical life, and a perceived ancient, but continuing musical past and the commemoration fulfils their requirement for a mediated experience. For newcomers to the tradition, participation at the graveside enables engagement with the symbolic construction of an Irish traditional music community which in turn may condition and informs future musical experiences (Cohen, 1985).

‘The iconography of public space represents what any given society exalts as its heritage’ (Morrissey, 2006: 109). Concretising what had previously been a sonic and print legacy, the debut of stones, statues and monuments dedicated to Irish musicians begin to appear in civic spaces from the 1970s onwards, representing a new cultural trajectory in commemoration in Ireland. The next part of this chapter addresses the placing of a monument to Willie Clancy in 1974 within this wider context of commemoration in Ireland. An abbreviated survey of a daunting array of commemorative construction, it provides an introductory insight into the wealth of expression available.

Commemoration in Ireland

Monuments and statues provide a backdrop for both the representation and framing of national and local identities in public spaces. A cursory glance at the project of monumentalisation in Ireland demonstrates that it was politically driven and moved from a symbolic royal domain to a primarily nationalist one. Until recent times Irish traditional music, and indeed other aspects of Ireland's cultural heritage, have clearly played second fiddle to that of its political heritage in terms of commemorative fervour. This informs wider debates about Irish identity and with regard to the project of monumentalisation in Ireland, not unlike the twin pillars of history and literature in Irish Studies, Irish traditional music falls between two pedestals. Accordingly, the statues decorating the streets of nineteenth-century Dublin consisted mainly of two types; royal monuments, such as the equestrian King William III at College Green (1701) or military leaders as depicted by Nelson's Pillar in the middle of O'Connell Street (1809).¹⁰ 'The commemoration of dead heroes or saints, and the events by which they left their mark, is an essential element of Irish political, religious and social organisation' (McBride, 2001: 184). It reoccurs consistently as different groups and political factions attempt to construct legitimacy by celebrating competing interpretations of the past. The rationale behind political commemorations is well documented in Irish scholarship (see Beiner, 2005, 2007, Dolan, 2006, Fitzgerald, 2009, Johnson, 1994, 2003, McBride, 2001). A number of monuments raised in the twentieth century were characterised by contestation over how and which significant anniversaries should be commemorated at any given time in a State governed by many of those who had played an active part in the revolutionary period. Mike Cronin observes that 'the past offered, until the mid-1960s, a safe haven for Irish politicians and their people. It was often more reassuring to cast their minds back to landmark events and personalities, rather than face the reality of the complex problems that dogged Irish society in the decades following independence' (Cronin, 2003: 396). This sentiment was shared, on the other side of the Atlantic, by collector Francis O'Neill who in 1918 articulated his disillusionment with the Irish as 'always glorifying the

¹⁰ 1701 marked the eleventh anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne. The statue was damaged by an explosion in 1928 and removed from College Green in 1929. Nelson's Pillar, erected in 1809 was destroyed in 1966 (Whelan, 2003).

legendary and historical past, and leaving to the future the realization of their dreams' (quoted in Carolan, 1997: 27).¹¹

McBride suggests that the proclivity for public commemoration gathered momentum in the latter half of the eighteenth century with the funerals of Daniel O'Connell, Terence Bellew McManus and Charles Stewart Parnell (McBride, 2001).¹² Dublin experienced its largest mass gathering of the nineteenth century with the unveiling of the O'Connell monument (1882) establishing 'the rhetoric and ritual framework for [...] remembrance' (Ibid: 31). Monuments provide a 'concentrated visual manifestation of Irish cultural identity' (Murphy, 2010: 29) or as Judith Hill states they 'inculcate a sense of Irish identity' (Hill, 1998: 147). This type of public display continues from the late 1800s with what Leerssen (2001) describes as an 'effusion of monuments' dedicated to Daniel O'Connell and the centennial celebrations of 1798.

James Hardiman was perhaps the first to lament 'the reproachful apathy of Irishmen towards the encouragement of native genius' (Hardiman, 1831: lxx). He drew on the words of admiration expressed by J.B. Whitty Esq., pertaining to the recognition of poet Robert Burns in Scotland by the erection of a monument to him and an annual celebration.

[They] differ as widely in politics as my countrymen, but still they do justice to each other; every man of them considers himself honored in the fame of their literati. Alas! The case is very different in Ireland: they have erected no monument to their Carolan or their Goldsmith - their Grattan or their Curran (Ibid.).¹³

According to Nuala Johnson, it was noted in 1856 that there was no public statue of an Irishman in the Irish capital (Johnson, 2004: 194). One of the first 'statues of celebrated Irishmen to appear in Dublin' and indeed the first sculptured Irish musician, is the statue of Thomas Moore, erected in 1857 in College Street, outside Trinity College

¹¹ Remarkably on O'Neill's first visit to Ireland in forty years (in 1906) he raised monuments to his maternal grandparents and parents in County Cork (Carolan, 1997: 66).

¹² These three funerals took place at Glasnevin cemetery: Daniel O'Connell (1847), Terence Bellew McManus (1861) and Charles Stewart Parnell (1891).

¹³ Completed in 1823, the Burns Monument in Alloway, South Ayrshire was the first monument built to honour Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns.

Dublin, five years after Moore's death (Hill, 1998: 97). Two other 'respectable figures pedestalsed outside their alma mater Trinity College' were Oliver Goldsmith (1864) and Edmund Burke (1868), 'protestant men of letters [who] were comparatively uncontroversial and could comfortably coexist with the more imperial statues gracing the city' (Johnson, 2004: 194).¹⁴ Following Moore, the next musician to appear (in marble) is Sir Robert Prescott Stewart, chorister, composer, conductor and organist. His statue, entitled a 'National Memorial' was placed on Leinster Lawn in 1898.¹⁵ These first two statues of musicians (Moore and Prescott Stewart) fulfil the two conditions for public sculpture that Hill asserts 'always remain the same [...] the fact that the sculpture is commissioned and placed by a small powerful group (the politics of public space) and the audience's understanding to consider (the projected meaning of the sculpture)'. However, despite the popularity of Moore and in particular his *Irish Melodies* 'across the country's social spectrum', it is the musical identity of middle-class urban-Dublin that is celebrated (McHale, 2009: 401).¹⁶ Moore's statue institutionalises the particular nostalgia he crafted in his texts and performances but his particular class associations underscore this salutation in statuary, a recognition continued by the high-profile celebrations that marked the centenary of his birth some twenty years later, in 1879.¹⁷

The monumentalisation of Irish traditional music

This point at which commemoration moves beyond politics and engages with a wider spectrum of Irish cultural life and its heritage is significant. Edited collections by Bort

¹⁴ Johnson (2004) refers to these three as literary (rather than Hill's 'cultural') figures and without doubt Thomas Moore was celebrated on both these counts. A bas-relief to the blind harper and composer Carolan (1670-1738) was mounted in the north aisle of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin in 1824. This is precluded from Hill's assertion, presumably because it is neither a statue or located in a 'public' space.

¹⁵ Sculpted by Thomas Farrell and unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant, Viceroy Cadogan. Stewart (1825-1894), is portrayed wearing the gown and hood of a Doctor of Music 'in a rather pompous image' (Murphy, 2010: 167). Details of the unveiling, the memorial committee and the rationale for the title 'National Memorial' are in the 'Sir Robert Stewart Memorial', *Irish Times*, 16 March 1898: 5.

¹⁶ Christopher Moore's statue (of Thomas Moore) was met by 'general disapproval and derision' (Hill, 1998: 98) and was also the subject of much ridicule: Patrick Kavanagh's 'A Wreath for Tom Moore's Statue' lambasts the hypocrisy of middle-class urban Dublin (Kavanagh 1964: 85). James Joyce's treatment of Moore has Stephen Dedalus reflect on the statue thus 'it was a Firbolg in the borrowed cloak of a Milesian' (Joyce, 1992: 194 cited in Mathews 2009).

¹⁷ The underlying subtext of the centenary event was to securely reaffirm the status of Moore as national bard. Performances of Moore's *Irish Melodies* at concerts and at a grand ball formed a major part of the celebrations, which were primarily musical rather than literary. For further discussion see McHale (2009).

(2004) and McCarthy (2005) provide commentary on this more recent phenomenon. However, poetry and drama comprise the ‘culture’ addressed in Bort’s *Commemorating Ireland: History, Politics, Culture* and musical references are similarly absent from the cultural and social approach in *Ireland: Identities and cultural traditions* employed by Lane (2009).¹⁸ In essence, there is scant cultural debate on the rationale behind the musical monumentalising of public space, a lacuna which the following section will attempt to address.

Daithí Kearney’s doctoral thesis logs and geographically maps many monuments and statuary specific to the commemoration of Irish traditional musicians, and in doing so opens up a fresh, geography-centred perspective on the tradition (Kearney, 2009). His work specifically addresses the role of monuments to Irish musicians in the creation of musical regions, disclosing the research potential that lies in addressing the initiation, growth and interpretation of these memorials within the fields of local and national commemoration. Kearney’s research does not refer to the memorial stone raised to Willie Clancy in 1974 by the School’s committee, which in fact as this thesis demonstrates is the first public monument to a named Irish traditional musician in the twentieth century (see photograph, Appendix 6).¹⁹ This has considerable significance because while SSWC is recognised as the first summer school of Irish traditional music and the blueprint on which all other summer schools have been modelled, it is not widely credited with establishing the first monument to an Irish traditional musician. Thereby the School, the monument and the incorporation of the monument into an annual celebration have shaped a devotion to Willie Clancy, introducing what Nigel Hamilton calls ‘the commemorative instinct’ to the field of Irish traditional music (Hamilton, 2007: 9).

The graveside location of the monument to Willie Clancy somewhat complicates this scenario, in that whilst certainly not a private space neither is the graveyard a civic

¹⁸ Concurring with Harry White’s argument that music is not considered a part of the dominant cultural discourse of Ireland, as argued in *The Keeper’s Recital* (White, 1998).

¹⁹ While earlier monuments exist their criteria for erection complicates the scenario of a ‘monument to an Irish traditional musician’. For example a monument entitled *the Stone Fiddle* was erected in 1770, at Castle Caldwell, Fermanagh to commemorate the death of Denis McCabe. McCabe was employed as a fiddler by Sir James Caldwell, Baronet and Count of Milan. However, the monument was raised on account of his tragic death (by drowning) by his employer rather than due to his status as a fiddle player (Tunney, 1979).

space which would experience the casual movement of people enjoyed by, for example, a town square.²⁰ However, this is somewhat ameliorated (if not further confused) by the concept that the entire civic space of Miltown Malbay during the week of the School is in fact a microcosm of commemoration, and not exclusively commemorating Willie Clancy.²¹ Likewise, Willie Clancy is not the first piper (nor indeed traditional musician) to be memorialised at his graveside. A memorial stone to uilleann piper Jack Wade (1914-67) was placed in 1968 at the Sacred Heart graveyard, Clones, Co Monaghan. The description of this unveiling in the local media and *Treoir*, which detail the fund-raising activity of the local Comhaltas-led committee is suggestive of a ‘public’ monument.²² However, it is in fact a headstone, sitting at the head of the grave, and as such is not a separate monument. In the case of Willie Clancy, the monument, whilst adjacent to the grave, is clearly separate and additional to the grave’s headstone and a focal point of the graveside ceremony from 1974 onwards.²³ In light of the impulse to memorialise Wade as early as 1968 and the number of similarities between Wade and Clancy, further investigation of their lives and subsequent memorialisations is productive. Subtle differences between the two give further insight into the unique way in which Willie Clancy bridges the gap between the vernacular and the hero. Clearly in terms of musicianship, the comparison is broad. Clancy is regarded as one of Ireland’s finest uilleann pipers a status that shows no sign of abating. The national acknowledgement of his death and coverage of his funeral is testament to this. However, for both Wade and Clancy the cultural milieu of Irish music and piping in particular played a central role in their lives. This is demonstrated through their involvement with Comhaltas, with céilí bands, as members (though not at the same

²⁰ This research documents only monuments in public spaces that are accessible to all, so this precludes monuments in buildings or churches. Locating the memorial at the graveside was a ‘logical option’ in terms of space and incorporation into an ‘annual gathering’ (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

²¹ Absent from any formal schedule, and therefore off the radar for the majority of the Willie Clancy Week’s 10,000 attendees, are the informal graveside visits to Bobby Casey and Junior Crehan, local fiddle players with early teaching connections to the School (Angela Casey interview, SSWC 2011). Through an ad hoc, word of mouth, arrangement (and highly dependent on the weather) friends and relatives gather at the graveside of these local heroes in an ‘mpromptu fashion to pay tribute in words and music. The fundamental, yet alternative status of these micro-commemorations which frequently involve awkward clambering and wet feet embodies the importance of the knowledge emanating from these graves. This contrasts with the official cradle of commemoration: the opening Memorial Lecture to Breandán Breathnach and the Tuesday afternoon ‘tribute to’ concert celebrating the life of a chosen musician.

²² The memorial stone was sculpted by Edward Delaney and bears an inscription in Irish and a carved picture of a piper.

²³ For this reason, this research continues to posit the Willie Clancy monument as the first monument to an Irish traditional musician.

time) of the Leo Rowsome quartet (regular broadcasters on national radio) and as recording artists.²⁴ They also shared and articulated an interest in musicians and instruments of generations past, demonstrated by active engagement with collecting from older musicians and indeed the claim by Wade to own one of the oldest set of pipes in Ireland, a Coyne set from the early nineteenth century.²⁵ Both were multi-instrumentalists and both died, tragically, when they were only in their fifties.²⁶

Wade's memorial stone was unveiled in 1968, the year after his death by (then) President of Comhaltas, Labhrás Ó Murchú, after Sunday mass at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Clones. Wade had in fact been instrumental in securing the Fleadh Cheoil, a major event, for his adopted home town. A revivalist, Wade was actively involved in Comhaltas; chair of his local branch and serving as an officer on boards at county and provincial level. As a collector he is acknowledged by Breathnach for his collection of tunes from Louth piper Tom Mathews, some of which appear in *Ceol Rince na hÉireann IV* (Breathnach, 1978, Breathnach and Small, 1996). He advertised and taught music classes in Clones and was in demand as an adjudicator nationally and in England.²⁷ The timely coincidence of his graveside commemoration during the Fleadh garnered coverage in the local press and in the Comhaltas magazine *Treoir*, but neither his death, nor this commemoration ceremony received coverage in the national press.²⁸ Further interpretations of this memorial are diminished by a lack of national or contemporary references causing it to effectively vanish from public view.

In direct contrast, the incorporation of Willie Clancy's monument into an annual commemorative ritual creates a 'social praxis of iterative remembering that sustains its on-going significance' (Fitzgerald, 2009: 86). Taking place at the start of the week-long

²⁴ Jack played with St Tiernach's Céilí Band during the 1950s and formed the Jack Wade Céilí Band in approximately 1959 (*Anglo-Celt*). Willie Clancy played briefly with the Tulla Céilí band in the late 1940s and then with the local Laicthín Naofa Céilí Band when he returned from England in 1957. Jack Wade can be heard on *Ceili music from Ireland* 'Jack Wade Ceili Band' Copley LP 33rpm (ITMA).

²⁵ As reported in the *Irish Times* article 'Musical Reasons for 'his Smiles' *Irish Times* 4 April 1953.

²⁶ Jack Wade was killed in a car crash in 1967.

²⁷ A report in the *Anglo-Celt*. 1 June 1963 states 'busy couple, musical adjudicators Mr Jack Wade and his wife Marie adjudicated at Feis Beal [sic] Feirste on Saturday and next weekend they travel to Mullingar to adjudicate at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil. On June 29th they go to Coventry, England to adjudicate at the Coventry Fleadh Ceoil [sic]'. A year later *Fonn* reports that Jack Wade and his wife adjudicated at the first fleadh in Manchester, the 'Manchester Fleadh Cheoil and Festival of Irish Dancing' held on the 3-4 October 1964 *Fonn* (1964).

²⁸ There were reports of his death and the unveiling ceremony in the local press the *Anglo-Celt* 7 June 1968 and in *Treoir*.

summer school in his honour, it effectively launches this annual celebration. Bearing in mind the similarities outlined between Clancy and Wade, the absence of an impulse to memorialise Jack Wade through an event such as a summer school in Clones is chronologically problematic (as detailed in Chapter 2) but also speaks to the more subtle conditions prerequisite in the mobilisation of an Irish traditional music hero which Clancy substantially fulfils. Both men were ‘revivalists’ yet their engagement with the revival of Irish traditional music demonstrates the broader spectrum of revivalist sensibilities in existence at that time. Clancy’s musical virtuosity was the outcome of a life-long investment and exploration of the tradition. His disposition of longing and nostalgia for the music of past generations experienced and amplified by this investment, underscores much of his life (as explored in greater detail in Chapter 1). Whilst testaments abound to his unfailing generosity in sharing what he had learned, and indeed the path to Miltown was well trodden by learners on account of this generosity, this is accompanied by a personal mission to reclaim the virtuosity of the past.

John Hutchinson and others writing on cultural revivals allude to the skill set which obtains to public sector professionals, which they then put to use outside of the work place in revivalist pursuits (Hutchinson, 1987). Wade’s position as a public sector worker (with the Revenue Commissioners) places him in a position comparable to that of Seán Reid.²⁹ The security of Wade’s employment mitigated the need for him to emigrate, which in hindsight might be conceptualised as a musical disadvantage given the strength and vitality of the music scene encountered by Clancy in London during the 1950s (as detailed in Hall, 1995). It also furnished him with the capacity to purchase a car, providing a mobility that enabled him to fulfil country-wide duties under the auspices of Comhaltas; attend committee meetings, engage in adjudication at Fleadhanna and Feis Ceoil and fulfil numerous engagements along with his wife Marie in the Jack Wade Céilí Band (*Anglo-Celt*, 1 Jun 1963: 4). His pedagogical positioning is proactive and adverts appear in the local press for his services as a music teacher which demonstrates a different method of engagement with revivalism to that demonstrated by Clancy. Clearly location is also a fundamental ingredient. For Wade, neither Dublin, the place of his birth, or his adopted home county of Monaghan

²⁹ Reid was an engineer with Clare Co. Council.

resonated with the musical symbolism embodied by County Clare.³⁰ His music was not generationally acquired; there were no perceived links to an earlier community of musicians, to a more ‘authentic’ source. His collection of music from older players is laced with symbols of modernity and facilitated by work motilities.³¹ This contrasts to the perception of ‘real’ connections associated with the rural status of returned émigré, Clancy, who invokes a style of revivalism indelibly linked to place, community and authenticity; connections that reimagine and rescore the centrality of the role of County Clare within Irish traditional music (explicated further in Chapter 2). Having established the basis for Willie Clancy’s memorialisation, the following section traces some of the significant patterns that appear in the monumentalisation of Irish tradition musicians.

Chronicling the monumentalisation of Irish traditional music

For the best part of history as Leerssen explains ‘the native tradition in Ireland had no control over the dedication and monumentalisation of public space (Leerssen, 2001: 210). This changes somewhat gradually in the 1970s with regard to Irish traditional music: hot on the heels of the monument to Willie Clancy is a cenotaph to Michael Coleman at Gurteen, Co. Sligo (see photograph, Appendix 6). This was raised in September of 1974 just months after the monument to Willie Clancy but thirty years after the death of Coleman (although the idea and fundraising process was underway since 1963).³² Other small-scale monuments to Irish musicians similar to those raised to

³⁰ In all three places (Dublin, Monaghan and Clare), the reality of actual music-making practices on the ground were and very often still are very different to this symbolic invocation. Proximity to the border and therefore perceived and real distance from the ‘authentic’ west might account for the lack of documentation of music-making practices in this part of the country, an anomaly that has been addressed in a series of recent publications and projects (Boullier, 2012, Fegan et al., 2009, Ní Uallacháin, 2003, <http://ourdeardarkmountain.com/> accessed 10 February 2014).

³¹ A theoretical construct developed by Vincent Kaufmann and utilised by Urry. It considers the capacity for spatial and socio-cultural mobility (Kaufmann et al., 2004, Kaufmann, 2002, Urry, 2007).

³² Planning for the memorial to Coleman began in 1963. The first edition of *Fonn*, June 1963, announced that Mr Paddy Maguire of Ballymote, Co. Sligo was receiving subscriptions for the memorial. The Newry Branch (producers of *Fonn*) donated £3 to the memorial. The second edition of *Fonn* details that ‘the exact nature of the memorial will not be finalised until the financial resources available to the Committee will be known, opinion at the moment appears to favour the idea of a bust on a stone plinth adjacent to the farmhouse in which Coleman was born. Here on a dais erected nearby, it is hoped to hold an annual Fiddlers’ Festival, similar to the historic Harpers’ Festivals of Granard and Belfast at the close of the eighteenth century, to which the cream of traditional fiddlers from the home country and from overseas will be invited to compete for the Fiddlers’ Laureate and cash prizes totalling at least £100’. In *The Footsteps of Coleman*, a compilation recording was released to raise money for the upkeep of the monument which was cleaned and reconstructed 2005.

Willie Clancy and Michael Coleman gradually begin to appear in the years that follow. Examples include a bronze plaque in memory of Joe Cooley in Peterswell, Co. Galway, 1975, a monument to John ‘Piper Reilly’ outside the Town Hall in Dunmore, Co. Galway, 1977 and a monument to John McKenna in Tarmon, Co. Leitrim, 1980, as local communities take the initiative to gather together, often under the auspices of Comhaltas to celebrate their musical heritage.³³

A notable feature of these monuments is their small town or rural location. This placement of monuments and statues in non-urban environments stretches the canvas of Irish identity back into rural Irish spaces. The traditional decoration of major urban centres, Dublin in particular, with statues of at first royal and then political leaders was an attempt (mirrored across Europe and North America) to construct and galvanize a sense of Irish national identity (Whelan, 2002). The trajectory of the monumentalisation of Irish traditional music, emerging in the mid-1970s, demonstrates that urban landscapes are no longer the sole ‘depository of symbolic space’ (Whelan, 2002: 509). Furthermore, it speaks clearly to the re-territorialisation of Irish music in ‘local’ rural places and a de-nationalisation of the Irish traditional music narrative (see Chapter 2). Following on from these small-scale engraved plaques and monuments, the next significant development in this monumentalising trajectory is the 1983 monument to Pádraig Ó’Keefe in Scartaglen, Co. Kerry (see photograph, Appendix 7). This one is noteworthy in that it is the first Irish traditional music monument to reproduce the likeness of a musician in three dimensions, depicting a substantial amount of Ó’Keefe’s head and shoulders and including a representation of his fiddle. It demonstrates an intricate workmanship and therefore unsurprisingly is the first monument to an Irish musician which publicly credits its sculptor, in this case Mike Kenny of Castleisland, Co. Kerry.³⁴ Whilst a life-size statue of a traditional musician doesn’t materialise until sixteen years later, Ó’Keefe’s monument demonstrates a first step in that direction. Ó’Keefe presents a particularly interesting case; representing a clear example of a

³³ Joe Cooley’s plaque was placed on the parish hall at Peterswell. The hall was later demolished to make way for a new community centre, named in honour of Joe Cooley and opened in 1985, to coincide with the first year of the Joe Cooley Festival. The plaque was subsequently reinstated on the new centre. The memorial stone to Piper Reilly is neglected, stained and difficult to read and the Town Hall is now Dunmore Community Centre. The John McKenna monument was erected by the John McKenna Traditional Society (formed in 1978 and reformed in 1995).

³⁴ Mike Kenny’s contribution to Irish traditional music sculpture continues with the life-sized bronzes of Johnny O’Leary (2007) and Seán Ó Riada (2008).

musician who has undergone a process of reclamation and recovery. An exceptional musician and pedagogue, and at one stage a school principal, he was perceived to have forsaken his work responsibilities in the pursuit of Irish traditional music. According to Pat Feely in ‘artistic circles his way of life would have been described as bohemian but, in the uplands of East Kerry, it was considered different and set him that little bit apart’ (Feeley, 2002: 57). He fits perfectly, then, with the model of ambiguity in terms of socio-economic status and respectability described by McCarthy and a certain type of cultural capital is conferred on O’Keeffe on account of his outsider status and rejection of conventional ways of life (1999: 184).³⁵ Writing in the 1960s, Alan Merriam portrays the dilemma faced by many folk musicians such as O’Keeffe and indeed Willie Clancy; that of high prestige and low status (Merriam, 1964: 137).³⁶ Were O’Keeffe alive today, his virtuosity like that of other artists would be deserving of state arts funding. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, he was socially marginalised for forsaking a ‘professional’ life and career for that of a musician. Three discrete monuments in various Kerry locations have been raised to O’Keeffe demonstrating the role of monumentalisation in the recovery of local history and the reclamation of an Irish traditional music narrative within that history.³⁷

The first three statues

A time-lag of nearly 150 years exists between the first sculptural expression of Irish musicianship (the arrival of Thomas Moore on College Street in 1857) and the appearance of a life-size sculpture of an Irish traditional musician: the statue to piper and composer Edward Keating Hyland (1780-1845) erected in 1999 in the square in Cahir, Co. Tipperary (see Appendix 7).³⁸ In fact in something of a watershed moment

³⁵ A similar observation can be made by drawing comparison between Joe Heaney and Seán ‘ac Dhonncha. Both were great singers, but while ‘ac Dhonncha maintained his job as a teacher, Heaney did not subsume to a modern office or public job ensuring that his cultural capital in this respect was higher. Sean Williams and Lillis Ó Laoire discuss this idea in relation to Heaney when they compare him to Lead Belly (Williams and Ó Laoire, 2011: 208).

³⁶ Séamus Mac Mathúna notes that music and musicians were held in greater esteem in London (in the 1950s) than in most Irish towns (Mac Mathúna, 1975).

³⁷ The first as described above was erected in 1983 in Scartaglen. The second, raised in 1993, is a limestone slab portraying a tune in O’Keeffe’s distinctive and unique transcription style. It is located at Glountane crossroads (between Castleisland and Ballydesmond) beside his home place. The third is a limestone commemorative piece displaying a variety of indigenous instruments raised during National Heritage Week, 2002, in the centre of Castleisland and attributed to J. O’Reilly.

³⁸ Hyland was sculpted by Mona Croom-Carroll. There are two anomalies to this asserted time-lag: a three-quarter size carved limestone representation of Antoine Rafterir, holding a fiddle, was unveiled

for the tradition, a total of three intricately carved, figurative statues of Irish traditional musicians appear on the cusp at the turn of the new millennium. Edward Keating Hyland is followed by Francis O’Neill (1848-1936) near Bantry, West Cork, in 2000 and Séamus Ennis (1919-1982) in the Naul, Co. Dublin, in 2001 (see photographs, Appendix 8).³⁹ These three statues represent the first life-size statuary of Irish traditional musicians and each is depicted practising their craft.

The selection of these particular musicians as suitable icons at the turn of the millennium is remarkable at numerous levels and in particular it conforms to Hill’s explanation of why monuments are valuable: ‘they tell of shared ideals [and] they point to those with power’ (Hill, 1998: 11). Sculpture as an art form is expensive due to the cost of materials and the time-consuming intricacy of the labour involved. This is clearly demonstrated during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, where sculpted media reflects the wishes of those in a position to commission and pay for it. Ireland’s ‘Celtic Tiger’ surely facilitated this aspect of these first three commissions of traditional musicians of the twenty-first century.⁴⁰ However, these three statues are also reflective of other factors relating to cultural identity and an increased recognition of Irish traditional music. A link that uniquely binds the three under discussion is uilleann piping (as players and/or collectors). This has added significance due to the particular Irish sonic aesthetic associated with the uilleann pipes and their representation of an unbroken line of tradition (see Chapter 1 for further explication). None of these figures however, are recognised just as musicians, each had other culturally visible and successful extra-musical outputs. It is perhaps equally on account of these other outputs that the impulse to monumentalise delivers at the level of both an intra and an extra-community of Irish traditional musicians as a brief biographical excavation of each man reveals.

in Craughwell, Co. Galway in 1980, sculpted by Domhnall Ó Murchadha. Although a musician, Raifteiri’s primary legacy is that of writer and poet and is therefore discounted in this instance.

Secondly, a bronze life-size statue of Turlough Carolan was unveiled in Mohill, Co. Leitrim in 1986.
³⁹ Francis O’Neill was sculpted by Jeanne Rynhart and Séamus Ennis by Vincent Browne.

⁴⁰ Hyland was funded by a South Tipperary Co. Council capital works scheme, O’Neill was funded entirely by subscription and Ennis was funded as part of the *Séamus Ennis Cultural Centre* by a grant from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.

The contribution of Francis O'Neill and Séamus Ennis to the collection performance and promotion of Irish traditional music is well documented.⁴¹ Hyland is a less familiar figure and his recuperation with a significant time-lag from the nineteenth century makes for a particularly interesting case. He was renowned as both a piper and composer, most notably for his composition of 'The Foxchase'.⁴² He sports royal connections; according to Henry Grattan Flood, King George IV was so impressed by Hyland's playing when he visited Dublin in 1821, that he ordered a new set of pipes for him at a cost of fifty guineas (Grattan Flood, 1905). However, key to his commemoration is his role in the oral history of the town of Cahir. Hyland is reputed to have solved an argument about the site of a spring well in the town when he returned to Cahir for his mother's funeral after a twenty year absence. When asked the blind Hyland marked the correct location of the well with his stick, so when south Tipperary County Council were required to undertake renovations to the water works in Cahir, the Hyland project was deemed appropriate.⁴³ According to Johnson 'the space monuments occupy is not just an incidental material backdrop but in fact inscribes the statues with meaning' (Johnson, 2004: 185). The recuperation of Hyland as a piper, is predicated on something much more fundamental to the town of Cahir - the source of its water supply. The first statue of an Irish traditional musician therefore is an uileann-piping Hyland holding a central position in the square in Cahir.

The 150 year time-lag noted between the raising of the statues to Moore (in 1857) and Hyland (1999) is in fact bridged by one other musical statue which lies beyond the parameters for inclusion in this research, but is nonetheless worthy of mention. A statue of Turlough Carolan was raised in Mohill, Co Leitrim in 1986, predating Hyland and indicative of the fact that Carolan's music is not deemed to be 'peasant' or 'folk' music on account of both the class associations of the harp, and Carolan's demonstrated ability to bridge the socio-economic divide of his time (and since) through composition and performance practice.⁴⁴ Indeed Carolan successfully bridges the sonic gap between

⁴¹ On O'Neill see for example Carolan (1997), Skerrett and Lesch (2008), Sommers Smith (2010). For Ennis see Bourke (1986), uí Ógáin and Ennis (2007), Mac Mahon (2010).

⁴² A report on the unveiling which states he composed this tune is carried in *An Píobaire*, 2000, 4, 4: 5.

⁴³ The statue was commissioned as part of the 'per cent for art' scheme in which a percentage of any local authority capital grant can be utilised for artistic purposes.

⁴⁴ A total of three public monuments have been raised to Carolan: The Oisín Kelly bronze at Mohill, Co. Leitrim, 1986. A statue at Nobber, Co. Meath sculpted by Ann Meldon Hugh unveiled in 2003. A monument unveiled in 1993 in Keadue, Roscommon, by Fred Conlon. Carolan is also commemorated

art and traditional music and the monumental gap (through this musical troika of Moore-Carolan-Hyland) straddling the trajectory of Irish traditional music recuperation by generating prestige, which previously attached only to a figure like Moore. Whereas in 1857 both Carolan and Hyland remained outside the realm of monumentalisation enjoyed by Moore, twentieth-century revivalism and rapid social and political change in Ireland from the 1960s and Sean Lemass onwards, clearly broadens the socio-economic reception of Irish traditional music. Joe Cleary makes the point that ‘the most [...] consistently innovative figures of the contemporary Irish cultural scene [...] are] its singers and musicians’ demonstrating what Dowling refers to as ‘an important cultural shift [...] in the study of Irish identities [...] where identity [can no longer be] quickly reduced to national identity’ (Cleary, 2004c: 32, Dowling, 2004: 112). Irish traditional music therefore has not figured highly in the commemorative realm, until recently, due to the hegemony of monumental nationalism. Carolan’s 1986 statue therefore paves the way for the possibilities for remembrance that ensue.⁴⁵

Returning to Francis O’Neill, the second of the three statues that are the focus of this research (Hyland, O’Neill, Ennis), a sixty five year time-gap separates O’Neill’s death and the placing of his statue standing and playing the flute beside his home place, Tralibane near Bantry in West Cork. O’Neill left Cork as a teenager and eventually settled and spent the majority of his ‘eventful life’ in Chicago where he became superintendent of the Chicago Police Force.⁴⁶ A flute player and collector, O’Neill made a considerable contribution to the body of knowledge on Irish traditional music.⁴⁷ Whilst his name is synonymous with tune collections and biographical details of pipers, for many years his notoriety beyond the Irish traditional music fraternity was minimal. However, in recent decades ‘the accounts of his contributions to Irish traditional music have reached hagiographic proportions’ (Bohlman, 2012: 198). A recent biographical account of his life by Nicholas Carolan and his edited diaries have raised his profile considerably, generating a pride now redolent in his local community in West Cork

by a variety of festivals, a branch of Comhaltas, commemorative stamps and he was depicted on the old Irish £50 bank note (Series B issued between 1976 and 1982).

⁴⁵ Moore was a unifying if ambivalent figure who eschewed blatant sectarian politics. His lyrics ostensibly disavow violence, although they contain more subliminal intimations of subversive rebellion (Mathews, 2009, McHale, 2008). The return to control by the nationalist faction in the twentieth century and this subsequent change in hegemony facilitates representations of nationalist culture such as the commemoration of traditional music.

⁴⁶ He became Chief of Police in Chicago in 1901.

⁴⁷ The importance of O’Neill’s work is documented in Carolan (1997).

(Carolan, 1997, Skerrett and Lesch, 2008). Whilst that pride may have existed contemporaneously with O'Neill's work, it did not manifest itself in any tangible way until 2000 with the erection of a statue representing and repatriating this pride within a local frame. Tralibane is not considered a strong-hold of Irish traditional music and connections to the tradition as an every-day lived experience are minimal.⁴⁸ However, the agency of raising a monument has empowered locals to renegotiate interpretations of the past and resituate them accordingly. More than eighty years after his death, a local commemorative committee are highly proactive having initially commissioned a plaque (prior to the statue), a commemorative wall (with engravings from Ireland, the UK and America) and a commemorative website. A permanent concrete base for a dance platform facilitates ceremonial events at the site; transforming place into 'practiced space' through the activity of monument-building (Fitzgerald 2009: 86).⁴⁹

The third statue of an Irish traditional musician is that of Séamus Ennis unveiled in 2001, seated and playing the pipes outside the newly built *Séamus Ennis Cultural Centre* in the Naul, Co. Dublin.⁵⁰ With an impalpable 'aura of authority' Ennis represents a towering cultural figure in the fields of both Irish traditional music and folklore and his contribution to SSWC is acknowledged throughout this thesis (Mac Mahon, 2010). Possessing a phenomenal piping pedigree, musicality and musical knowledge facilitated his work as a collector and subsequent broadcaster with both RTÉ and the BBC making him a household name and thereby pre-empting the shortest time-frame between death and commemoration. For the first three statues dedicated to Irish traditional music international reputations, status and publicly recognised extra-musical achievements figure highly in the biographies of the musicians they celebrate, accelerating their rise to the top of the pedestal. The immediacy of the erection of Moore's statue after his death demonstrates his alignment with the ideals of Irish national identity available to those with the economic wherewithal to fund a statue at

⁴⁸ During his lifetime, Micheál Ó Riabhaigh highlighted the legacy and provenance of Francis O'Neill by organising an annual event at Tralibane (Máire Ní Ghráda, personal communication, 13 June 2011). Every year since 2000, the local committee organises a mid-summer open air platform dance and an Annual Pattern Day in September at the site of the monument.

⁴⁹ Sally Sommers Smith suggests a lack of recognition for O'Neill, particular the centenaries of his seminal early twentieth-century publications of 1903 and 1907. This viewpoint overlooks the commemorative impulse behind the monumentalisation of O'Neill, demonstrating the still nascent role of commemorative activities that widen the constituency base beyond performance or published text-based activities within the tradition (Sommers Smith, 2010).

⁵⁰ A plaque placed in 1989 (just seven years after his death) preceded this statue.

that time in the nineteenth century. By 1999, the appropriation of public space with prominent statues to Irish traditional musicians demonstrate a rise in the status of these musicians both within and without the tradition. However, they continue to fulfil the historical conditions for statue building in that they are atypical of the community of musicians from which each emerged. Yet extra-musical qualities broaden their constituencies of reception, inviting new audiences to engage with the role of Irish traditional music as a part of Irish national identity in the twenty-first century. In post-millennium Ireland, as the representation of Irish traditional music through the monumentalising of musicians gathers apace, a space for musicians who do not carry the extra-musical status of Hyland, O'Neill or Ennis, but rather are feted mostly within their own communities of practice is enabled, signalling a shift towards both the celebration and recognition of 'the ordinary'.⁵¹

In 2007, a bronze sculpture of Johnny O'Leary was unveiled in the centre of Killarney, depicting O'Leary seated and playing the accordion, wearing a simple jumper and trousers, representing all that is ordinary about music. An egalitarian impulse that deliberately eschews elitism, his casual mode of dress points to how the musician is not set apart from his community, but rather is fully integrated into it.⁵² Yet the prominent placing of this monument in the town of Killarney confirms to a community of practice, and enlightens a much broader constituency, that his music was in fact extraordinary. This parallels the upsurge of interest in collective memory noted by Johnson (writing in relation to the experiences of two world wars), as an iconographical movement away from 'the commemoration of generals or rulers to the acknowledgement of the role of ordinary soldiers' (Johnson, 2004: 190). The first three statues to Hyland, Ennis and O'Neill, and indeed later statues to Canon James Goodman (2006) and Seán Ó Riada (2008), reflect the desire to equate Irish traditional music with attainment, by honouring the successful and mobile and 'othering' the community of practice of 'ordinary' musicians - Hirsch's present day 'peasants' (Hirsch 1991). The statue to Johnny O'Leary represents a break with this 'othering' and the acceptance of a community of Irish traditional music and musicians as an integral part of Irish national identity. In the

⁵¹ An anachronistic example of this, outside the realm of Irish traditional music is the statue to Pádraic Ó Conaire (1935) in Galway. Sculptor Albert Power in a clear rebuttal of the classical style of city statues deliberately portrays Ó Conaire as he frequently was, casually dressed, one foot carelessly placed over the other.

⁵² It perhaps also simply represents the casualisation of dress that has come to prevail in most areas of Irish life now as a result of modernity.

new millennium, the territorialisation of culture through statues and monuments is so well developed in some counties that the placing of O’Leary (from Gneeveguilla) in the town of Killarney is regarded as anachorism to his neighbours in Gneeveguilla (Cresswell, 2004:103).⁵³ Yet the greater visibility and accessibility presented by Killarney represents a fundamental part of the process of reclamation (in this case a county-based musical identity) in which monumentalisation is ensconced. Coeval with an upsurge in collective memory, the informality of the O’Leary monument renders it accessible and relevant to all, a quality which is absent from the Hyland representation and certainly the figure of Moore. Lowenthal argues that heritage is not about ‘grand monuments, unique treasure and great heroes’ but rather ‘the typical and the vernacular’ (1995). Hyland functions in iconography; his presence solicits public acknowledgement for the historic status and importance of piping, rather than attempting to evoke a contemporary collective moment of music. As the first statue to an Irish traditional musician, Hyland serves as a lynchpin for the future emergence and articulation of a new pride in Irish traditional music.

Since the millennium, the monumentalising of Irish traditional musicians has gathered momentum demonstrating the power of local communities and what they believe to be important with revealing geographical and social inferences to be drawn from their placements.⁵⁴ What is heralded through this steady and subtle process is the beginning of the celebration of the ordinary rather than extraordinary.

Extramonomental commemoration

Monumentalising is but one commemorative practice through which Irish traditional music is remembered and the Irish music tradition resonated with myriad commemorative tools prior to its debut on the plinths and bases of Ireland’s cultural landscape. Likewise, current performance practices of Irish music are replete with intrinsic modes of commemoration and surrogation and such modalities continue to inform and enrich the very thing that is labelled Irish traditional music (as discussed in

⁵³ Personal communication with the shop-keeper in Gneeveguilla (3 November 2011). Cresswell defines anachorism as ‘out of place or in the wrong place’ (as opposed to in the wrong time: anachronism). He attributes the invention of the term anachorism to Michael Brown (Cresswell 2004: xiii)

⁵⁴ Research undertaken by this author has found seventy nine monuments dedicated to named Irish traditional musicians (in Ireland).

Chapter 1). However, much of this commemorative activity, whilst occurring within the public sphere, is largely contained within the community of practice of Irish traditional musicians. Appositely, the creation of monuments brings Irish traditional music into a wider public sphere. Engraved stones and plaques solidify the intangibility of performed utterances, placing them as permanent, visible and therefore less ephemeral records. In the following section the inherent realm of remembering and commemoration as differentiated from the process of monumentalisation is discussed.

Commemoration is an inherent aspect of learning, performing, collecting and recording Irish traditional music and occurs at both conscious and subconscious levels. Tunes, the building blocks of Irish traditional music, embody commemoration in a variety of ways manifesting themselves in performance, in transcription methods and in nomenclature. Tune names invoke and commemorate people and places, and likewise tune versions are associated with individual players. Transcription is an act of commemoration and indeed transcription from performance practice, as instigated at the BHF creates a surrogate for the sonic presence of a tune in the same way that amongst their many functions, monuments fulfil a process of surrogation for performance practices and musicians that no longer exist.

By transcribing the tunes of the harpers at Belfast, Bunting effectively memorialised both musician and tune as they were performed.⁵⁵ Publication of collected transcriptions enacts a process of memorialisation, and in turn inspires other collectors to engage with this process.⁵⁶ The conceptual shift from the antiquarian pursuits of the organisers of the BHF, to the 'real-time' collection for active dissemination and practise is realised in the publication of *O'Neill's Music of Ireland* in 1903.⁵⁷ However, it is the musician and collector Breandán Breathnach, who privileges individual players by noting their exact tune versions, commemorating their contribution to the tradition

⁵⁵ This is somewhat complicated by the editing undertaken by Bunting working as he was within a Western art music literate tradition and according to Colette Moloney his published melodies 'lacked authenticity in relation to their original repertoire' (Moloney, 2000: 55). The BHF is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

⁵⁶ Bunting published *The Ancient Music of Ireland* in three volumes (1796, 1809 and 1840). The Petrie Collection of the *Ancient Music of Ireland* was published in two volumes in 1855 and 1882 (the most recent re-edition in 2002 by David Cooper).

⁵⁷ O'Neill's 1903 hardback publication was followed in 1907 by the cheaper and widely used *The Dance Music of Ireland* (O'Neill, 1907).

in doing so.⁵⁸ Refracting the lens further, the styles and tune settings of individual players are exalted through close transcription and detailed contextualised description presented in works such as that of Pat Mitchell and Jackie Small on piper Patsy Touhey (Mitchell and Small, 1986) and Matt Cranitch on Pádraig O’Keeffe (Cranitch, 2006). These pre-empt even more detailed biographies of musicians, for example there are no less than three publications concerning Francis O’Neill (Carolan, 1997, Mac Aoidh, 2006, Skerrett and Lesch, 2008).⁵⁹

Other commemorative modes include festivals, concerts, lectures and recordings. Indeed the naming of an event after a particular musician is a common-place and powerful mode of remembrance. One of the first visibly public commemorations of Irish music was the centenary anniversary of the BHF in 1903 (which for various reasons took place slightly more than 100 years after the original event of 1792).⁶⁰ This centenary celebration placed an emphasis on spectacle as opposed to musical performance, exhibiting various static displays of harps and Bunting’s music collections (Magee, 1992).⁶¹ Such an exhibitory style was more reminiscent of the Great Exhibitions of the second half of the nineteenth century rather than any current understanding of an Irish music festival. However, performances did take place and Galway piper Martin Reilly is cited as being ‘the hero of the occasion’ with his renditions of ‘The Fox Chase’ and ‘The Battle of Aughrim’ and through his provision of music for dancers (O’Neill, 1987 [1913]: 240).

The nomenclature of Irish music festivalisation embodies a wealth of commemorative potency: the *Willie Clancy* Summer School and *Joe Mooney* Summer School are just two examples. Lecture series such as the *Ó Riada Memorial Lecture* at UCC and the

⁵⁸ Comparisons can be drawn with a similar movement in the collection of folk song, when individual performances were understood to be as important as the song itself, see for example Freeman (2011). A significant body of Breathnach’s collections are published in 5 volumes of *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* between 1963 and 1999 (the last two posthumously).

⁵⁹ Even Caoimhín Mac Aoidh’s biography of James O’Neill is concerned extensively with Francis O’Neill (Mac Aoidh, 2006).

⁶⁰ The Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge (the founders of the Linen Hall library) considered a centenary celebration in 1892. This was delayed as the Society set about finding new accommodation (the present City Hall was to be built on the site of the old White Linen Hall, where the library had been located since 1802) To mark the transfer to the new premises (the building it still occupies today) the Harp Festival was organised in the second week of May 1903.

⁶¹ Performances of music were, however, part of the occasion and drew substantial numbers to the event (Magee, 1992).

Martin Reilly Lecture hosted by NUI Galway represent other examples.⁶² In the realm of competition examples include the coveted *Corn Uí Riada* song competition at the Oireachtas and the perpetual trophies donated in memory of past musicians at Fleadhanna Ceoil. Branches of Comhaltas are named after musicians such as *Craobh Coleman* and *Fred Finn Comhaltas* in Sligo.⁶³ A visual and potentially transient commemoration of musicians is marked in Belfast by two murals: one to legendary fiddle player Sean Maguire and the other depicting Joseph Haverty's *The blind piper*.⁶⁴

Another major area of commemoration is tied into the legacy of recording music. This encompasses a range of acts from self-commemoration with the release by any musician of their own music as a commodified product, but more frequently commemorates the specific influence of an earlier generation. At a macro-level this is demonstrated by the 1986 Frankie Gavin and Paul Brock recording *Ómós do Joe Cooley*, and at a micro-level, recognition is often given to influential musicians in accompanying sleeve notes.⁶⁵ Institutions such as NPU and OAC release recordings representative of their work and values.⁶⁶ Posthumous retrievals are facilitated by the re-mastered 78rpm recordings and field recordings of collectors providing the commemorative grist for compilations such as Gael Linn's collection *Seoltaí Séidte* and anthologies such as *Past Masters of Irish Dance Music* compiled by Reg Hall.⁶⁷ Radio and television provide a significant medium for presenting both live and recorded music from the early radio broadcasts of RTÉ radio programmes *Ceolta Tíre* (1955-1970) and *The Job of Journeywork* (1957-1970) through to the longstanding *Céilí House* and the rich musical programming presented by RnaG. In the realm of television programmes these would include the early RTÉ programme *Bring Down the Lamp*

⁶² The *Ó Riada Memorial Lecture* was initiated in 1985, the *Martin Reilly Lecture Series* was first held in 2012.

⁶³ The Seán Ó Riada (1931-1971) cup is the highlight of the Oireachtas competitions and is awarded for sean-nós singing.

⁶⁴ Sean Maguire *Ceol gan teorainn*, 2006, Iveagh Parade, Belfast. The mural of *The blind piper*, 1997, Flax Street, Ardoyne, North Belfast Cultural Society. For a discussion of the use of murals as symbolic objects in urban spaces and their potential impermanence see Jarmen (1998).

⁶⁵ Joe Cooley (1924-1973) from Peterswell, Co. Galway was a well-regarded and highly influential button accordion player. For further analysis of his style and legacy see Ní Chaoimh (2010: 245-252).

⁶⁶ For example *The Rolling Wave: A new generation of uilleann pipers* NPU 2012, *Rogha Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy* 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 OAC.

⁶⁷ *Seoltaí Séidte - Setting Sail*, 2004, documents musicians recorded during the period 1957-61 (Gael Linn, 2004). *Past Masters of Irish Dance Music* (Topic Records, 2000).

(1968) right through to the raft of Irish music programmes produced by TG4, *Sé Mo Laoch and Cérbh éil* providing pertinent commemorative example.⁵⁸

This is an exemplary rather than exhaustive list and what it demonstrates is how these types of commemoration are tied into social practice and therefore contrast starkly with that of physical monumentalisation. Irish traditional music performance practice, whether live or recorded, embodies an inherent aspect of temporality. For the wider population who do not engage with this performance practice as either musicians or listeners, the existence of this music remains ephemeral, if it exists for them at all. In contrast, the monumentalising of public space by Irish traditional music lends a degree of permanence not previously available and inhabits a space open to a potentially borderless constituency base.

Ephemeral and tangible commemoration

In order to raise a monument, a number of steps are required by the memorial-making process which ‘assert a depth of commitment transcending everyday preoccupation’ (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 184). On the heels of the original impulse is the entrepreneurship required to garner local support and interest, planning, tendering, funding, commissioning and final execution of the work. All of these elements ‘constitute integral aspects of the finished memorial’ and the very act of its creation ‘possesses a value apart from, and often exceeding, that of the physical monument itself’ (Fitzgerald, 2009: 86). The activities directed during the unveiling ceremony create an opportunity to introduce not just the memorial, but the meanings implicit in it. The large-scale ceremonial processions that led the way to the erection of the O’Connell monument in 1882 and the laying of the foundation stone for the Wolfe Tone monument in 1898 are cogent examples of this.⁶⁹

A further act in the monumentalising drama is the actual unveiling ceremony and subsequent (if any) memorialisation rituals. Clearly the tangible presence of a statue, stone or wall-plaque, its design, and character, monumentalises its subject by virtue of

⁶⁸ Nicholas Carolan’s *Come West Along the Road* on RTÉ since 1994 and its sister programme on TG4 *Siar an Bóthar* (since 2001) re-commemorates by retrieving some of this earlier material from the archives, making them accessible again.

⁶⁹ The Wolfe Tone monument itself was never erected due to lack of funds see Murphy (2010: 244).

its material presence. As Guy Beiner suggests, ‘monuments have a biography which extends beyond their moment of inauguration’ (Beiner, 2006: 164). These unveiling ceremonies present an opportunity for those involved to rationalise, in the present moment, the importance of this figure as its present-day significance may have different or additional meanings to the original meaning (commemoration of 1916 is an exemplary case in point). However, it is the successive re-enactments of ritual gestures at calendrically-driven moments, the ‘perennial performance of memory’ that reconfigures the initial founding impulse of the monument into a potential site of memorialisation (Morrissey, 2006: 103). The composition of civic space is altered by the introduction of a monument, and its subsequent territorial claim can be heightened during the spectacle of ritual commemoration. The incorporation of certain attitudes, tones, actions, words, all resonate and re-imprint memories and new meanings onto the monument. However, in contrast to the fixed permanence of the monument, these memories and meanings are mobile, and may alter during its subsequent manifestations of remembrance and/or neglect.

The lack of public monuments to ‘Irishmen’ in the mid-1800s, noted earlier, was followed by a proliferation of monuments in towns and villages across the country by the turn of the nineteenth century (Hill, 1998, Murphy, 2010). These civic monuments provide sites of commemoration, both at the time of their inception and at important dates thereafter. Examples of this include the wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Liam Mellows in Galway city every Easter Sunday; the annual summer visit to the Liam Lynch Memorial, County Tipperary and the annual oration at the Michael Collins memorial, Béal na mBláth, County Cork.⁷⁰

Monuments to heroes and heroic acts dominate the town squares and greens of Ireland. Irish traditional musicians are not heroes in the traditional, fighting for your country, sense of the word. However, the developing role of Irish traditional music as a

⁷⁰ Liam Mellows (1895-1922) was an Irish republican veteran of the Easter 1916 Rising. His statue in Eyre Square, Galway was erected as part of the fifty year anniversary of the Easter Rising in 1966. This statue is also used as a meeting point for other Nationalist commemorations in Galway. For example the 1981 Hunger Strike anniversary commemorations. The fifty foot ‘round tower’ memorial to Liam Lynch (1893-1823) is in the Knockmealdown mountains, where he died. It was built by Dennis Doyle and unveiled in 1935. The monument at Béal na mBláth, marks the spot where Michael Collins was shot in 1922 during the Civil War. An annual commemoration ceremony takes place each year in August.

CHAPTER 5

Performance

'to entertain the people'

Next came the Cuiteach Fuait, or third great function, consisting of the Funeral Games in honour of the dead; and it is curious to note how this ancient custom of rejoicing after a funeral is still practised in many countries [...] after the deceased is laid to rest, the attendant bands cease playing their 'Dead Marches,' and other lugubrious tunes, and immediately strike up the liveliest airs in their repertoire (Nally, 1922: 20).

Citing earlier festivals and celebrations fortifies the currency and perceived authenticity of new events. In keeping with this trend, this chapter draws again on Thomas Nally to explore the celebratory performances of SSWC. Under examination are the elements of the school constituted 'to entertain the people'. The term 'Performance' in the title of this chapter is an interpretive category that works both literally and metaphorically. It provides, literally, a label under which to explore all elements of performance that take place at SSWC. As a metaphor and in Edensor's words 'it allows us to look at the ways in which identities are enacted and reproduced, informing and (re)constructing a sense of collectivity' (Edensor, 2002: 69). The particular performance scenarios created by the School shape and explain an authentic Irish traditional music identity which is in a constant process of becoming as musicians enact and transmit the meanings that it holds for them. According to Turner;

a performance is a dialectic of 'flow' that is, spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and 'reflexivity', in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen 'in action' as they shape and explain behaviour (Turner, quoted in Schechner and Appel, 1990: 1).

This dialectic between flow and reflexivity is explored in the opportunities for performance that occur at the School.

As a discipline in its own right, performance studies came into existence during the last third of the twentieth century, contemporaneous with the beginning of SSWC and performance in all its interpretative frames informs the core activities of the School (Schechner, 2002: 26). This chapter argues that underlying the enclavic performances at the School is a paradox; an ideological conflict between the ceremonial and the modest, between the very public commemoration and performance of Irish traditional music up front and on stage, versus the intimate and self-effacing community activity that it draws upon. The success of the School lies within the creative tension produced by this unresolved paradox as it informs the concept of creative renewal, the creation of cultural authority and the process of re-traditionalisation encased within the ideology of the School. ‘The conscious encounter with tradition creates a tension between the world it once referenced and the modern world it must be made to reference’ (Rice, 1994: 15). This disjuncture parallels what Heaney describes as

the modern clash between an international style of commerce and culture and the more indigenous conservatism and traditionalism of Irish life generally [...] the demure, frugal [...] world of de Valera’s Ireland - pastoral, pure and Papist; and corresponding to the organisational, ecclesiastical, administrative Latin culture, we have the rational, international, pragmatic spirit of Sean Lemass, Dr. Ken Whitaker and the First Economic Plan (Heaney, 1990: 27).

Not only does SSWC emerge from the nexus of this clash, but it resolves the tensions through performance as Lemass’s emphasis on modernisation reveals itself in the modern processes of re-traditionalisation at SSWC reflecting Ireland’s new way of viewing itself (Higgins, 2007: 8). Referencing the past in the context of the new is a core value of the School to which many of its attendees subscribe and while it cherishes the past, and embraces links and continuity with that past; it equally embraces and reaches out to change, since clearly ‘change is not anathema to tradition [...] but rather] a fundamental component of [it]’ (Quinn, 1997: 31). This historical and archivally informed overview is supplemented by ethnographic research, in particular that undertaken during the schools of 2009 and 2010 which provide the stage on which specific performance practices are contextualised in this chapter.

Performing West Clare

As suggested in Chapter 1, the performance practices of Willie Clancy and his neighbours in conjunction with his appetite for the Irish music tradition, were readily galvanised in the construction of the performance rubric West Clare after his death. The performance of West Clare therefore was central to the early years of the School, exerting a spatial agency in the construction of authenticity or, as Connell and Gibson would suggest, the ‘fixing’ of authenticity to place (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 19).¹ Ideas of exceptionalism attributed to County Clare are compounded by the county’s significant geographical detachment. An article on Ciarán Mac Mathúna in the *Irish Times*, 1986 noted that ‘it’s like an island, bounded by the mountains, the lake, the great river, the Atlantic’ (Mercator, 1986). This gives rise to Ó hAllmhuráin’s description of ‘the near-insular county of Clare’ cut off from its neighbours to the south and east by the river Shannon, Lough Derg and the Shannon Estuary and bounded to the west entirely by the Atlantic and to the North by the Sliabh Aughty mountains (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2008: 59).² The programming of the first years of SSWC sows a field of authenticity predicated on this concept of a territorialised West Clare identity. An identity created through social interaction, symbolically homogenising the region and county as traditional, socially cohesive and distinct from other places. According to John Urry, ‘places and performances are bound up with each other [...] places are not fixed and unchanging but depend upon what gets bodily performed within them [...] thus places are economically, politically and culturally produced through the multiple mobilities of people, but also of capital, objects, signs and information’ (Urry, 2007: 269). Through the Willie Clancy Week, therefore, Miltown is economically and culturally produced. Its annual repetition contributes to the development of collective memory at the site of Miltown, reseeded in the present each year, influencing the creation of a sense of authentic continuity. This annual continuity, the construction of collective memory and the development of cultural authority interlaces the School’s narrative with discourses of authenticity which overrides any essentialised concept of

¹ In his recent publication on the music of West Clare, Barry Taylor mitigates the problem of geographically defining the region by taking his lead from how the concept of West Clare is understood and accepted by its inhabitants (Taylor, 2013).

² The artist Philip Brennan uses a similar island metaphor to describe SSWC and his return journey there: ‘the whole affair, of people, music and the landscape where it all takes place, is similar to being on an island. Once over that ridge it is like making landfall on a small island that holds precious memories (Brennan, 2006: 84).

purity attached to the idea of a West Clare style. Furthermore, as the School grows and develops, the geographical reach of stylistic representation expands laterally to privilege other local styles and vertically to integrate seamlessly the hybridity that is inherent in a living tradition. Performance then, whilst key to an essentialist concept of West Clare as an authenticating device, also provides the arena in which the realisation of ‘the power of local cultures [...] cannot be assumed to remain passive but are as likely to appropriate that which they find useful from the external forces that impinge on them’ (Cooke, 1997: 24). At the early Schools, the local provenance of featured musicians and singers, or at the very least a traceable line of influence to the local is clearly indicated. This is further solidified by extra-musical scheduling; lecture topics, themes and concert-style ‘tributes’ which all strongly integrate to produce and represent a West Clare identity by demonstrating its contribution to the Irish music tradition, and indeed Ireland’s cultural history. The official validation at national level is compounded by the appointment as the School’s first patron of the President of Ireland, Dr Patrick ‘Paddy’ Hillery in 1978 ‘who never made any secret of the fact that he was Clare to the backbone’ (Foley, 1977b).³ He continued to hold the position of School Patron during his capacity as ‘former president of Ireland’, until his death in 2008.⁴ In 1991, following the departure of Hillery from the office of President, the School bestowed its own presidency on West Clare’s elder statesman of Irish traditional music, Junior Crehan, a post he held until his own death in 1998.⁵ However, as the School grows and with its own West Clare pedigree firmly and centrally established, it is in a position to negotiate a space in which other peripheral and local styles can be celebrated. Notably in 1995 an east Clare fiddle workshop was introduced, but more generally, this is now demonstrated by the countrywide and indeed diasporic provenance of the School’s tutors. These new inheritors of the ‘masters of tradition’ status continue to tap into the authority of tradition, and thus appropriate it in order to legitimate their own cultural authority.

³ Patrick Hillery, a native of Spanish Point. Miltown Malbay was President of Ireland from 1976-1990. He was also Ireland’s first commissioner to the EU.

⁴ The Willie Clancy Week maintained its presidential connections when President Mary Robinson officially opened the School on its 21st birthday in 1993.

⁵ The position of School President remained vacant for a number after the death of Junior Crehan in 1998. Seán Potts became SSWC’s next ‘Uachtarán’ (President) in 2012. Dublin-born Seán Potts (1930-2014) was the first non-West Clare holder of the post. however, his genealogical and piping credentials were not only deemed appropriate to fulfil the position, they demonstrate the authority that SSWC acknowledges resides with life-time practitioners.

Performing authenticity

Like many music genres, a significant proportion of Irish music consumption takes place in mediatised ways, and thus live performance proves to be a key signifier of the authentic.⁶ According to Avron White, ‘in this context [of performance] the musical product is being produced and consumed in the same moment; there is an inextricable association between the musician and his music’ (White, 1987: 187). In an Irish traditional music context, the playing of tunes is in itself an authenticating practice, and performing in West Clare now provides an additional authenticating lustre and a ‘delineated’ domain (Green, 2006: 103).⁷ It is in the moment of performance, in the flux between production and reception, that tension is created and in this tension lies the pivotal moment in which the re-working of authenticity takes place. As Roach elucidates, ‘the memories of [...] particular times and places have become embodied in and through performances’ (Roach, 1996: xi). So when Leo Rickard offers Leo Rowsome’s version of ‘The Old Man Rocking the Cradle’ (Piping Recital, SSWC 2009), this rendition is interpreted as authentic, not just at the level in which notes are played and heard, but also in the imagined and interior world of the musicians and the audience. The real and the imagined are therefore simultaneously present, and are both part of each other, re-traditionalising, metaphorically at least, a construct of a West Clare reality. Authenticity resides ultimately within a sense of becoming, a playing towards something one is seeking to define, rather than a given inheritance set permanently in stone. So while representations of West Clare as a performance rubric both crystallise and dissolve during the life-time of the School, an underlying substrate runs through the realm of live performance representing concentrated distillations of authenticity.

The authenticating factors inherent in live performance are intensified by dynamics that synergistically combine at the School. These include the development of a very particular terminology for the description of performance and the creation of ritual and continuity by programming similar events on the same day each year. Location, both physical and imagined, is central, from the small, pokey pub or very basic community

⁶ See for example Philip Auslander in relation to the importance of live performance for constructions of authenticity in rock music ideology (Auslander, 2006).
⁷ Green’s concept is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

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centre venue to the imagined West of Ireland ideal.⁸ Finally the presence of family dynasties with the imprint of their genealogical legacy and the use of the Irish language likewise combine to signal purity and continuity, bedrocks in the construction of authenticity binding the School into associations with a distant and intemperate past. The consolidation of these dynamics lies in the developing narrative discourse of the School which pervades the transmissive and commemorative practices of the School as discussed in the previous two chapters. This discourse interweaves and overlays formal performance practices and is articulated, as shall be seen, by the performers themselves. Concerts, recitals, tributes and lectures at the School create liminal spaces, mythical utopian spaces which by virtue of sitting on such solid foundations lend themselves to both the assumption and articulation of cultural authority and the concept of re-traditionalisation. This re-traditionalisation is articulated in a number of ways, from the championing of other micro-styles, to an acknowledged smorgasbord of influence realised by learning Irish traditional music in the homogenising multi-mediatised world of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Creating a lexicon

The terminology chosen for the scheduled components of the School, lays down a marker for a particular representation of Irish traditional music. The term recital, for example, is used from the very first year of the School.⁹ A word historically associated with the performance of Western art music, its use demonstrates a clear rejection of any association of amateurism within Irish traditional music in general and with the School's representation of it in particular.¹⁰ This is somewhat paradoxical given the School's recourse to an historic cultural performance mode of amateur and community

⁸ For further discussion on the idealisation of the West see Chapter 2.

⁹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, recital refers to 'a performance of a single musical piece or esp. a selection of music (in earlier use only from one composer) by a soloist or a small group' <http://www.oed.com> (accessed 10 February 2014).

¹⁰ Notwithstanding amateur music-making contexts, it is possible to trace an arc of 'professional' contexts for Irish traditional music performance dating back to the stage of Convent Garden, London in the eighteenth century (Carolan, 2012). Likewise Patsy Touhey appeared in Carnegie Hall and Martin Reilly graced concert stages in Dublin and Belfast (Mitchell and Small, 1986, O'Neill, 1987 [1913]). Equally with the onset of the Irish republic, céilis took place in the Mansion House and Oireachtas competitions on the stage of the Abbey Theatre. An immediate precedent to the School is the use of the Shelbourne Hotel and the Gaiety Theatre, selected by Seán Ó Riada for performances of *Ceoltóirí Chualann* in the 1960s and 70s. The presence of Irish traditional music in these spaces in the 1960s and the iconicity of these images on the cover of the album *Ó Riada sa Gaiety*, signal a clear repositioning of the social status of Irish traditional music.

music-making.¹¹ However, the selection of this word places Irish music on equal-footing with these other music traditions and inserts it into a space previously perceived to have been occupied only by them. Furthermore it confirms a growing self-assertion that informs the classicisation of Irish traditional music suggested by Valley (2005).¹² The use of the term recital co-opts the language and perceived status of classical music onto an Irish traditional music space and its resonance as a modern cultural practice conforms to the process of re-traditionalisation that this thesis asserts is central to the School. The School creates and labels its constituent parts with terms such as recital, workshop, demonstration, lecture and exhibition along with classes and concerts. Singer John Flanagan recalled his internal response when asked to be a participant in a singing workshop at the second SSWC in 1974; ‘I’d never heard of the word “workshop” before, well, not in relation to singing’ (John Flanagan interview, SSWC 2010).¹³ The repetition of this new lexicon of Irish traditional music expands the conditions under which music is performed and received, a transformation appropriated without fanfare as it slips into the history of the School’s annual scheduling. As such, this annual repetition of content and its terminology has proved canonical: post-1970s Irish traditional music festivals are, and continue to be, replete with similarly labelled events.

Continuity and ritual repetition

The time-table format for the Willie Clancy Week undergoes minor scheduling changes over the years, but a gradual calendric and terminological consolidation of events at the School is in place by 1997. Henceforth, a clearer rhythm is established as

¹¹ Clearly many performers would site outside an ‘amateur’ status. Many of the uilleann pipers mentioned heretofore in this thesis: Garrett Barry, Martin Reilly and Johnny Doran, for example, made their living from music-making.

¹² The classicisation of folk music is also a cultural response noted by Bohlman (1988: 134) and McCarthy also notes the adaption of the values of Western education in the transmission of traditional music (McCarthy, 1999).

¹³ John Flanagan wasn’t entirely sure if this workshop took place in the first or second year of the School (according to the brochure no singing workshop takes place in the first year). This blurring of years occurs frequently within discourses on the School as the chronology of memories, caught up in ritual repetition so strongly attached to place begin to merge (see also the footnote in the Introduction). Indeed as Whelan succinctly explains ‘sense of place abolishes time and establishes memory’ (Whelan, 1993: 46). Máire O’Keefe drew attention to this, particularly in relation to her own memories of the Archive Room. However she also noted how certain years are clearly marked, 1999 for example was a highly significant year for her on account of it being the first school without Junior Crehan, following his death in August 1998 (Máire O’Keefe interview, Dec 2009).

certain events ensue, consistently, on particular days. The single instrument recitals, for example, each have their own day and followers of the School enjoy a guarantee that the fiddle recital will take place on Monday evening, the flute and whistle recital on Tuesday evening, the piping recital on Wednesday, dancing on Thursdays, singing on Friday afternoon and concertina on Friday evening. As newer elements come on stream, they are melded around this existing framework. For example, the button accordion recital, when it was introduced in 2002, took a 4.00pm Thursday afternoon slot, where it has remained since.¹⁴ The School itself which had taken place on different weeks ranging from the end of June to the end of July, settled permanently in 1980 into its current position in the first full week of July, embedding itself temporally into Irish life with the familiarity of an Irish calendar custom.¹⁵

The development and evolution of the Willie Clancy Week along a time and place continuum reinforces its social order and connectedness and develops a sense of security which signifies the consolidation of its identity and authority. Sara Cohen observes how other events that are markers of time are also often framed by music such as Christmas and weddings (Cohen, 1993). Finnegan speaks of the meaningful structure that a cyclical annual event creates throughout the entire year as months of anticipation and recollection resonate with both organisers and attendees (Finnegan, 1989: 320). SSWC in fact creates 'time' by marking an interval in the social life of Irish traditional musicians and this ordering of time and the sharing of symbolic structures and practices in the liminal space of Miltown resonates with pre-industrial time and hence another axis of continuity with a more distant past. In this way, SSWC fits into Finnegan's cyclical (rather than linear) view of time in which she proposes that music-making is based around life cycle and ritual as much as rational clock-based decision-making (Finnegan, 1989: 318).

This ritual repetition is a powerful affirmation of the shared celebration of community however such ritual incorporation of repetition and location obtains not just to the formal elements of the School. During the week, individual musicians, develop their

¹⁴ In 2012, recitals for the latest instrumental additions, the harp, banjo and mouth organ were included in the programme and timetabled for 5.00pm time slots on Monday, Thursday and Friday at the Mill Marquee. Harry Hughes explained that both temporally and spatially this time at the marquee was available without intruding on the afternoon lecture or evening recital at the Community Centre.

¹⁵ The start of the school is marked by the first Saturday that falls in July. For more on Irish calendar customs see Danaher (1972).

own traditions of colonising times spaces such as certain pubs or doorways on particular days (or sometimes the entire week).¹⁶ During the life-time of SSWC, musicians have built and developed relationships with both publicans and punters. Olga Connolly recalled her earliest memories of music-making at the Willie Clancy Week in the two pubs closest to where she grew up on the Ennistymon Rd. This included the regular presence of the older Clare musicians such as John Kelly Senior and Bobby Casey playing in the kitchen in the Blonde's, and the 'Kerry crew' next door in Hennessy's, following the introduction of set-dancing to the teaching schedule in 1982 (Olga Connolly interview, Dec 2009).¹⁷ Breannán Ó Beaglaoich, one of this 'Kerry crew' described how Johnny O'Leary would 'hold court' in Hennessey's pub every afternoon after playing music for Joe O'Donovan's set-dancing class each morning (Breannán Ó Beaglaoich interview, SSWC 2010). When Hennessy's closed, Johnny O'Leary's 'residency' moved to the Westbridge on Main St, which according to Breannán was good, but never the equal of Hennessey's. Ó Beaglaoich's discursive narrative is reminiscent of many others interviewed who demonstrate knowledge of places, publicans and musicians that no longer exist. Attendance at the now legendary Gleeson's of Coore before it closed down for example, accrues both cultural authority and cultural capital which can only be attained by first-hand experience.¹⁸ John McEvoy recalled a number of his earliest memories one of which was how 'Frankie Gavin would always come in on a Wednesday or Thursday, into Hillery's and there would be a big tune' (John McEvoy interview, SSWC 2009). This author remembers the excitement generated in 1996 by the arrival of Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Dermot Byrne into Queally's and how quickly the word spread by osmosis around the town,

¹⁶ Other rituals, peripheral to the core purposes of the School are however located and maintained through the existence of the School. A sub-cultural organ of SSWC manifests itself in the annual production of the *Miltown Journal*, an 'anonymous' publication which features satirical articles and pokes fun at aspects and personalities of Irish traditional music. The journal is 'launched' in Friel's on the first Monday of the week and copies are 'sold out' rapidly (Olga Connolly interview, Dec 2009; Áine Hensey, personal communication, 18 February 2014).

¹⁷ The names, as they appear on the outside of pubs in Miltown and the names by which these pubs are known locally (and indeed now, internationally), interweaves additional layers of confusion and meaning in their invocation. Cleary's pub on the Ennistymon Rd. for example, is referred to as 'The Blonde's', not to be confused with Cleary's pub on the Ennis Rd. Likewise the pub by the name of Lynch's on the Mullagh Rd. is in fact called Friel's, due to the fact that it was run by Maisie Friel and her husband Tom (but it retained the name Lynch's, Maisie's uncle and former owner above the door). This is not a phenomenon confined to the pubs of Miltown. However, the invocation of the 'local' name, as it becomes internalised for regular non-locals signals a discursive negotiation of authenticity and identity garnered through the accrual of territorialised cultural capital.

¹⁸ *The pub down in Coore* gives an insight into the history of music-making in this rural pub six miles east of Miltown Malbay (Gleeson, 2011).

even in the pre-mobile phone era.¹⁹ For a number of years before its closure in 2011, Marrinan's was the designated singing pub. Ritual relationships between pubs and musicians, such as in the examples given, were reiterated during fieldwork, cropped up in more casual discourses and occur in newspaper articles and opinion pieces describing the School.²⁰

Sessions now take place in all the public houses of Miltown and its environs. During the life-time of the Willie Clancy Week a number of pubs in the town and its environs have closed, disrupting some of these relationships as already noted. The pub as a site for the development of collective memory is a core feature of narrative reminiscences. The realisation of familiar places prompts kinaesthetic and geographical memories and the re-sounding of previous experiences. However, sites from which access is removed, possess further mythological potency, as their access to new attendees and hence the potential for any further re-enactments of music-making in place are fully removed. Part of the annual draw to Miltown is the way in which collective memory is gathered and understood in relation to other pasts. Attending Miltown on an annual basis ensures one's placement into these collective memories and the authority therefore to recollect them. In a similar vein, performing and learning at SSWC confers varying levels of cultural authority on individuals, with which they may endorse their musical lives beyond the bounds of the School. Within the developing narrative of the Willie Clancy Week, few pub closures are lamented as much as Queally's and Cleary's on the Ennis Rd whose walls resounded to Irish traditional music-making long before SSWC came into existence.²¹ Friel's pub now represents the informal *genius loci* of the School. Imbued with the legacy of Willie Clancy's music-making and supportive of SSWC from its outset, it holds a justifiable magnetism to musicians. Perhaps on

¹⁹ Even since the side-spread arrival of digital communications, the notoriously poor mobile network signal in Miltown diminishes the availability of phone calls and text messaging to reliably relay information. This factor was a constantly reiterated in interviews and has become part of the mythology of the town.

²⁰ See, for example 'Miltown's Rare Breed of Festival' *Clare Champion* 9 July 1982 and 'Dazzling young musicians and top traditional players share tunes' *Irish Times* 8 July 1998. With the closure of Marrinan's pub, the singing session relocated to the golf clubhouse during the 2012 Willie Clancy Week.

²¹ Tom and Baby Queally are shown being interviewed on the *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary* in their role as former custodians of a music-making space originally inhabited by Willie Clancy. Frank McNally writing in the *Irish Times* draws attention to the 'shrinking number of pubs available' to musicians and the nostalgia for their closure is captured in a comment made to McNally 'the Ennis Road is dark' referring to the closure of five or six pubs there (McNally, 2008). The loss of these pubs inscribes itself onto the discourse although the economic reality of their closure is frequently vented from the discourses of nostalgia created by their demise.

account of this, considerable acrimony was displayed by both locals and School attendees alike when an extension was added to Friel's pub in 2002. Commentators berated the perceived loss of authenticity created by this sizeable addition, despite the very successful way that it now accommodates the early afternoon, post-workshop session. From the early years of the Willie Clancy Week, the workshop tutors would retire to Friel's for tunes, a tradition continued by members of the Kelly family and the current 'masters' who choose to inherit that particular tradition. This also represents a tradition for both longstanding and new listeners and attendees of the School. Like many pubs in Miltown during the week, Friel's frequently finds itself host to more than one session at a time. Indeed with the new extension, up to four sessions may take place simultaneously. Along with the new extension, the front bar and the middle section are coveted music-making spots and even the external hallway leading to the toilets and smoking area is a potential session space. This continuous history of music-making, aided and compounded by its location at the base of the main road into Miltown bestows on Friel's multifarious roles; gateway, hub and meeting place as verified by those who (weather permitting) congregate outside.²²

Performance space - the community hall

The School's brochure is key to providing information as to the locations in which the formal performative activities of SSWC transpire. These locations, particularly the less conventional use of spaces for teaching discussed in Chapter 1, signal the geographical integration of the Willie Clancy Week into the area. As the use-value of domestic and other spaces are temporarily transformed, the School embeds itself into the local community. The chief location for timetabled performance at SSWC is the hall of the community centre and in many respects the community centre at Miltown is a synecdoche for the town of Miltown itself during the Willie Clancy Week. Like the town, it fulfils a range of functions at multifarious levels in what, superficially at least, appears to be an entirely inadequate space for doing so. For eight days and nights in a row, the community hall hosts the cream of Irish traditional musicians in a deluge of primarily concert-style performances. The hall is reasonably large, capable of seating

²² The interview with John McEvoy cited earlier and several others that dot this thesis took place outside Friel's pub during the post-workshop session. John McEvoy's interview was interrupted by several other musicians, most notably Jackie Daly, who having just bumped into James Kelly was reminded of a 'funny story' which he proceeded to tell as he passed by.

over three hundred people and contains a permanent high stage at one end. During the Willie Clancy Week, rows of chairs are set out in lines facing the stage and progressing through to the back of the hall. A banner and dated-looking wooden backdrops with Celtic designs elaborating the name of the School are rolled out annually, and signify the transition of mundane community hall into the focal point of the Willie Clancy Week. Basketball hoops and bingo signs, signalling spatial functionalities for which the Hall is perhaps more adequately suited, become meaningless during the unfolding rituals and practices of this one week. With the exception of a sophisticated sound system installed and utilised during the week, the basic accoutrements of a modern concert venue; back-stage access, green room, stage curtains, black outs, lighting rigs, etc. are largely absent.²³ When it rains, the corrugated iron roof provides an additional (thunderous) sonic back-drop. The sky-high side-windows sport ageing wooden shutters (those that aren't missing), the functional capabilities of which in fulfilling the role of blocking out daylight have all but disappeared. Stage lighting is provided by the existing four fluorescent lights in situ.²⁴ Access to the stage is via a set of steps, stage-right, which participants alight in full view of the audience. 'Back-stage' consists of a room, again stage-right, which is adjacent to the stage and spill-over noise from off-stage performers is a constant cause of concern for the stage-manager.²⁵ However, whilst the comforts of the concert-hall may be missing, so too are the boundaries that dedicated concert venues construct to separate performer from audience. Whilst tiered seating and surround-sound might be considered performance enhancers they are also performance creators. This lack of professional auditorium paraphernalia reduces the level of separation between performers and audience, adding an additional degree of unmediated rawness. Junior Crehan and John Kelly senior negotiated the boundary between the 'staged' and the everyday by choosing to stay on the floor (Bauman, 1975). Ita Crehan recalled the early fiddle recitals which consisted of just Junior Crehan, John Kelly Senior and Bobby Casey, sitting on three chairs in front of (rather than on top of) the stage and an audience of just one full row in front of them (Ita

²³ A bank of recording equipment takes up a space in front of the stage, signifying the presence of the ITMA and OAC who record for archival purposes most events which take place in the hall.

²⁴ With the exception of the grand finale concert on the last Saturday night when a professional lighting rig is installed.

²⁵ Additionally there is a small hospitality room at the left-hand side of the stage which is utilised by artists during the grand finale concert on the Saturday night.

Crehan interview, SSWC 2011).²⁶ The subsequent vertical movement by performers from floor to stage was an inevitable response to improve audience optics, rather than representing any major hierarchical swing. The scaling upwards of both audience and performer numbers creates tension between the cultural integrity of the setting (i.e. on a stage, in a large hall, in front of rows of seated people, the use of microphones, recording equipment and cameras) and the perceived tradition that is being performed. However, status-building devices and boundaries simulated by dedicated concert venues are continuously offset and indeed mediated by the functional simplicity of the community hall. Artists and audience continue to share the same access door to the hall, placing artists visibly and equally into the same spaces as the audience. The synaesthesial response created by the quality of the performative practices at such a modest venue further informs the creation of authenticity at the School. According to Connell and Gibson ‘notions of authenticity derive from how music is valued and the shifts in value that occur as music is perceived to have been disembedded from its social and cultural origins’ (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 28). In this way, the unsophisticated ordinariness of the community hall becomes an elemental part of the creation of authenticity which in turn informs the cultural capital that adheres to the Willie Clancy Week, Miltown Malbay and West Clare. The community hall, while it lies beyond the familiarity and localness of the country kitchen, represents nevertheless a community, as opposed to a private space, giving way to what Henry Glassie describes as an ‘expansion of intimacy’ through a realm of transaction not possible at a dedicated concert-venue (Glassie, 2006: 284). The recitals at the community hall offer a powerful sense of intimacy and immediacy to musicians whose performing circuits primarily feature more tightly segregated venues. Just as the town with its noted infrastructural shortfall is capable of hosting a highly successful international festival, the community hall nested within the town like the next layer of a Russian Doll, successfully stages a concentrated calibre of Irish music expertise.

²⁶ Jimmy O’Brien Moran had similar recollections of the piping recitals of the 1970s where nobody played up on the stage ‘it wasn’t a them and us sort of thing. There was nearly more pipers playing than there were listening’ (Jimmy O’Brien Moran interview, Mar 2011).

The recital series

a performance of traditional music is a thing of the moment - a few short minutes filled with music that is the result of many long hours of practice, years of listening and perhaps generations of involvement in the tradition (Ó Canainn, 1993 [1978]: 40).

The recital series at SSWC has become a performative cornerstone of the School and the immediacy realised in Tomás Ó Canainn's description of performance conveys the core reason for this importance. The choice of performers for the first recital of the 1973 School set a tone and marker for all future performances with a line-up that delineated the performance of West Clare discussed earlier.²⁷ The tetralogy of Séamus Ennis, Bobby Casey, Sean Keane and Tom Lenihan, like authors of the four gospels of the SSWC bible, represented and conveyed an authorising presence as well as serving the symbolic purposes of the School: Séamus Ennis, one of the most eminent pipers of the time, a recognised authority on tradition and honorary member of West Clare via his friendship with Willie Clancy (see Chapter 4); Bobby Casey, the emigrant musician, one of West Clare's finest fiddle exponents reinstated in West Clare for the week, a pilgrimage he would make annually from that year onwards; Seán Keane, the up and coming young Dublin fiddle player with a carefully acknowledged West Clare genealogy representing the emerging safety of the tradition and Tom Lenihan, the local guardian of West Clare singing style.²⁸

Since 1978, the term 'recital' has been employed consistently at SSWC to describe concerts classified by instrument-type. Each individual instrument taught at the School has its own single-instrument recital, at which those engaged to teach at SSWC (and indeed other musicians) perform, providing a unique platform for solo, unaccompanied playing.²⁹ Performer after performer takes to the stage in rapid succession. The absence of accompaniment presents a stripping back to the bare melodic line, reminiscent of an older performance format, now almost unprecedented in the commercial public platforms on which Irish traditional music is performed beyond the School. Solo

²⁷ Kearns and Taylor describe the programming of the School's first years as a veritable '*Who's Who* of resident Clare musicians' (Kearns and Taylor, 2003: 55).

²⁸ Séamus Ennis (1919-82). Bobby Casey (1926-2000), Sean Keane (b. 1946), Tom Lenihan (1905-90).

²⁹ There are some exceptions to the solo element: performances at the fiddle recital in particular include duets and trios, however, across the board accompaniment is exceptional.

performances are also to be heard at the Fleadh, the competition structure organised by Comhaltas.³⁰ As a competitive platform, however, the motivations and intentions of Fleadh performers are significantly different. Instead, the recitals reinstate the social value of performance in its own right and the cultural authority of the performance stays in the hands of the performer rather than the adjudicator. The process of re-traditionalisation, therefore, is firmly embedded in these recitals reverting to an older cultural expression, a predominantly solo art-form. This is in sharp contrast to contemporary representations of Irish traditional music in which group performance predominates. These exhibit a variety of instrumentation, utilise harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment and occur most frequently in either a session or concert context. The manifold development of ensemble and accompanied playing reflects the shift in Irish traditional music practice from domestic to commercial spaces, the development of early twentieth-century sound recordings of Irish traditional music in the United States, the rise in popularity of the céilí bands, and ultimately Seán Ó Riada and his spearheading of ensemble playing through his group Ceoltóirí Chualann. This paved the way for the arrival of Irish traditional music ‘super-groups’, none less influential than Planxty and the Bothy Band who altered both the reception and perception of Irish traditional music forever. As discussed in Chapter 2, the early 1970s formation of Planxty represents another aspect of the developing musical milieu out of which the Willie Clancy School developed.³¹ These developments initiated new collaborations of melody instruments and introduced and normalised the concept of accompaniment, opening a spectrum of harmonic and rhythmic possibility. The SSWC recitals create a sonic portal to the individual, including members of such super-groups and other professional musicians, who play and tour on national and international circuits and whose recordings utilise sound engineers and producers in the attainment of their ensemble sound.³² The single instrument recitals re-traditionalise to a concert stage, in a de-mediated environment, the unaccompanied melodic line, evocating and

³⁰ Exceptions to this include ensemble competitions: duets, trios, grúpaí ceoil, céilí bands and marching bands.

³¹ Donal Lunny (of Planxty and the Bothy Band) explains how accompaniment provides a point of access for new audiences to a solo instrument like the uilleann pipes who might otherwise find it ‘too intense, too demanding’ (Graham, 1977). SSWC provides a context in which members of those new audiences and indeed all listeners can then revert to the unaccompanied, re-traditionalised form.

³² Sean Keane for example, a stalwart of SSWC is more widely known and heard performing as a member of the group the Chieftains. Representative perhaps of the musical innovation required of professional Irish traditional musicians, younger fiddle players such as Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Oisín Mac Diarmada appear in a wide variety of different musical ensembles and collaborations.

privileging a sound of the past less commonly experienced in the present in either a concert or recorded idiom.³³ This re-traditionalisation is experienced by players as they come to both drink at, and from, the perceived well of authenticity present at Miltown.

The staging of performance alters the temporal and spatial organisation of Irish traditional music, resulting in the increased passivity of Irish traditional music audiences, which is inevitably facilitated by the layout of the community hall as described earlier. It also gave rise to the concept of the virtuosic performance, first exemplified and captured in recordings of musicians such as Patsy Touhey and Michael Coleman.³⁴ Likewise, the fiddle recital demonstrates the talents of performers, whose primary role in this instance rather than satisfying an engaged community of dancers, is to provide instead aesthetic stimulation and entertainment for a usually seated audience.³⁵ However, as Simon Frith claims, listening is itself a performative ‘experience of sociability’ (Frith, 1996: 204). Indeed a repertoire of vocal and corporeal modalities for performance interactions are available such as clapping, foot-tapping and the whooping or ‘hupping’ which occurs during the transitional moment created by the introduction of a tune change.³⁶ This engagement traverses the functional and physical separation created by the hall enculturating the acquisition of what Deborah Kapchan refers to as ‘literacies of listening’ through repeated sonic engagement (Kapchan, 2009: 65).³⁷

For attending workshop participants, the recitals offer an opportunity to further consolidate their class-based experiences. It creates an occasion in which they observe their tutor in ‘performance-mode’ as opposed to their daily teaching mode, providing further insights into Irish traditional music ontology. This is not to suggest that

³³ The term de-mediate[†] is used here rather than un-mediated on account of the presence of a sound system. This is essential to facilitate the size of the room, and somewhat ironic given that this was the very obstacle that ensembles were developed to overcome.

³⁴ Galway-born Patsy Touhey (1865-1923) and Sligo-born Michael Coleman (1891-1945) were both early innovators in the fledging sound recording industry in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century and subsequently their music and style was highly influential.

³⁵ The development of technical virtuosity in performance was also a result of and aided by engagement in competitive performance practice at the *Fleadh Cheoil*. See for example the deconstruction of the performances of Séamus Connolly and Brendan McGlinchey at the *Fleadhanna Ceoil* of the 1960s in Ní Fhuartháin (2011: 294-5).

³⁶ Carson gives an insight into this process of listening to a live product: a CD of a live performance in his case (Carson, 2010).

³⁷ Kapchan writes specifically in relation to Sufis in France, and how initiates acquire ‘literacies of listening’ into sonic traditions (Kapchan, 2009).

performance is not taking place during workshops, clearly it does, however the masters of tradition may well exhibit additional or different performance dispositions when on stage in a concert environment. Observation of this disposition, a ‘way of being’ on stage described by Smyth as including both body and verbal language, adds exponentially to the pedagogical knowledge received in class (Smyth, 2009: 70). At the recitals, students learn acceptable ways to perform, behave and belong both on stage and as members of an audience.

Performing the fiddle recital

The number of performers participating in the recitals has increased concurrent with the growth in numbers of teachers at the School. In 1996, for example, twenty six fiddle players performed whereas at the 2009 fiddle recital this had increased to forty four players who partook in twenty eight performance slots in a concert which lasted over three hours without an intermission.³⁸ In 2009, the popularity of the fiddle recital is evidenced by the long queue outside the hall which begins well in advance of the allocated recital starting time. The spatial logistics of the community hall indicated earlier, and the sheer numbers of performers, makes the coordination and smooth running of the recital considerable.³⁹ Subsequently, the amount of time allocated to each has decreased: the forty four players in 2009 (many of them in duets and trios) each played just one set of tunes.⁴⁰ Backstage capacity for forty four musicians is, quite simply, lacking and therefore the running order frequently resorts to luck rather than

³⁸ Due to the lack of backstage space, it is neither desirable nor practical for all performers to be present at any one time and because of the premium on seating, occupying an audience seat is not really an option either. For this reason, few of the fiddle players hear the entire concert. Partly on account of this, parallel narratives overspill the recital site: the late arrival of musician X, the need to extract musician Y from the pub, the inconvenience foisted upon musician Z at having to vacate a pub session in full flight to participate in the recital. These parallel narratives interweave and inform discourses that emanate from SSWC, concurring with the idea purported by Timothy Cooley that at festivals ‘off-stage events ... are typically considered more “authentic” and valuable’ contributing to the authenticating whole experience at SSWC (Cooley, 2001: 233).

³⁹ This is a task undertaken by Mary Kelly, wife of John Kelly Junior. According to Máire O’Keeffe, Mary has her own model for running the night and musicians ‘book their slots’ with her prior to the concert. The opening slots have the highest cachet, because those musicians then have the rest of the night free. The sooner the performer asks for one of these slots, clearly the better chance they have. As Máire O’Keeffe noted, ‘some of the young ones are very clever... they’ll have booked from last year!’ Another key role in the fiddle recital is conducted by Peter Mackey who keeps notes on musicians (information such as provenance, influences etc.). Peter maintains these notes annually and supplies them to John Kelly (Máire O’Keeffe Interview, Dec 09).

⁴⁰ This was not always the case as Máire O’Keeffe revealed: ‘When I first started playing you had to play two sets, possibly three if you were up early enough’ (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009).

edict. As a result, hierarchical scheduling, special opening or closing acts, first and second half divisions or time differentials allocated to musicians is completely absent. As journalist Frank McNally notes 'even the most illustrious of musicians are confined to playing only two or three tunes' (McNally, 2007).⁴¹

The following fieldwork diary excerpt gives an ethnographic description of the fiddle recital that took place at the community hall on Monday 6 July 2009, 8.00pm. It illustrates a number of points that will be discussed further such as the logistics of the room, the popularity of the event and the running order.

Despite arriving twenty minutes early, the hall is packed to capacity, every seat is taken and people are beginning to stand at the back and sides. Effusively eager to fulfil my research purposes as efficiently as possible, I edge my way up to the front and manage to occupy a space anterior to the front row of seats (i.e. on the floor). I smile inwardly at the absence of formal boundaries created by the lack of a stage door as on more than one occasion performers negotiate their way up to the stage through aisles blocked with standing and sitting people. The running order is an unknown entity to both myself and the wider audience. John Kelly is like a magician as he pops out from behind the screen to reveal the identity of the next performer. The rapid succession of performers is overwhelming. I particularly enjoy 83 year old John McManus from Fermanagh who is on his first visit Miltown! He plays in a trio with Gerry O'Connor and Duncan Wood and his shy unassuming stage presence gets one of the best cheers of the night. At 10.30pm I welcome the (relative) comfort of a vacated seat (the concert lasts for more than three hours). Clearly the queue outside continues and a degree of fluidity occurs amongst the audience as younger or less steadfast members take their leave and latecomers standing at the back and sides take their place. My new seat - a stackable chair - no doubt acquired for reasons of mobility and storage rather than comfort, presents a similar level of discomfort over time and the physical sacrifices associated with pilgrimage

⁴¹ In 1988 additional weekday céilís were scheduled in the community hall placing a strict time imposition on the recital as the Hall was required by 10.00pm. However, this time limit was relaxed again in 1997 when the official céilís were relocated to the Mill Marquee which was a response to the ever-increasing demand for set dance céilís and in recent years a large marquee is specifically constructed for the duration of the School.

inhere to the pains of sitting for three hours on a hard surface. Listening to a continuous stream of Irish fiddle players combined with the visceral sensation of sitting on the floor rekindles memories of my first Miltown fiddle recital thirteen years earlier, at which I occupied a similar position. The musical results on stage make it all worthwhile.

This concentration of musicianship has few equals on any world stage of Irish traditional music. At the end of the night John Kelly remarked on the uniqueness of the concert and the ‘exceptional feat of getting all those fiddle players under one roof’ (John Kelly, Fiddle Recital, SSWC 2009). Indeed, in a later interview he surmised that in any other situation ‘even if you had an open chequebook and you tried to get all those people together, it just wouldn’t happen, they wouldn’t come’ (John Kelly interview, SSWC 2009). Throughout the remainder of the night and the week, details of individual performances are reiterated and analysed, chronicling the 2009 fiddle recital into Miltown’s musical narrative just as soon as it has finished.

Fear a’ tí

John Kelly performs the role of fear a tí at the fiddle recital each year, giving an introductory background to each player as they take the stage.⁴² As son of one of the original summer school ‘masters’, John Kelly is genealogically and geographically grafted to the School, an incontrovertible cultural authority and archetypal School stalwart. His role in ‘minding’ the fiddles with Eamon McGivney at the fiddle workshops is detailed in Chapter 3 and the Kelly family intervention at both the fiddle school and recital is multifaceted.⁴³ Alongside his daughter Leah and son John (who both teach at the School), John Kelly performs the first set of the evening. His brother James (see Chapter 3 for details on James’ teaching role) performs later in the concert and John’s wife Mary (a Clare woman into the bargain) stage-manages the running order of the recital. The role of fear a’ tí and indeed stage-manager has developed in

⁴² Fear a’ tí, translates as ‘man of the house’. Its meaning, whilst interchangeable with the title MC, carries the more subtle inflection of ‘householder’ or ‘host’ which embraces both cultural insider status and authority. It also confounds the traditional relationship of MC and audience.

⁴³ A term used by Muiris Ó Rócháin, ‘minding’ embodies the curatorial care and attention demonstrated by the various School deputies and organisers.

stature and in tandem with the growth of the Willie Clancy Week.⁴⁴ It adds an additional layer of discourse and a stabilising voice of authority because as John Bealle explains they are ‘allowed to say a great deal more about [...] performers than [...] performers are allowed to say about themselves’ (Bealle, 1993: 81).⁴⁵ In the case of the recitals at SSWC, it is a role generally carried out by those with a longstanding responsibility and involvement with that particular section of the School.⁴⁶ The information imparted by John Kelly is symbolically loaded as he briefly chronicles each musician, their links to SSWC, their family connections and their provenance. In turn, the perspicacity of John Kelly further legitimates the performances that follow. Connections to West Clare, County Clare and longstanding relationships to the School are foregrounded, where they exist, and indeed provenance is noted on every single occasion. A remarkable exposition of this link resides in the fiddle duet of Martin Hayes and Mark Donnellan. Introduced as sons of ‘two great friends of the School’ (P Joe Hayes and Francie Donnellan), these musicians, like their late fathers are also members of the Tulla Céilí Band, which has a bond, through performance, to every single year of the School (John Kelly, Fiddle Recital, SSWC 2009). During his performance, James Kelly (brother of fear a’ tí, John) dedicates his tunes to their eldest brother Michael who died only a month previously. The audience are given a remarkable insight into the vital role of Irish traditional music socialisation in the Kelly household when James reveals that Michael’s middle name was Coleman; his father had named him Michael Coleman Kelly.⁴⁷ The informal revelations of these paradigms of human behaviour demonstrate the fuzzy boundaries that separate performance from everyday life via the lived musical lives of these musicians. This normalisation of music-making as an everyday part of the Kelly family’s habitus imbues and reiterates the cultural authority held by them, which is then transferred to the Willie Clancy Week. The concluding module of John Kelly’s role is the positive acknowledgement and thanks he gives for each individual performance an ‘approbation given personally’

⁴⁴ The fear a’ tí is occasionally a bean a’ tí. Claire Keville for example was bean a’ tí during the 2009 concertina recital and Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin performs this role at the closing Saturday night concert and other tribute concerts.

⁴⁵ A similar idea was reiterated by Oisín Mac Diarmada who has co-taught a fiddle class at SSWC with Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh for a number of years. According to Oisín an advantage of co-teaching is that ‘I find it easier to talk about somebody else’s music than my own’ the co-teaching dynamic offered him an enhanced opportunity to highlight aspects of Caoimhín’s playing to the students and vice versa (Oisín Mac Diarmada interview, SSWC 2010).

⁴⁶ The uilleann pipe recitals are exceptional in this regard, as NPU are central to the organisation of all uilleann piping matters at the School.

⁴⁷ See earlier footnote on Michael Coleman.

as Shields refers to the non-economic reward accorded to musicians' informal performance practice within rural communities (Shields, 1993: 164).⁴⁸ In this way, the role of fear a' tí, even as it is re-traditionalised to the stage, controls and fulfils the dynamics of the reciprocal relationships of a country house dance or older community practice. A broad variety of tunes is presented at the 2009 recital. Reels, however, predominate and the common dominator of all the sets played, is a set of three reels. The introductions by John Kelly, the brief introductions given by the musicians themselves, and the exposition of usually two or three tunes, creates a musical and dispositional praxis for Irish traditional music which is witnessed by the hundreds of attendees in the hall.

Stage talk

In light of the time constraints described earlier, each performer is expected to play only one set of tunes and to be considerate of the brevity of any articulated performance narrative. At the 2009 fiddle recital, some musicians chose not to speak, others briefly named the tunes about to be played while more sign-posted their performance in great depth. This pre-tune commentary, which Bealle refers to as 'stage talk' and Richard Bauman considers as an aspect of 'keying' the performance enables musicians a degree of control over the interpretive frame of the performance (Bealle, 1993, Bauman, 1975). This framing is multi-layered and the spoken word provides further opportunity to dissipate the physical stage-audience division and collapses structural formalities by deploying various techniques such as stories or jokes, reminiscent of an older, less formal participatory gathering. Whilst the obvious function of the pre-tune commentary is to provide further information about the impending performance, the way in which this information is imparted controls to a certain degree, the interpretive dimension of that performance.⁴⁹ Bealle describes how 'bluegrass performances revive deeply felt cultural associations constituted in past performances, recordings, and contextual associations' (Bealle, 1993: 64). This description equally corresponds to the recitals at SSWC and by verbally linking the performance to a particular perceived past it authorizes the performers' presence.

⁴⁸ Shields is dealing specifically with singers, but the idea is transferable.

⁴⁹ Niall Keegan examines in detail the 'transformative possibilities presented by speech (along with notation and writing) on Irish traditional music and the additional meanings mediated by language using cognitive linguistics, structuralist and post-structuralist discourse' (Keegan, 2012).

Glassie purports that the social interactions that occur between individuals and collectives in events called performances are the means by 'which history is constructed' (Glassie, 1994: 239). By evoking past happenings performers shape opinions in the present. In fact, these pre-tune introductions play a prominent role in all performative scenarios at the School, in particular as they occur during workshops and in the Archive Room (see Chapter 3). Musicians' commentaries, then, help to project meaning and authenticity onto their own music, since authenticity is not a quality that is inherent in the music itself. Carson's 1996 perambulation on music sessions skilfully demonstrates the significance of discursive acts that weave within and without informal music-making, reflective of the participatory versus performance nature of the session (Carson, 1996). Drawing on Gregory Bateson, Bauman describes communication about the forthcoming communication (that is the music itself) as a meta-communication (Bauman, 1975). These meta-communications, now transported onto stage are formalised into a statement of intent which imbue performances with additional meaning by revealing musical introspection.

There is no standard style or authentic comportment for the Irish traditional musician engaged in this meta-communication, in fact there are as many styles of introduction as there are styles of playing, yet increasingly, some type of introduction has become an expectation. The staged formality of the meta-communication has become a personal and to some extent learned behaviour that reveals the credentials and aesthetic preferences of the players. Michelle Mulcahy, for example, at the concertina recital of 2009 informs us before playing 'The Flax in Bloom', that while this was a tune that she had known for a long time, she had recently come across Séamus Ennis's version, which she then presented to the audience. Furthermore she cited the album *Forty Years of Piping* on which she had heard the track. Michelle Mulcahy, a performer too young to have learned this tune from Séamus Ennis himself (who died in 1982) presents learning from and acknowledging a recording as both an authentic and viable means of engagement with a past master. Furthermore, this insight reveals the performer's disposition towards old recordings as aesthetic resources with the potential to inform current music-making practices. This embeds the importance of learning not just a tune, but recognising the cultural stamp placed by style masters such as Séamus Ennis and recreating these different versions or settings and enjoying the subtle differences

that are so integral to the creative process that informs the tradition.⁵⁰ Michelle's meta-communication bears out Tom McKean's claim that

Tradition is communication, the passing on of (social) culture through shared practices and lore. It is an expression of an intense emotional bond between performer and source and, by extension, the cultural manifestations of that relationship'. He continues 'most performers cite a source [...] which is seen as authoritative. When one wishes to confer legitimacy on traditional knowledge, one has recourse to those from whom one learned it; there is a need for such higher authority. Today, when that source may be a person, a page, or a recording, it is the performer's relationship to it that defines traditionality. What matters is a sense of cultural authority, as important today as it was hundreds of years ago (McKean, 2003: 49).

These meta-communications frame the aesthetics of the performance and 'the particular identities that they invest in musical performance' (Bealle, 1993: 64). As each performer takes to the stage, they carry with them layers of tradition and learning and these verbal footnotes open a window onto the performer's interpretation of and relationship with Irish traditional music. In doing so, they provide an opportunity for the performer, as social actor, to negotiate and forge their own identity on stage, create their own personal foundation myth and thereby stake their own place in the tradition. Displaying what Glassie terms as 'historical responsibility in performance [...] without which [tradition] could not be, these stories and memories consolidate the cultural authority of not just individual players but the entire recital and indeed the School' (Glassie, 1995: 405).⁵¹

As stated earlier, the information presented in these meta-communications varies as performers choose to explicate details on the provenance of the tunes about to be played. This creates an important space in which all musicians can compensate for being what Appadurai refers to as the 'newly arrived' (Appadurai, 1996: 76). The special status ascribed to older masters reflects a perceived relationship to a way of life,

⁵⁰ See also the comments made by Denis Liddy with regard to the tune versions presented at the fiddle workshops in Chapter 3.

⁵¹ There are however, other formal performance scenarios at SSWC outside of the single instrument recitals which involve ensemble playing and accompaniment.

and thus music-making, that is no longer available to contemporary musicians. Even those who emulate older musicians or indeed create their own new and idiosyncratic styles 'can acquire objects with patina, but never the subtly embodied anguish of those who can legitimately bemoan the loss of a way of life' (Appadurai, 1996: 76).⁵² Many of the performers at the 2009 fiddle recital could not trace their roots back to 'organic, local scenes' but instead demonstrate that they have '[paid] their dues' through informed listening and learning via less 'organic' processes (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 111). John Kelly's genealogical inheritance scores his legitimate access to the concept of patina as he refers to the musical loss of his father. In order to compensate for that which they did not experience, other musicians utilise the concept of patina in their pre-tune commentary by indexing names, tunes and versions, thereby demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of 'old goods'.⁵³ This meta-communication assembles the materials of identity formation and displays an awareness of symbols of authenticity. The limited (if any) introductions given by the older Clare masters such as Joe Ryan, Francie Donnellan and P Joe Hayes at various fiddle recitals down through the years, exemplify this, proving in these cases that cultural memory is encoded in performance, and that quite literally, the music speaks for itself.⁵⁴

⁵² According to Appadurai, Grant McCracken proposes patina as a general term to deal with 'that property of goods by which their age becomes a key index of their high status' (Appadurai, 1996: 75).

⁵³ Nostalgia is intrinsic to the reception of Irishness. Foster comments on the growth of fabricated Irish pubs in the late twentieth century with interiors based on old cottages and grocery stores 'summoning up a nostalgia for something that never was' (Foster, 2007). Likewise Pine reflects on how nostalgia 'feeds a yearning for the stability which is absent from a present that is perceived to be fast-paced and hence unstable' (Pine, 2011: 8). Ó Laoire presents an alternative idea of nostalgia by linking the idea of *cumha* a term that resonates within the emotional framework of the Tory Island community about which he writes, to the original meaning of nostalgia. Drawing on David Lowenthal, he traces the meaning of nostalgia back to the seventeenth century when it was believed to be a physical disease rather than a psychological state. He demonstrates *cumha* (nostalgia) as part of the Tory worldview through an exploration of the song 'A Phaidí a ghrá' (Ó Laoire, 2005).

⁵⁴ This can be observed at archive footage of the fiddle recitals in 1996 and 2001 at the ITMA. This is not to suggest that all 'masters' are silent. Indeed another area ripe for research is the way that some of these masters grew into the pedagogical role assigned to them by the initiation of the school. This statement is further complicated by the performance of, for example, the Campbell brothers from Glenties in Donegal at the 1997 fiddle recital. Vincent Campbell unaffectedly embracing the stage and microphone, sat back and addressed the audience as if they were in his own living room, assuredly relating and positioning himself through story within a nuanced musical relationship between John Kelly Senior and Donegal's equivalent of Willie Clancy: the fiddle player John Doherty (SSWC 1997, ITMA). Indeed Tom Munnally comments on the proclivity of Vincent Campbell, Micho Russell and Johnny Doherty to bring their own 'domestic atmosphere' with them regardless of the size or nature of the performance space (Munnally, 2001: 196).

The meaning of an articulated narrative is conditioned and influenced by the performance arena. Willie Clancy maintains a constant authenticating presence at the School. ‘I’m sure Willie Clancy is smiling listening to that!’ remarks Tommy Keane at the end of Cian Talty’s rendition of Willie Clancy’s version of the Gold Ring during the 2009 piping recital.⁵⁵ At the fiddle recital, Vincent Griffin gives a tune for which he has no name an impromptu re-christening as ‘Willie Clancy’s 37th’ (in what was the 37th year of the School). Pre-tune commentary draws further authentication from the sphere of commemoration via the enactment of dedications to deceased musicians and personnel linked to the School. Leo Rickard (as stated earlier in this chapter) dedicates a tune recorded by Leo Rowsome, to Leo Rowsome, acknowledging his enormous legacy to uilleann piping. At the same recital, Jimmy O’Brien Moran took the opportunity to commemorate members of the piping fraternity who had died in the previous year. The first was Waterford piper, Tommy Kearney a former teacher of his. Tommy Kearney was also acknowledged in the pedigree of other pipers in the recital, not least its Waterford-born fear a’ tí, Tommy Keane. The second dedication was to the French, highly regarded uilleann pipe-maker, Alain Froment. The craft of uilleann pipe-making is a central element of the piping section of SSWC and due to the shortage of good pipe-makers the loss of Froment is highly significant. Glassie refers to these introductions and meta-communication as an obligation stating that ‘the performer is positioned at a complex nexus of responsibility’ (Glassie, 1995: 402). This duty is inextricably linked to the past, to previous teachers, deceased masters, to their present audience and equally to themselves and the future tradition. The audience, then, experience not just a performance in the present, but one which informs ‘the completion in the future of work unfinished in the past’ each performance invariably refers back to a previous example, yet at the same time each constructs its own original as it emerges and adapts to the present circumstances and conditions (Glassie, 2006: 75).

⁵⁵ Willie Clancy played and recorded Garrett Barry’s setting of the Gold Ring, which Pat Mitchell notes is very different to the standard O’Neill/Séamus Ennis setting. Pat Mitchell recounts that Gilbert Clancy (Willie’s father), on hearing Séamus Ennis’s version of the Gold Ring turned to Willie and asked ‘what’s that oul’ thing he played?’ (Mitchell, 2009).

‘Real time’

A sense of authenticity believed to prevail at Miltown pervades countless discourses, both public and private, which pertain to the Willie Clancy Week and by extension, County Clare. As Donegal fiddle player Vincent Campbell stated emphatically during the 1997 fiddle recital in relation to a visit to Co. Clare thirty years previously (and time spent with John Kelly Senior in particular) ‘the Clare people were just the real people’.⁵⁶ In fact, Vincent’s status as a senior tradition-bearer gives him permission to articulate an undercurrent that is often felt rather than said; ‘that’s days gone by, they were good days, I still rather see them days back than what we have today. I’m talking about the real time’.⁵⁷ Vincent Campbell’s cultural authority is expressed through his highly stylised fiddle playing and through his on (and off) stage self-narrative he straddles the modern-traditional dichotomy in which the desire for authenticity is rooted. The resulting combination of musical performance and meta-communication as each mutually reinforces the other presents a model for re-sounding an authentic past. This model is normalised by replication in myriad performance situations throughout the week as the present is counterpoised with authentic traces of a ‘real’ past.⁵⁸

Tim Rice writes that

[t]he truth that music embodies and symbolically represents is not a propositional, logical truth, verifiable by the niceties of epistemological reflection and explanation, but an existential, ontological truth that sensation, memory and imagination coalesce into a memorable experience (Rice, 1994: 305).

The real people and real time are the truth that music embodies for Vincent Campbell and which he recognises in others by their commitment to music-making (such as that exemplified by the Kelly family naming their son Michael Coleman). Providing

⁵⁶ His personal qualification that ‘they were the most like the Donegal of all the people’ does not detract from the sentiment portrayed.

⁵⁷ This echoes Cooley’s experience of folk festival stage shows in the Polish Tatra mountains which are filled with references to unspecified times in the past (Cooley, 2001).

⁵⁸ On this same theme, Martin Hayes refers to SSWC as ‘that place that people come to when they want to touch the true reality of this music [...] be real, experience it’ (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013). This corresponds to the desire to participate in the “real thing” or the prevailing notion of whatever that may be’ that Moloney also identifies amongst audiences in the United States (Meloney, 1999: 133).

insights into the micro-level of individual experience the meta-communication of Campbell, the performer, is a response to the peripherality experienced by a rural-based Donegal musician and the shared cultural micro-dynamics held in common with the Kelly family. That the Kelly family had relocated to Dublin, reinforces the argument made in Chapter 2 for a reappraisal of centre and periphery in Irish traditional music discourse. The affiliation that Vincent Campbell expresses for John Kelly Senior is synonymous with musical relationships that the Willie Clancy Week facilitates each year. At the School ‘musicians find something to recognize in each other. They find ways to enunciate, perform, and negotiate their own identities (Dowling, 2004: 108). Young Dublin-based fiddle player Liam O’Connor, the inheritor of a musically expressed position of cultural authority, evoked in similar terms the ‘feeling’ he gets on arriving in Miltown (from Dublin) and the meaning that this feeling gives to his interpretation of performance.⁵⁹ Irish traditional music then as suggested by Steve Coleman is ‘a resource for the mediation of private and public negotiations of pain and discontinuity’ and the articulation of this pain, through nostalgia, has in fact become traditionalised, as practised by Willie Clancy himself (Coleman, 2010).

Performing families

Finnegan suggests that ‘music is perceived as having positive value in some deeper sense [...] not often precisely articulated [...] but] deeply embedded’ and notes that music like the concept of family is ‘among the unquestioned good things of our society’ (Finnegan, 1989: 333). Crossovers at the nexus of music and family, therefore, add additional resonance to the School just as biographies of musicians privilege details of musical family linkages.⁶⁰ Families and family dynasties are imbued with the authenticity of perceived continuity.⁶¹ High status is ascribed to transmission within a family context and the socialisation of families within SSWC has witnessed the

⁵⁹ This was expressed during his meta-communication at a tribute concert to Muiris Ó Rócháin on the 19 January 2013, at the Armada Hotel, Spanish Point, Miltown Malbay.

⁶⁰ Such as those that constitute *Blooming Meadows* (Valley and Piggott, 1998). ‘There were localities and there were families that were always involved in the music’ the opening words of Joe McNamara’s prologue in *The Living Note: The Heartbeat of Irish Music* underscores the authentic continuity accorded to the pillars of family and place (Woods and McNamara, 1996: 9). See also Cawley (2013) which considers familial influence on Irish traditional music acquisition from a socio-cultural perspective.

⁶¹ This also resonates with the projection of familism and domestic relations by Arensberg and Kimball which imbues subsequent Irish anthropology (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968 [1940], Wilson and Donnan, 2006).

familial inheritance of organisation and teaching roles (as demonstrated by the Kelly family). Such continuity is seen as an important safeguard for the continuity of SSWC. The importance of family and kinship ties within the School and indeed within Irish traditional music more generally was a constant trope in interviews conducted for this research.⁶² Kearns and Taylor point to the generational continuity guaranteed by families in teaching and performing as being a key factor in the seamless continuity of the Willie Clancy Week (Kearns and Taylor, 2003).⁶³ At the 2009 piping recital, Jimmy O'Brien Moran's final dedication embraces the genealogical continuity enshrined in the School when he indirectly commemorates Seán Reid 'another great patron of pipers' (as Tommy Keane refers to him earlier at the same recital) by dedicating the last tune to Reid's great grand-daughter who is attending Jimmy's piping class at the School that year. Additional meaning is available for much of the piping fraternity who are aware that Jimmy plays a set of pipes that he received from Seán Reid. This evocation of genealogy opens a window for the audience onto the historical past of the player and their musical bloodline and at the same time 'they reveal a story...of the importance and centrality of the family as a social and economic system which produced and reproduced a self-sufficient traditional rural community' (Byrne et al., 2001 [1940]: 2).

So whilst it is something of a cliché to suggest that the Irish traditional music community is a big family, the role of family, immediate and extended is prominent at the School. The fiddle recital is replete with family dynasties. Like the Kelly family, the O'Connor family figure strongly and their father flute player Mick O'Connor, is a long-term stalwart and organiser of the tin whistle section of the School. His children Liam, Aoife, Donal and Darach O'Connor, all fiddle players, learned and now teach and perform regularly at the School. The bloodline of fiddle players Breda Smyth and Áine O'Connell who duet at the 1997 recital is foregrounded when John Kelly introduces them with the trailer; 'both learned their music from their fathers' (John Kelly, Fiddle Recital, SSWC 1997). Bernadette McCarthy, a regular performer and

⁶² For example in interviews with Muiris Ó Rócháin, Máire O'Keeffe, John Kelly, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Angela Casey.

⁶³ The families listed by Kearns and Taylor include: Kelly, O'Connor, Peoples, McCarthy, McPeake, Hayes, McKeon, Glackin, Crehan and Potts. In his publication on West Clare music, Barry Taylor problematises assumptions about the role of family in music-making, contrasting familial musical inheritance with expectation of recognition by the community on account of such familial ties (Taylor, 2013: 3).

teacher in the fiddle school belongs to another major West Clare dynasty. Her father Tommy, a piper and concertina player from Miltown emigrated, like Willie Clancy, to London and fulfilled the role of West Clare tradition-bearer during the early years of the School. Her sister Jacqueline, an outstanding concertina player in her own right is both married to and mother of an outstanding piper, indeed all their offspring are musicians in their own right. Another sister Marion teaches tin whistle and fiddle player Tommy Junior is a regular Miltown visitor first coming from Boston but now repatriated to Galway. Remarking on this generational continuity at SSWC Áine Hensey recalled ‘I remember Sean Potts senior being here when Sean Potts Junior was 17 or 18, now you seen Sean Potts Junior’s kids doing the classes, and there’s that kind of cyclical thing which is amazing’ (Áine Hensey interview, SSWC 2009). Back at the piping recital, the introduction to young Miltown piper, Cian Talty, acknowledges and commemorates his pedigree, as grandson of piper Martin Talty (a founding member of SSWC) and son of Sean Talty, who learnt at the knee of Willie Clancy, a coveted apprenticeship, and the ultimate representation of West Clare still rooted firmly in the local. Extended families, along with local, neighbourhood and community networks comprise what Donal Guerin and Frederick Powell describe as ‘the institutional relationships of a vibrant civil society’ key to the development of social capital (Guerin and Powell, 1997: 21). However, while families play a vital role at the School and represent important signifiers of authenticity, the involvement of other organisers in a voluntary capacity demonstrates the extent to which identity is increasingly performed outside of traditional social networks such as family and local community, paralleling what John Hewitt suggests is a more general shift towards voluntary identity and voluntary networks as conduits for claiming group membership (Hewitt, 2007).

‘Where’s the women?’

Another family now filling the ranks of teachers and performers at SSWC are the multi-instrumentalist Mulcahys comprising of Mick Mulcahy a musical stalwart of the School and his two daughters Louise and Michelle who learned and now in turn teach at the School. ‘Where’s the women?’ was the question Kitty Linnane demanded of Muiris Ó Rócháin during a fiddle recital in the late 1980s when the performers were

exclusively male (Máire O’Keeffe interview, Dec 2009).⁶⁴ Kitty Linnane, piano player and leader of the Kilfenora Céilí Band from the 1940s onwards was herself the exception rather than the rule in the male-dominated realm of Irish traditional music performance of her time.⁶⁵ It was in fact 1992, the twentieth year of SSWC (and just eight months before Kitty’s death) before a female fiddle player appeared on the stage at the fiddle recital.⁶⁶ Clearly Kitty asked this question in the knowledge that any amount of female fiddle players existed and the extent of gender imbalances in Irish traditional music is an area ready for further research.⁶⁷ In particular, a contextualisation of the role and status of women in Kitty’s time might throw light onto the spaces in which women did learn, teach and perform Irish traditional music.⁶⁸ Contemporary balances in the public performance realm are still uneven; Michelle Mulcahy, for example, was one of just ten female fiddle players (out of forty four) who participated in the 2009 fiddle recital.⁶⁹ Since the majority of performances and narratives of Irish traditional music are of male authorship, the concept of re-traditionalisation then is somewhat complicated by the gender of nostalgia. While the uilleann pipes have a predominantly male-practitioner history, much more interesting is the particularly female gendered relationship associated with the concertina, which complicates the re-territorialisation of performance in County Clare as revealed by this

⁶⁴ The removal of the public service bar on the employment of married women coincided with the first year of SSWC in 1973 (as did the first ever inter-county ladies Gaelic football match) and Ferriter denotes the 1970s as having an ‘increasingly visible and demanding Irish feminist movement that has notable achievements to its name, including equality and contraception legislation [and] a Council for the Status of Women’ (Ferriter, 2012: 4). The reverberations of this, however, were slow in reaching Miltown Malbay.

⁶⁵ In using this term ‘exception’ about Kitty Linnane I am guilty of perpetuating a trope which Tes Slominski’s recent article on the location of women in the history of Irish traditional music draws much needed attention to. Slominski writes the ‘assumption that ... women musicians, however skilled, were exceptional contributes to the erasure of less famous women from popular historical memory’ (Slominski, 2013: 2).

⁶⁶ In fact there were two female fiddle players that year; Kathleen Smith and Máire O’Keeffe.

⁶⁷ Existing scholarship in this area includes; O’Shea (2008: 105-118), Schiller (1999), Slominski (2010, 2013), Waldron (2006) and Williams and Ó Laoire (2011: 137-176).

⁶⁸ Suggesting an antipathy towards women in 1930s Ireland, Barbara O’Connor proposes that women were nudged or indeed forced out of the public sphere, obliging them retreat into private/domestic spaces. Her work on the relationship between women, dance and public space might equally apply to such gendered performance legacies in Irish music (O’Connor, 2013). This compounds the lack of mobility created by domestic responsibilities and the subsequent poor self-image that Michael Cronin asserts is created by this real and perceived lack of mobility (Cronin, 2002).

⁶⁹ The flute and fiddle recital has demonstrated greater gender equality from a much earlier stage with three female performers appearing in the 1981 recital. The concertina, perceived by many as a particularly gendered instrument, remained in exclusively male hands (with the exception of Mrs King in 1981 and 1982) at the concertina recital until as late as 1993.

research.⁷⁰ The Irish traditional music microcosm offered by the Willie Clancy Week presents a clear platform for further research in the area.

Exterior music-making

Music performance is rarely confined to the indoors during the Willie Clancy Week. Outdoor music-making was scheduled during the first thirteen years of the School at two locations; beside the community hall and on a temporary stage erected in the town square, memories of which are fixed by photographs from this era of windswept musicians open to the elements on a temporary stage. At the time of the School's inception in 1973, impromptu street sessions were a much heralded (if problematic) aspect of Comhaltas run Fleadhanna (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011). Outdoor music-making was also a significant part of Gaelic League organised Feiseanna from the early twentieth century, which in turn had recourse to an era of crossroads dancing and community gatherings wherein music-making would have commonly occurred as an external practice. However, the outdoor spaces occupied by this rejuvenating tradition were increasingly urban, as opposed to rural, spaces. The sonic colonisation of urban spaces created by external music practices such as at the fleadh, signifies a new-found confidence in Irish traditional music performance and street sessions in turn become a feature at SSWC. Organised exterior music-making, however, was not entirely novel in Miltown Malbay in 1973. Indeed, brass bands, fife-and-drum bands, brass and reed bands and pipe bands of various affiliations were a common feature of many towns in Ireland. Brid Talty records that a local brass band played for Charles Stewart Parnell when he delivered his public address in Miltown in 1885 (Talty, 2013).⁷¹ The Clonboney Pipe Band, founded in 1936, numbered Willie Clancy amongst its members and fulfilled numerous duties in Miltown and its environs.⁷²

The open air session on the first Sunday of the School was 'a big part of the afternoon' during the early years of SSWC, lasting for several hours (Harry Hughes interview,

⁷⁰ The argument for a preponderance of female concertina players in Co. Clare is well-rehearsed (Breathnach, 1996 [1971], Curtis, 1994, Ó hAllmhuráin, 2006, Ó Rócháin, 1972). However, Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin notes that despite the high number of players in existence they were largely ignored or not sought out for collection or broadcast purposes (Ó hAllmhuráin, 2008).

⁷¹ This was to coincide with turning the first sod for the West Clare Railway.

⁷² It also presented Willie with his first opportunity to experiment with the art of reed-making (Talty, 2013).

Nov 2013). Incorporating outdoor music-making or ‘street entertainment’ as Harry Hughes referred to it into an event such as SSWC fulfils a number of roles. It signals and facilitates occasions of outdoor public participation conforming to what Brian Osbourne labels as ‘crowd choreography’, signifying a shifting trajectory of visualization in culture (Osbourne, 2001: 24).⁷³ It creates an ethos of accessibility; by removing music practice from places where an admission fee is charged, or with limited accessibility such as the small public houses of Miltown. It also suggests a degree of mobility as music-making is untied to any one fixed place. However, more significantly for the early years of SSWC, the programming of external music performance enabled the School, and therein Irish traditional music, to assert its place in the town by creating a sonic hegemony and indeed authority, that informed any unknowing or disinterested parties of what was taking place. All traces of the programming of external music-making disappear from the official brochure by 1986, suggesting that by this time the sonic authority of the School within the town and indeed the region is now firmly established and such public tonal assertions are no longer requisite.⁷⁴ The only remaining official event at which outdoor music-making takes place is the graveside tribute. Tucked far away from the town, sonic spill-over is unlikely, however close-up accessibility to performing ‘masters of tradition’ is part of its attraction as discussed in Chapter 4.

Spontaneous outdoor music-making continues unabated and is part of the thriving session scene that inhabits popular discourses on the School.⁷⁵ The session, notwithstanding all the widely understood meanings that the word has come to hold, is a significant part of Irish traditional performance practice. Considering that of the estimated 20,000 people attracted to Miltown during the Willie Clancy Week less than 2,000 of them attend classes, the appetite for the atmosphere created by informal music-making, the heterogeneous element of the festival, is highly significant. This

⁷³ Osbourne refers to the opening up of public spaces to contemporary developments such as: labour demonstrations, stage spectacles and commercialised sport (Osbourne, 2001).

⁷⁴ Timetabling was one of the reasons for moving the outdoor entertainment as this is the time in which the launches take place. Insurance and liability requirements were also factors in its demise (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013).

⁷⁵ Although beyond the time-frame of this thesis, Meltdown (rather than Miltown) Malbay was the moniker for SSWC 2013 as temperatures soared into the late twenties and spontaneous music-making indoors and out was compromised, rather unusually, by hot weather. As the sunshine played havoc with reeds, the cool blue Atlantic lapping the beach at Spanish Point upstaged the dark musical corners of pubs as musicians frequently forsook reel-time for swim-time in the afternoon heat of the sun.

writer's own experiences of the Willie Clancy Week prior to the ethnographic research carried out for this thesis were primarily session-based. In light of the extent of this major constituency who attend but do not engage directly with the organised parts of the School, questions have been raised about the necessity for the formal taught and performed elements of the Willie Clancy Week at all. An anecdote heard frequently about the Willie Clancy Week is that if the School itself were cancelled 'sure people would come anyway'. However, this is a reductive overview that misunderstands the complexities informing the session seizure that afflicts the town. All the ingredients that shape the construction of authenticity through the performance of place are what feed into these phenomenal daily and nightly sessions turning Miltown into 'a centre of intensity, where the creation of place is concentrated through ... performance' (Duffy, 2000: 59). Like an inverted pyramid, the masters that teach at the School engage with session performance attracting other musicians and listeners who in turn attract more musicians and listeners.⁷⁶ Furthermore, these sessions represent an inversion of the 'paid gigs' that constitute the majority of session-performances that occur in public houses throughout Ireland.⁷⁷ At the Willie Clancy Week, participation in unpaid music-making renders authenticity meaningful, by removing the agency of payment from the equation. Equally, it has a strong bearing on its identification as Irish traditional music (O'Flynn, 2009: 180). Both O'Shea and Kaul point to the less egalitarian side of sessions previously assumed, giving a more nuanced understanding of the reciprocity which takes place between musicians (that confounds economists), while explaining their motives for playing (Kaul, 2007, O'Shea, 2008: 119-140). The abundance of musicians at Miltown offers immense potential for the meeting and matching of such mutual reciprocal exchanges. Therefore to remove the masters of tradition, the cornerstone of the School from the equation, would surely result in its collapse. In a sense, the agency of the individual musician is displaced by the agency of SSWC such that musical outcomes are a consequence of the two. Spontaneous sessions in the heterogeneous spaces of SSWC are an active ingredient in the week-long Miltown experience, producing outcomes that are entirely unpredictable.

⁷⁶ Curtis noted that if you 'ask any member of The Chieftains, De Dannan, Altan, Stockton's Wing or indeed any traditional musician the length and breadth of the county where they intend to be on the first week of July the answer will invariably be the same: in Miltown Malbay for the Willie Clancy Summer School' (Curtis, 1994: 96).

⁷⁷ Kaul discusses the authenticity, or not, of these experiences as they play out in Doolin (Kaul, 2007). See also Kneafsey (2002, 2003).

Talking Music

According to Muiris Ó Rócháin the afternoon lectures at SSWC ‘address the cultural and intellectual side of traditional music [and the] “Breandán Breathnach Memorial Lecture”, given by various authorities on traditional music, opens the School’ (Ó Rócháin, 2011: 754).⁷⁸ Since its inception SSWC has provided a valuable space for the presentation of Irish traditional music research, and the extent of this provision, four or five lectures on average each year, provided and still provides one of the main forums for this activity. In its initial stages it appeared that Comhaltas would fulfil a similar role; ‘there was a deliberate commitment among the organisers of the first Fleadh that in conjunction with music-making, an academic interest in traditional music would be fostered’ and lectures or ‘formal papers’ as they were referred to, were given at each of the first seven Fleadhanna Ceoil (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 124). These lectures addressed Irish traditional music historically, currently and in the future a time it was envisioned that Comhaltas and Irish traditional music would move into, hand in hand. This did not endure, however and Ní Fhuartháin notes a direct correlation between the discontinuity of these papers and the advent of a constitution for Comhaltas concluding that all of these papers ‘can be interpreted as fledging constitutional discussion documents’ (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 123). The inclusion of lectures at SSWC, demonstrates the pioneering vision of its organisers to engage intellectually with musical discourses and the influence of models available to the fledgling School, such as the Merriman Summer School (see Chapter 2).⁷⁹ The lectures give voice to the socio-historical context from which Irish traditional music-making emerges, rather than predicting the future role of SSWC in the tradition, offering a dynamic site for discussion at the School.

The subject matter of these lectures, and the widening focus of the lens over the years, is indicative of the School’s developing ideological pathway as they interpret and re-interpret discourses and performances of Irish traditional music. For the first two years the subject matter is firmly rooted within the legacy of Willie Clancy and County Clare as revealed by the following titles: *Willie Clancy the man and his music* by Séamus

⁷⁸ Dedicated as the ‘Breandán Breathnach Memorial Lecture’ from 1986 following the death of Breathnach in the previous year.

⁷⁹ It is also reflective perhaps of the decision in 1971 two years before the foundation of SSWC, to house the Irish Folklore Commission in ‘the academic milieu’ of UCD, resulting in the creation of the Department of Folklore (Briody, 2007).

Mac Mathúna; *Traditions and folklife of Clare* by Muiris Ó Rócháin; *Gaeilge an Chláir* by Andrias Ó Gallchóir; *Collecting folk music in County Clare* by Ciarán Mac Mathúna; *Sean-nós singing lecture* by Seán Óg Ó Tuama; *Pipes, piping and pipers* by Breandán Breathnach; *The manuscript tradition of Clare*, by An tAthair Pádraig Ó Fiannachta; *Collecting folk songs in County Clare* by Tom Munnely; *Logainmneacha Iarthar an Chláir* by Breandán Ó Ciobháin and *An Sean-nós* by An Dr Tomás Ó Canainn. These diverse micro-narratives insert local history into ‘the totalising claims of historical meta-narratives’ (Whelan, 1993: 46). Foregrounding local history as a shared historical experience builds a community of interest amongst a local and international audience attending the School, adding to the sense of place achieved by SSWC with Willie Clancy and County Clare the pivotal anchoring and authoring devices for its subject matter. The lectures then in conjunction with other performance contexts, are paramount to the re-centring of the periphery which occurs both physically and metaphorically at the School. By inculcating a sense of regionality, be that West Clare or County Clare, the West of Ireland or indeed the island of Ireland itself, the lectures demonstrate that this sense is not ‘fixed or rooted in immemorial continuity but is instead, fluid, flexible unstable in meaning, formed, reformed and deformed by changing ideologies and perceptions’ (Whelan, 1993: 41). Furthermore, the lectures and the allocated time for discussion that follows, create a space to explore ‘the dialectic between insider and outsider in the creation of a sense of region’ as this pertains to the (re)production of a County Clare or indeed West Clare identity (Whelan, 1993: 41). In the third and fourth years of the School, the subject area opens up to encompass broader themes within Irish traditional music. These include: *The fortunes of Irish traditional music* by Dr Tomás Ó Canainn; *Petrie and the music collectors* by Breandán Breathnach; *Francis O'Neill - the music collector* by Breandán Breathnach and *The collecting adventures of a folk music collector* Séamus Ennis. However, this is balanced by a clear local resonance with *Ceoltóirí an Chláir* by Séamus Mac Mathúna; *Antiquities of North West Clare* by Etienne Rynne; *The piping of Willie Clancy* by Pat Mitchell; *Micheál Ó Coimín* by Eoghan Ó hAnluain and *The rich archaeological heritage of Clare* by Etienne Rynne. Notably, in 1979, the seventh year of the School, and perhaps with this regional sensibility now firmly established, none of the lectures pertain specifically to County Clare; instead they access and illustrate the musical traditions of other places and peoples, a platform that develops with the lecture series during the development of the School. These include: *Traditional music in the north of*

Ireland by Brian Vallely; *James Goodman the Music Collector* by Breandán Breathnach; *Songs of North West Derry* by Dr Hugh Shields; *Forgotten songs of Ireland* by Dr Liam Ó Caithnia; and *Whistle and flute playing past and present* by Séamus Mac Mathúna. A number of key authorities, most notably Breandán Breathnach and Séamus Mac Mathúna regularly populate the speaker list in the opening years.

Máirtín Ó Cadhain chastised the Folklore Commission for ‘being obsessed with everything old’, and accused it of neglecting more recent tradition, for example the living tradition of song composition in the Gaeltacht (Briody, 2007: 444). A similar complaint could not be raised against SSWC and lecture speakers are drawn from a wide pool of expertise which frequently includes contemporary research and perspectives that extend beyond the phenomenological immediacy of Irish traditional music. During an interview in 2009, Muiris Ó Rócháin lauded the relatively recent flowering of Irish traditional music research at third level and the increase in potential speakers that this afforded (Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). Indeed the 2009 line-up included two such young researchers with Tim Collins presenting *Around the house and mind the bonfire - dance spaces in East Clare and South East Galway* and Síle Denvir speaking about *Tradition and innovation in the Gaelic song tradition of Ireland and Scotland*.⁸⁰ Ó Rócháin also revealed the freedom with which potential lecture topics are chosen articulating that even if ‘any aspect of Irish music was particularly contentious, we never shied away from discussion’ (Ó Rócháin, 2013: 104). While the lecture series caters to only a minor cohort of the thousands who attend SSWC, they provide an important arena for the presentation of new research knowledge and ideas from Irish music scholars (and indeed Scottish and other jurisdictions) to a community of practice whose responses provide feedback and nurture discussion and debate. The inclusion of lectures is an idea replicated by other summer schools all of which provide an important outlet for the dispersal of academically situated research.⁸¹ Furthermore, the series confers additional cultural authority onto the School, representing an engaged curiosity that inheres with its namesake Willie Clancy.

⁸⁰ The other two lectures that completed the 2009 series were *Desire and duty: The collecting of Irish traditional music* by Nicholas Carolan and *Come listen a while to me ... a journey in the Ulster Song Tradition in English* by Len Graham.

⁸¹ Two other fora outside of both the summer school milieu and academia have developed more recently that provide a similar outlet: the Notes and Narratives Series organised by NPU and the Martin Reilly Lecture Series hosted by Comhrá Ceoil in Galway.

A secular performance

The importance and power of the Catholic Church at the time of the inception of both the Gaelic League and Comhaltas is demonstrated by the role and status of the clergy within these institutions. Ní Fhuartháin for example notes the regular appearances of clerics and politicians at the top table during opening ceremonies of Comhaltas events (Ní Fhuartháin, 2011: 95-6, 125). At SSWC, however, not only are clerics and politicians largely absent, but so too is the top table itself as ceremony is not stood upon and a hierarchy-free level playing field is idealised.⁸² As such then, the equation of nationhood with Catholicism first espoused by Daniel O'Connell and embraced through the revivalist activities of Comhaltas is largely absent from the foundationary impulses of SSWC. The festivity of SSWC described in Chapter 2 occurs both inside and outside of the Catholic Church. It draws on those symbols of celebration expedited by the pilgrimages, patterns and wake customs that characterised pre-famine Ireland (and resonate with the great Aonachs) but were banished by the clergy during de Valera's administration (Donnelly and Miller, 1998: xi). However, the weekly religious ritual of the mass is incorporated into SSWC, and *Aifreann i nGaeilge* (as 'mass in Irish' appears in the School's brochure) represents another aspect of continuity at the School, taking place on the first Sunday of the week from the outset of SSWC. The inclusion of mass at any social gathering of the time is a reflection of the fact that in 1973, 91% of the Catholic population attended Sunday mass (Inglis, 2004b: 655).⁸³ The School is now bookended by Festival masses in Irish. Up until 1978 the Willie Clancy Week officially finished with a gala concert on Saturday night, but since the start of the 1980s, a second mass with *Cór Chúil Aodha* takes place on the last Sunday of the week.⁸⁴ The early 1980s also saw the formal scheduling of Irish traditional music

⁸² This concurs with a changing attitude towards priests at the time as John A Murphy writing in 1976 states 'over the past fifteen years or so, the Irish priest has lost his mystique and much of the prestige that went with social eminence and moral domination' (Murphy, 1976: 147).

⁸³ This had declined to just over 60 per cent in the late 1990s (Inglis, 2004a: 73). Interestingly David Cregan notes that the decline in mass attendance in Ireland has been accompanied by an increase in pilgrimage to sites such as Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick (Cregan, 2009: 114).

⁸⁴ From 1978, additional céilís were scheduled which included the last Sunday night. *Cór Chúil Aodha*, the choir founded by Seán Ó Riada and now under the guidance of his son Peadar Ó Riada performed at Willie Clancy's funeral in January 1973, just as Willie had performed at Seán Ó Riada's funeral mass just fifteen months earlier in October 1971. Performances of *Aifreann Traidisiúnta* by *Cór Chúil Aodha* beyond the choir's local region were initiated by Seán Ó Riada from 1967 (Peadar Ó Riada, personal communication, 19 February 2014). The performance at Clancy's funeral and subsequently at SSWC characterises one of these initial performances. The Ó Riada mass represents another mark of authentication along the School's historical continuum, effectively interweaving the legacy of both Willie Clancy and the School with that of Seán Ó Riada.

performance as part of the first Sunday mass and therefore the sacred provides yet another outlet for the performance of both music and language at the School. Outside of these liturgical opportunities and with the exception of musical-instrument playing priests, or lecture givers such as an tAthair Seamus O’Dea and an tAthair Ó Fiannachta, the presence and role of the clergy at SSWC has been minimal.⁸⁵ Indeed the graveside tribute to Willie Clancy, the most sacred location used by SSWC, is an entirely secular affair, at which prayers and officiations are of the entirely musical kind.⁸⁶ This contrasts with the first Clare County Fleadh, held in Miltown in 1957 at which the ‘Very Rev. T. Canon O’Reilly, P.P’ undertook the official opening and wished the work of Comhaltas God’s blessing.⁸⁷ Likewise, the absence of invited officiating politicians discloses the School’s disposition towards political pandering. Geographical and genealogical ties to County Clare predisposes Síle de Valera to the role of opening the 1998 School in her capacity as Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the title of School Patron (from 1978-2008) was bestowed on former politician but by then President of Ireland, Patrick Hillery, as described at the beginning of this chapter.⁸⁸

Muiris Ó Rócháin insisted that ‘our criteria was never to get involved with associations’ and as a result the School has achieved an aura of egalitarian openness to everyone (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).⁸⁹ This desire for openness was explicated further;

⁸⁵ Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, Professor Emeritus of Modern Irish in Maynooth, contributed two lectures and officially opened SSWC in 1983. On the second two occasions he is referred to as *an tOllamh* (Professor) rather than *an tAthair* (father) Ó Fiannachta, perhaps demonstrating the School’s measure of his achievements.

⁸⁶ The openness of SSWC extends to local community-based groups which include the West Clare Curia of the Legion of Mary who park their Marion Caravan outside Vaughan’s house (beside the Community Hall) and next door to the RnaG Ródaí on Church Street a position facilitated by Mrs Vaughan and the School Committee. SSWC is now the only festival at which the West Clare Marion caravan is in attendance (Una Doyle, personal communication, 18 February 2014). Fintan Vallely quotes Con Fada O’Drisceol and Pat Ahern’s response to the proximity of the Legion of Mary caravan and the RnaG Ródaí: ‘the radio asked us to go down and do an interview and we were halfway through the third decade before we realised we were in the wrong caravan’ (Vallely, 1994).

⁸⁷ From the article ‘Thousands Present At First County Fleadh’ in the *Clare Champion*, 19 Aug. 1957.

⁸⁸ A ceremonial rather than political office. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland from 1990-97 opened the SSWC in 1993.

⁸⁹ He went on to qualify the integral role of NPU at a festival honouring a piper. However, what remains unsaid in this reference is the involvement of Comhaltas during the first year and their subsequent departure, which as Fintan Vallely noted, ‘marks the end of the importance of the “national”, “broad front” policy on Traditional music revival’ (Vallely, 2004: 19).

we're not bringing people because they belong to X or Y association, but because they have something to offer culturally, artistically, academically, intellectually, and not because they're branded. All organisations are very, very welcome and that has worked, we kept completely clear of the politics of music, we are very conscious about that... We kept clear of politics, even national politics, even opening the school, like, we were never concerned about hierarchical systems, we had no hierarchical structure, just everyone was the same, there was no one ... that still would exist. Treat people with the greatest of respect, not to make anyone special, in fact the people themselves respect that, even the very finest artists respect that, they come here to enjoy themselves and meet up with others (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009).

This particular mindset was informed by developments Muiris had witnessed at first hand. In an interview reported in Kearns and Taylor, he described with some dismay the treatment of sean-nós singer Johnny Mháirtín Learaí on his arrival at the office of the Fleadh Cheoil, at which he was an invited guest: 'there was no one to meet him ... all the committee ... were running after the fellow who was opening it, this ambassador. They hadn't time to talk to this man who was a prime artist' (Kearns and Taylor, 2003: 53). The School, then, was set up not by rules of the state or church or any other external body, nor in answer to a national question, but in response to locally-recognised needs and capabilities, with musicians, rather than priests or politicians occupying centre-stage.⁹⁰

Performing language 'the greatest music of all'⁹¹

Conceptualising SSWC's agenda as one of re-traditionalisation rather than revivalism, removes the nationalising frame that many revivalist groups found themselves (sometimes unwillingly) attending to. Through a process of re-traditionalisation, the School has demonstrated a clear focus on Irish traditional music. without an unspoken

⁹⁰ Muiris Ó Rócháin drew attention to the first nine years of the School when they 'didn't bother' with an opening ceremony (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). After that, people were chosen who 'had given a cultural directional contribution to Irish life' exemplified by the choice of poet Máirtín Ó Direáin. 'It's easy get a politician - they're only too willing for the publicity' (Ibid.).

⁹¹ Quoted by Willie Clancy in an interview published in *Dal gCais* where he declared that 'the Irish language is the greatest music of all' (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972: 111). This now forms part of the inscription on Willie Clancy's statue unveiled in November 2013 in Miltown Malbay.

nationalist agenda unduly influencing decision-making processes. Similarly, SSWC has no stated claim to promote the Irish language.⁹² Yet the presence of the language is an integral part of the school and it has appeared continuously in the brochure and in signage from the outset. Bilingual introductions at official events of the School (in which Irish is privileged) are commonplace and an explicit connection between Irish traditional music and the Irish language is made by the School, informed by a number of factors. Firstly, it is a response to Willie Clancy himself who articulated on numerous occasions during his lifetime a desire for greater fluency in the language.⁹³ Indeed attributes paid to Willie Clancy's performance of slow-airs frequently credit his knowledge and understanding of the words and phrasing of the airs being played. Secondly, the nostalgia and sense of loss experienced by loss of the Irish language informs nostalgia for old and absent music traditions, a theme which is concurrent with the School. Thirdly the Irish language signals longevity and historical continuity, and as such it informs the re-traditionalising project of SSWC and finally, the Irish language as one piece in a wider cultural jigsaw was central to the cultural understanding of the School's two key animateurs; Muiris Ó Rócháin and Harry Hughes. As stated by Muiris 'we're always very conscious of the importance of the language and centrality of the language in anything to do with Irish culture' (Muiris Ó Rócháin interview, May 2009). Indeed according to Áine Hensey 'Muiris in particular was adamant always that the Irish language would have a central role in a lot of the activities of the summer school over the years' (*Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 40th Anniversary Documentary DVD*, 2013). Undoubtedly, this dedicated and pervasive enthusiasm has maintained a meaningful and constant presence for the language at SSWC. A role that is cemented by the ever-present RnaG, founded in the year prior to the School, 1972 and indelibly linked through annual live broadcasts which now take

⁹² According to its organisers it didn't 'enter the field leaden with high minded cultural ambitions, like language revival for example. If this chanced to be another off-shoot of the week's main work, all the better' (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1993: 6). Undoubtedly the milestone decision in 1973 to remove Irish as a prerequisite for entry to the Civil Service and the necessity to pass the subject for school pupils to gain state Leaving, Group and Intermediate Certificates must have impacted the Irish-speaking School teachers/civil servants, Muiris Ó Rócháin and Harry Hughes who founded SSWC in the same year.

⁹³ Willie Clancy said in an interview shortly before his death 'If I were to choose in the morning between my music and a knowledge of the Gaelic tongue, I would settle for the latter' (Hughes and Ó Rócháin, 1972: 111).

place from the familiar RnaG Ródaí parked outside the community hall, visually and sonically securing an Irish language presence at the School.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Through the re-traditionalisation of performance, SSWC augments to the symbolic formation of West Clare as an archive of Irish [musical] identity.⁹⁵ SSWC creates an authenticating context through a variety of modes and factors which include continuity and ritual repetition, uses of space, stage talk, narratives and lexicon, family and language. The community hall at Miltown provides the high ceremonial platform on which Irish traditional music is displayed. However, performed within the structural restraints of the hall, the ‘display’ element is contained to maintain an authentic, modest aesthetic of Irish traditional music with perceived origins firmly emplaced in the rural, the ordinary and at a remove from the bright lights of modernity. As Stokes explains

Performance does not simply convey cultural messages already ‘known’. On the contrary, it reorganises and manipulates everyday experiences of social reality, blurs, elides, ironises and sometimes subverts commonsense categories and markers’ (Stokes, 1994: 97).

The recitals in particular have come to represent a very particular and specific re-traditionalised manifestation of Irish traditional music, providing a physical and metaphorical platform on which discrete performances of Irish traditional music are displayed to outsiders, but equally to the musicians themselves. Performers at SSWC are musical stylists who actively delineate threads of authenticity through their music, who make and claim linkages to the past, and whose validation and contextualisation of their interpretations have an enormous impact on the social construction of authenticity

⁹⁴ RnaG have recorded music at SSWC since the first year of the School, representing another cog in the machine of continuity and tradition at the School. As the years progressed, live recordings took place just outside Miltown at Rockmount National School. As the most elevated building in the area, it was crucial in providing a good signal for transmission. With the onset of mobile satellite technology, RnaG made live transmission from at first a caravan and eventually An Ródaí. RnaG’s outside broadcast unit (Áine Hensey interview, SSWC 2009).

⁹⁵ In the same way that Simon Warren speaks of the Gaeltachts emerging as an archive of national identity (Warren, 2012: 321).

within Irish music performance. The meta-communications which precede musical performance are key to these constructions, revealing the social relationships through which music-making inheres and the commitment to music demonstrated by individual players. These displays occur not just for those who pay to attend the School, but for the performers themselves. Furthermore, the reverberations of performance permeate a wider constituency, those attending in a less formal capacity who by their presence reveal the magnetic attraction that 'the real' generates. These performance models are dispersed, via the international attendance at the School to locations throughout the world in which Irish traditional music is played. As styles and narratives are emulated, authentic constructions are reformulated by performances in new locations.

A legitimising factor of SSWC is its repetition and re-enactment of an established set of meanings. Each tune that is played, extols the present, yet is entirely reliant on a memory process, a bringing back to life of a multi-faceted past in which the tune was previously performed, a combination of performance histories. Performances then at SSWC look backward in order to look forward, constantly imagining the future of Irish traditional music. Modernity has cleaved connections between place and identity and these connections require additional efforts in order to be re-made. These efforts are produced at SSWC and the elements of performance discussed in this chapter and the process of re-traditionalisation at SSWC has responsibility for the realignment of contexts for the performance of identity in place.

CONCLUSION

On the 9th November, 2013, Liam Óg O’Flynn unveiled a statue of Willie Clancy in the main street of Miltown (see photograph, Appendix 9).¹ Concluding with this unveiling, demonstrates the persistence of the legacy of SSWC at the moment in which this thesis bookends the first forty years of its existence. The statue fills a void, not just the void left by the piper Willie Clancy himself, but those fashioned by memories and rituals created in the performance of Irish traditional music during the first forty years of SSWC. Furthermore, it fills a sonic vacancy, by recuperating both Willie Clancy and his music from beneath the legacy of the School.²

Filling that void satisfactorily is a difficult accomplishment since a replacement rarely matches the original. Indeed Roach concurs that surrogation rarely succeeds because the substitute can never fulfil all its expectations.³ The performance practices of Willie Clancy during his lifetime are a conceptual surrogation for those of Garrett Barry, the nineteenth-century West Clare piper and last musical link musically to what might be conceived of as a mythical, West Clare performance rubric. Despite his efforts, Willie Clancy didn’t achieve this substitution. However, ‘in his playing, as in his conversation, he was constantly communicating, constantly contributing something very personal, a love, a feeling, a concern’ and arguably this musical communication and ‘feeling’ was, and is, vital to the creation and recreation of a West Clare musical identity facilitating acts of surrogation to continue through the enactment of the School (Mac Mathúna, 1975).

¹ The statue, executed by sculptor Shane Gilmore at the foundry of Séamus Connolly in Kilbaha, Co. Clare, was a philanthropic gift from Barry and Judith Merrill an American couple who spend part of the year in County Clare since buying a cottage on the coast beside Miltown Malbay. The Merrills publicly reiterated the significance of SSWC in influencing their decision to move to Miltown during the speeches after the launch (Judith and Barry Merrill interview, SSWC 2012 and launch speech, 9 Nov 2013, community hall, Miltown). The statue itself is an eloquent rendition of Willie Clancy; seated, smiling and playing with his instrument case at his feet it displays an extraordinary attention to detail and craftsmanship.

² Pat Mitchell once said that Willie Clancy ‘is associated more with the Summer School than with his own playing, and, certainly I would like - and I think it’s worthwhile from time to time - to bring his music in front of people and let people see just what a brilliant musician he was’ (*Lashings of Music*, RTÉ Radio 1, 2003).

³ Despite the attention to detail, which included the very careful copying of a Taylor set of pipes, the statue of Willie Clancy will not burst into a set of reels.

During speeches made at the community hall directly after the unveiling, Harry Hughes described the statue of Willie Clancy as a ‘permanent physical symbol of his legacy’ and he compared this to the ‘living commemoration’ of his legacy embodied by SSWC.⁴ In actual fact, the statue, and the layers of symbolism with which it is imbued, implicitly celebrates the legacy of SSWC as much as Willie Clancy himself. This factor is marked explicitly by the bench beside the piper ready to publicly welcome both contemporary and future visiting musicians to the new agora of Miltown Malbay as Willie Clancy had welcomed them during his own lifetime.⁵ As Chapter 4 reveals, the very public act of commemoration, brings issues of memory, identity and status to the fore. The raising of this statue therefore confers civic stature onto Willie Clancy and Irish traditional music, affording him a status in 2013 that was not widely available to him or indeed his contemporaries at that same locale during his own lifetime. Indeed both Willie Clancy and the School have taken on meanings and values independent of what takes place at the Willie Clancy Week in any given year.

The ambition of this thesis, therefore, has been to reveal the making of SSWC and its legacy through an exploration of the School’s historical development, organisational structure, ideological evolution and complex interactions with other institutions and an international community of Irish traditional musicians. In doing so it expands the arena of SSWC’s recognition, measurement and articulation within the epistemological field of Irish Studies, and by foregrounding SSWC as a site of analysis, makes a worthy contribution to the emerging discipline of Irish Music Studies. Utilising the tripartite division of transmission, commemoration and performance the thesis conceptualises SSWC as undertaking a process of surrogation, (re)constructing symbolic elements of Irish traditional music performance and engaging in a process of re-traditionalisation firmly rooted in place – in the local, in West Clare. It demonstrates how the impacts of SSWC reverberate throughout a wide community of practice, placing the West Clare canon within a wider cultural matrix of regional styles that are perceived to constitute

⁴ The term monument frequently appears in narratives of the School, for example President Hillery referred to SSWC as ‘the finest monument that one could imagine to ... an inspired musician who shared his great God-given talents so generously with so many’ and that furthermore ‘it was a memorial more enduring than any bronze or stone’ President Hillery quoted in the *Clare Champion* (9 July 1982).

⁵ In ancient Greek cities, the agora was an open space serving as an assembly area at the centre of the commercial, civic, social, and religious activities of the City. The highest honour for a citizen was to be granted a tomb in the agora. The statue of Willie Clancy and the adjacent bench will undoubtedly alter the future geographies and musical assemblies of those who visit Miltown.

Irish traditional music. By furthering the canon of West Clare, the School is grounded not just in a mere 'recovery of the past, but has positioned itself within the narrative of that past' (Hall, 1990).

The opening chapter utilises a close reading of an extract from the 'Question of Tradition' in which de Paor problematises the relationship between tradition and modernity in an Irish traditional music context, a relationship that is interwoven into the fabric of SSWC (de Paor, 1979: 24). This thesis demonstrates how through the processes of transmission, commemoration and performance, the School selects symbols and images (that Heaney might say are 'adequate to our predicament') to create a symbolic space in which the re-traditionalisation of Irish traditional music takes place (Heaney, 1980: 56). SSWC secularises Comhaltas hegemony over Irish traditional music practices by providing a space in which the symbols and institutions of Comhaltas, namely its organisation of competition, become insignificant. Instead, the uilleann pipes, imbued with unique historical and musical value and seen as a conduit to an ancient past are foregrounded in the School's narrative. However, as is revealed, demonstrable shifts from the material to the symbolic occur over the lifetime of the School, represented by the introduction of new instruments to the symbolic repertoire of taught classes. SSWC, therefore, provides a site of negotiation between tradition and modernity as they coalesce in the interstitial spaces of transmission, commemoration and performance. This adaptability and potential for change enables the School to remain relevant, to continue to produce meaning in an appropriate way by providing a site for constant renegotiation. At the same time the School retains a veneer of continuity by maintaining a communion with the past, and the absence of a written constitution is one of the key ways by which this is achieved. A founding document or constitution has the potential to create division between people with shared goals and the School instead articulates its ideology orally during introductions and in performance as the events of the School unfold. In this way it achieves the perception, at least, of adherence to an 'original' state of existence, which is integral to the on-going construction of authenticity at the School. SSWC meets the challenge of modernity not by preserving the past, which can result in museumization, but rather by facilitating the opportunity to have meaningful experiences and creating credible spaces for the on-going processes of negotiation and identity creation into the future (Relph, 1976). The ethos of the School centres on the recognition and understanding of

Irish traditional music within a global context, rejecting nostalgic notions of ‘pure’ tradition, and recognising instead the presence of multiple and hybrid identities.

The first two chapters embed the origins and development of the School within broad economic, political, cultural and musical processes. This demonstrates how in its early role-model days, SSWC provided one of the few contexts for musical practice ‘untouched by the hand’ of what Anthony McCann describes as either ‘competitions, tourism-oriented showcases, or commercial performance’ (McCann, 2001: 97).

Theorising SSWC within a cultural economy framework, Chapter 2 examines the configuration of festive space, problematising the ideological clash between both the ‘festival’ label and the official title of ‘School’ by which SSWC is characterised. It attends to concerns about overt aspects of commodification, particularly the negative light in which commodification is presented, critiquing its role in the loss of original forms and meanings. After a forty-year existence and in spite of the economic benefits it creates, the School itself has maintained its original cultural imperative, demonstrated by continued privileging of cultural production over economic exchange in decision-making process. Shared value systems and a spirit of voluntarism have prevented sponsors or external funding agencies from exerting overt gatekeeping influences over the School’s content (a more familiar scenario in the storybook of other festivals). The re-traditionalisation of Irish music at SSWC celebrates anew the rural origins of Irish traditional music and provides a modern identity for Irish traditional musicians. While the past is still reified, the celebration of the rural origins of Irish traditional music no longer represents the ‘backwardness, thick accents and the past’ that John Waters spoke of wanting to escape from (Waters, 1991: 66). Rather it offers a re-traditionalised, contemporary site, reconstructing authenticity in the restoration of respect for the performance of vernacular culture as represented by its tradition-bearers. It embodies the cultural authority of these tradition-bearers and carefully shares that authority throughout the school. The validation of qualities demonstrated to reside in Willie Clancy presents a cultural device through which the School organises and directs the system of collective values and assumptions that inhere to Irish traditional music. The location of the School in the ‘west’ is significant for its success, and it draws on the social and cultural capital created locally by earlier initiatives such as the Spanish Point Holiday Festival and the national re-invigoration of Irish traditional music by Comhaltas through festive competition. Specifically for Miltown, this

manifests itself in the first Clare county Fleadh of 1957, which importantly instates the concept of musical pilgrimage to West Clare, informing the cultural economy of the area through the development of stocks of social cultural and symbolic capital.

Chapter 3 explores the development of these stocks of cultural and symbolic capital, specifically through the privileging of the master-apprentice dyad. The School's workshops drew originally on the authority of tradition residing in older tradition-bearers emanating from this peripheral west of Ireland location. The discussion charts the foundational importance of the workshops to the School and their core value as sites of innovation and tradition. Innovation is displayed in the re-traditionalisation of the master-apprentice dyad, temporally and territorially to a week-long summer school. Tradition is constructed by highlighting the importance of previous generations, privileging and commemorating past 'masters' and the rural contexts of music-making in which they occurred. The process of surrogation continues with the masters of tradition who attempt to convey what has been passed on to them and who in turn are replaced and substituted during the lifetime of the School. The workshop environment demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of the tradition: oral transmission, a defining element of Irish traditional music is idealised, yet the provision of written notes of tunes at the end of a class and the facilitation of recording tunes clearly example how tradition and modernity engage with one another at the School. Hybridised elements (such as written out notes) become accepted as part of the tradition during the lifetime of the School, as tutors engage with the pragmatic reality of what they believe to be appropriate behaviour and values around music. This fusion of horizons takes place in a context conceptualised as traditional even in the presence of modern elements and traditional and modern horizons merge coherently (Gadamer, 1989).

The monument raised to Willie Clancy in 1974 is announced in Chapter 4 as the first monument to an Irish traditional musician, opening up an additional realm of influence exerted by the School. It traces the successive monumentalisation of traditional musicians post-1974, situating this succession within a wider national framework of commemoration. It demonstrates the explicit claim for continuity presented by the graveside ritual; its signification of a return to the source at the grave of Willie Clancy. Through this ceremony, the attendees are 'reminded of [their] identity as represented

by and told in a master narrative' (Connerton, 1989: 70). The piper's notes sound the process of surrogation as attempts are made to fill the vacancy created by the absence of an original, and memory and surrogation are shown as vital to the formation of identity through performance. This combination of monument, commemoration and performance at the grave reveal a powerful mnemonic system for constructing and producing an authentic identity.

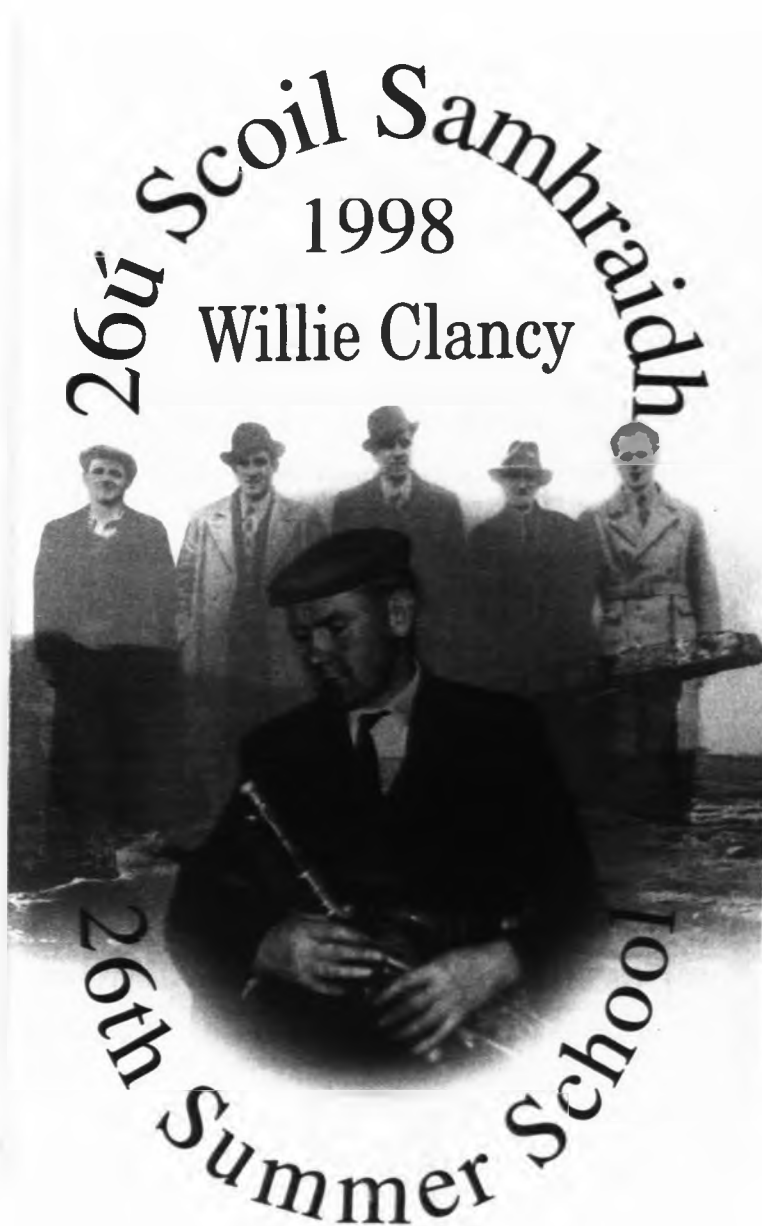
The final chapter turns its attention to performance, highlighting the single-instrument recital as locations in which the perceived continuity of tradition is played out and new modes of authenticity in performance are constructed. The meta-communications which precede musical performance are key to these constructions, revealing the social relationships through which music-making inheres and the commitment to music demonstrated by individual players. The paradox created by the tradition-modernity dialectic frames performance scenarios at the School, manifesting itself as an ideological conflict between the ceremonial and the modest as musicians on stage and on view enact, in individual and authentic ways, the performance of Irish traditional music. The success of the School rests in the creative tension produced at the interstices of this paradox, the public performance of modesty and frugality and the way that it is resolved in the moment of territorialised and re-traditionalised performance.

The fortieth year of the School bookends this thesis; a significant anniversary celebration for the School albeit tinged with sadness due to the untimely death of founding member and key animateur Muiris Ó Rócháin in October of the previous year (2011). The nostalgia and loss felt for Willie Clancy in Miltown was transferred in a process of surrogation onto Muiris Ó Rócháin during a marathon four hour tribute concert that celebrated his legacy during the Tuesday afternoon of SSWC 2012. When SSWC was established in 1973, the organisers demonstrated to the wider Irish music fraternity a new way to commemorate and mark Irish traditional music and the manner in which it has been modelled and replicated is indicative of its success. Since 1973, the consistent annual delivery of the School has established both Willie Clancy and SSWC as authenticating agents within the genre of Irish traditional music. Harry Hughes spoke of the 'transitional phase' the School has entered since Muiris' death (Harry Hughes interview, Nov 2013). The task of transferring the immense symbolic,

cultural and social cultural capital embodied by Ó Rócháin is no small one and the orality so highly prized and lightly worn by him presents an intimidating legacy of inheritance. However, the strength and meanings embodied by the name SSWC continue to assist the current committee, peopled with new blood and new ideas, to continue the transmission, commemoration and performance of Irish traditional music at SSWC in innovative and traditional ways. This thesis attempts to demonstrate that the celebration of Willie Clancy at the School is ultimately a continuation of his own quest for authenticity. SSWC provides an inspirational site for the imaginative dilemma of wondering about the music of the past as much as a project for resolving it in the future.

Appendix 1

Sample brochure front page cover from 1998



ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL

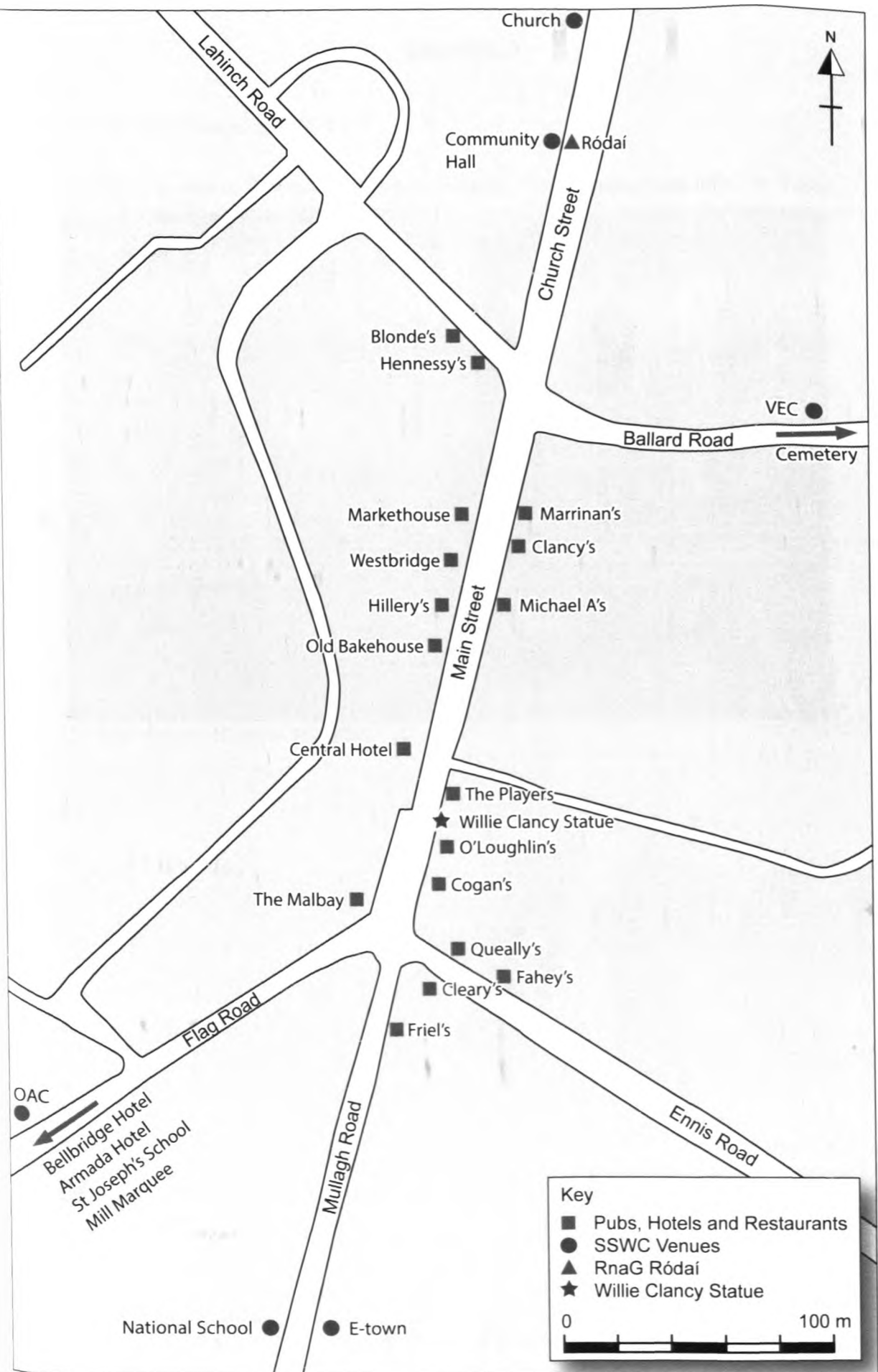
4ú Iúil - 12ú Iúil

(4th July - 12th July)

The Arts Council
An Chomhairle Ealaíon



Appendix 2: SSWC Locations, Miltown, Co. Clare



Appendix 3¹

The Archive Room, SSWC 2010

Capturing tradition: Ben Lennon, Vincent Griffin, Peter Mackey and John Joe Tuttle



Photograph by Michael McCabe

¹ Photographs by Verena Commins unless otherwise indicated.

Appendix 4

Brochure from the first SSWC, 1973, courtesy of OAC (two pages)

Programme: FIRST SUMMER SCHOOL

SCOIL ÉIGSE
SRÁID NA CATHRACH
CO. AN CHLAIR
WILLIE CLANCY

Iúil 28 - Lúnasa 4, 1973

SATHARN
July 28:

Hall

8.30 p.m.

Enrolment (all day at hall)

Failtiú - Seamus de Brun, Uachtaran C.C.E.

"Willie Clancy - the man and his music" - Seamus Mac Mathuna.

Cathaoirleach: Mairtin O Tailtigh.

10.00 p.m.

Open-air dancing and sessions.

DOMHNACH
July 29:

9.30 a.m.

Aifreann i nGaeilge

12.00

Visit to Willie Clancy's Grave

Speaker: Sean Reid

Pipe lament: Peadar O Lochlainn

Wreath Laying: Seamus de Brun

3.00 p.m.

Seisiún Piobaireachta in square - Seamus Ennis, Sean Seery, Leon Rowsome, Sean Reid, Peadar O Lochlainn and others.

Hall

9.00 p.m.

Ceili - Tulla Ceili Band.

LUAN
July 30

Vocational
School

10.00 a.m.

Ranganna - Sean-nós Singing, Fiddling, Piping, Adjudication and Teaching.

Hall

11.30 a.m.

Lecture on Modes - Pilib O Laoire

Hall

2.15 p.m.

Recitals - Seamus Ennis, Bobby Casey, Sean Keane and Tom Leachan.

School

3.30 p.m.

Ranganna

Hall

8.00 p.m.

"Traditions and Folklife of Clare"

Muiris Ó Fáthain

Cathaoirleach: Fr. John Hogan

MAIRT
July 31.

School	10.00 a.m.	Ranganna
Hall	11.30 a.m.	Group discussion
Hall	2.15 p.m.	Recitals
Hall	8.00 p.m.	"Flute and Whistle" - Seamus MacMathuna Cathaoirleach : Padraig O Maoileoin

CEADAOIN
August 1

School	10.00 a.m.	Ranganna
Hall	11.30 a.m.	"Sean-nos singing" - lecture Sean Og O Tuama.
Hall	2.15 p.m.	Recitals - Seamus Ennis, Paddy Murphy, Bobby Casey, Cuil Aodha Singers, Seamus MacMathuna.
School	3.30 p.m.	Ranganna
Hall	7.30 p.m.	Concertina Session Cathaoirleach : Junior Crehan

DAORDAOIN
August 2

School	10.00 a.m.	Ranganna
Hall	11.30 a.m.	Group Discussion
Hall	2.15 p.m.	Recitals
Hall	8.00 p.m.	"Gaeilge an Chlair" - Aindrias O Gallachoi Cathaoirleach: Muiris O Rochain.

AOINE
August 3

School	10.00 a.m.	Ranganna
Hall	11.30 a.m.	Lecture on Piping
Hall	2.15 p.m.	Recitals
Hall	8.00 p.m.	"Collecting Folk music in Co. Clare" - Ciaran MacMathuna Cathaoirleach : Labhras O Murchu.

SATHARN
August 4

School	10.00 a.m.	Ranganna
Hall	11.30 a.m.	Group discussion
Hall	2.15 p.m.	Ranganna
Hall	7.45 p.m.	Ceol-Choirm.

Appendix 5

Tiarnan Ó Duinchín playing at the Graveside Ceremony, SSWC 2011



Appendix 6

Monument to Willie Clancy, Ballard Cemetery, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare (1974)



Monument to Michael Coleman, Gorteen, Co. Sligo (1974)



Appendix 7

Monument to Pádraig O'Keeffe, Scartaglen, Co. Kerry (1983)



Edward Keating Hyland, Cahir, Co. Tipperary (1999)



Appendix 8

Francis O'Neill, Tralibane, Bantry, Co. Cork (2000)



Séamus Ennis, The Naul, Co. Dublin (2001)



www.geograph.ie/photo/1804951

Appendix 9

Willie Clancy, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare, 2013



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Sound and video archives

Local Studies Centre, Clare Library, Ennis, County Clare
Newspaper Collections

Na Píobairí Uilleann, Henrietta St., Dublin (NPU)
An Píobaire, Papers of Seán Reid

National Library of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin (NLI)
Newspaper Collections

Oidhreacht an Chláir, Miltown Malbay, County Clare
SSWC sound, video and digital archives

Journals

Ceol

Clogher Record

Comhar

Crane Bag

Dal gCais

Fonn

Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society

Irish Review

Musical Times

Old Limerick Journal

An Píobaire

Radharc

Treoir

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Irish Times

Web Resources

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Áine Hensey, 10 July 2009, SSWC
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