

A detailed image of a green harp with intricate gold floral and scrollwork patterns. The harp is positioned vertically, with its frame curving from the top right towards the bottom left. The strings are visible, and the harp is set against a solid black background.

# IRELAND

*Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690–1840*

THE MUSIC

## DEDICATION

WHEN OUR GRANDPARENTS and great-grandparents came to Chicago from County Cork and County Mayo in the late 1800s, Chicago was already a city with a large and established population of Irish immigrants. Some had come to work as laborers on the creation of the Illinois and Michigan canals (1836–48); many more had arrived as a consequence of the pervasive and persistent famine known as *An Gorta Mór* (the Great Hunger), which plagued Ireland from 1845 to 1851. From the depths of such profound hardship and struggle, hope-filled seeds were planted here in America's heartland and elsewhere that bore glorious fruit.

A century later, the broad and deep influence of the Irish and Irish-American population in Chicago is well documented: our fair city has been built, maintained, fed, educated, entertained, protected, and cared for by countless thousands of individuals and families who can trace their roots back to Ireland. Among this number are also twelve of our mayors, a number of fire and police chiefs, and scores of business, financial, political, civic, educational, and religious leaders of national and international renown.

Chicago is also well known as the home of a vibrant, talented community of Irish musicians, singers, and

dancers dating back to the mid-1800s, a heritage of which we have long been so very proud. Indeed, our chief of police from 1901 to 1905, Captain Francis O'Neill, is universally regarded as the single most important collector and publisher of Irish traditional music in the twentieth century. That said, the incredible artistic patrimony that we also share in has, perhaps, been underappreciated—until now. As indicated on the Art Institute's Web site, the museum "is not only the first but the only venue to present this show celebrating the Irish as artists, collectors, and patrons—a fitting tribute to Chicago's own deep Irish roots."

The primary purpose of this specially prepared compilation of Irish music is to serve as an accompaniment to this historic exhibition that amplifies its mission and message. It is also our hope that this recording will serve to honor the steadfast commitment of generations, in Chicago and elsewhere, who have sought to protect, nurture, and celebrate the unique and wonderful musical traditions of our Irish ancestors.

John and Patricia O'Brien

O'BRIEN INTERNATIONAL/RJ O'BRIEN

## INTRODUCTION

**IRELAND: CROSSROADS OF ART AND DESIGN, 1690–1840** was a wonderfully appropriate title for this ambitious exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. While it aptly described the intersection of artistic talent, both native and non-native, in the Ireland of the long eighteenth century, it also suggested the important social position that crossroads themselves held within Irish culture and reflects the very nature of this musical project.

In the Ireland of centuries past, the crossroads was a meeting place, a place of frequent and vital social interactions. Neighbors encountered one another not only by chance, but also by design. Village dances (*céilís*), political speeches, sporting stand-offs, and meetings large and small were held there: these crucial spots functioned as de facto open-air community centers.

The creation of this companion CD of Irish music for the exhibition is itself a modern-day crossroads experience. A diverse, inspired, and dedicated group of benefactors, musicians, sound engineers, scholars, photographers, graphic designers, and publishing professionals, along with a host of well-wishers, came

together for a noble purpose: to illuminate and celebrate the musical influences at work in Ireland between 1690 and 1840, and to sponsor the composition of new musical masterpieces inspired by the themes of this historic exhibition.

What follows is an hour of music, some from the ancient harp tradition, some carefully chosen from the distant past by Liz Knowles, and some especially composed by Chicago's own Liz Carroll. This booklet features selected images from the exhibition, brief notes and insights into the melodies themselves, and an insightful short essay on the role of the Irish country house. Taken together, it is our hope that these ingredients will extend the fond memories of your visit to the Art Institute while also serving to deepen your appreciation for Ireland's boundless

supply of musical, artistic, and cultural treasures and the people who create, collect, and care for them.

Please enjoy this moment at the crossroads with us.

Marty Fahey

PRESIDENT, O'BRIEN INTERNATIONAL



## PRODUCERS' STATEMENTS

I'M PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ASKED to compose and play music for my fellow artisans: the painters, metalsmiths, embroiderers, woodworkers, and instrument makers—and their apprentices and laborers—who created the work highlighted in this exhibition.

As the child of Irish parents, the soundtrack for all things Irish has played a huge role in my life; my father was an accordionist and my mom's father a fiddler. With



this music, I applaud the artists whose work you see while appreciating the benefactors who supported them and acknowledging the inspirations for the artwork: the history, the language, and the land itself. What a compelling period this was for Ireland!

So, on the shoulders of all of these people, and the musicians

I learned from, and the tunebooks and the musicians from whom they learned, and the collectors who gathered the tunes, and the musicians who composed . . . here it is, a homage to the period between 1690 and 1840 in music for ten rooms.

Liz Carroll

THERE ARE SOME VERY INTERESTING differences between what we think of as Irish music today and the musical environment of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland. Collections of music like those of O'Farrell, Petrie, Bunting, Goodman, and Neal each



tell a different story, revealing what tunes were in circulation and offering an indication of both their style and interpretation. The repertoire seems to have been far more varied, encompassing dance tunes from the Continent such as the minuet, pieces from popular opera and derived from songs, and tunes that have a strikingly different

modality than those in the common repertoire today. I chose to focus on these more obscure types of pieces to contrast and complement Liz Carroll's compositions.

My litmus test for dusting off such works was first, that they be interesting and attractive melodies, and second, that they say something both familiar and new to us as modern-day Irish musicians. This allowed us to engage with the exhibition in ways both historical and freshly contemporary. The idea of music as a piece of history that can be rediscovered and given breath again through the hands of musicians hundreds of years later is fascinating to me: it calls great attention to the power of music as a connector of human experience.

Liz Knowles



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A WARM, HEARTFELT THANKS to the following people and organizations who enabled this special project to come to fruition: benefactors John and Patricia O'Brien; Bruce Pfaff and Deborah Leydig Pfaff; producers Liz Carroll, Marty Fahey, and Liz Knowles; musicians Triona Ní Dhomhnaill, Catriona McKay, Kieran O'Hare, Jackie Moran, Emer Mayoock, Aoife Ní Bhriain, and Mick O'Brien; sound engineers Trevor Hutchinson and Blaise Barton; experts Ann Heymann, Nancy Hurrell, and Dr. Karol Mullaney-Dignam; note authors Marty Fahey, Liz Knowles, and Liz Carroll; editors Kieran O'Hare and Greg Nosan; Joan Sommers of Glue+Paper Workshop; Leslie Fitzpatrick, Sarah Guernsey, Stacey Hendricks, Beata Hosea, Katie Levi, Lauren Makhholm, Joseph Mohan,

Christopher Monkhouse, and Greg Nosan of the Art Institute of Chicago; Monica Baber, Susan Valand, and Jeff Miceli of O'Brien International; Nicholas Carolan of the Irish Traditional Music Archive; Donough Cahill of the Irish Georgian Society; Fintan Vallely, editor of *Companion to Traditional Irish Music*; Roseann Finnegan Le Feavour, Kieran McLoughlin, and Thomas Meagher of The American Ireland Fund; Chris Johnston of Johnston Antiques; and Chantal O'Sullivan of O'Sullivan Antiques. Financial support was provided by The American Ireland Fund, O'Brien International, RJ O'Brien and Associates, O'Sullivan Antiques, Johnston Antiques, and Mallett Antiques.

*For their steadfast encouragement of this project and their generous support—which made both the original release and the post-Exhibit release of this CD possible—the Musicians and Producers would like to thank all of the Lenders, especially John and Patricia O'Brien and Bruce Pfaff and Deborah Leydig Pfaff.*

Lead funding for *Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690–1840* has been generously provided by Kay and Fred Krehbiel, Jay Frederick Krehbiel, and the Krehbiel Family Foundation. Lead Corporate Sponsor, Kerry Group. Major support has been provided by Molex, Incorporated; Neville and John Bryan; Caryn and King Harris, The Harris Family Foundation; and the Eloise W. Martin Legacy Fund. Additional support has been generously contributed by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Maureen O'Malley Savaiano, The Buchanan Family Foundation in honor of Katherine H. Buchanan, Pamela and Roger Hull, Patrick and Aimee Butler Foundation, Richard and Ann Carr, Art and Diane Kelly, Maureen and Edward Byron Smith Jr. Family Endowment Fund, Doris and Stanford Marks, Philip and Betsey C. Caldwell Foundation, the Irish Georgian Society, Shawn M. Donnelley and Christopher M. Kelly, The Felicia Fund, Inc., Ellen and Jim O'Connor, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Ronald and Rose Wanke, Gloria G. Gottlieb, and Steven J. Zick. Annual support for Art Institute exhibitions is provided by the Exhibitions Trust: Kenneth and Anne Griffin, Robert M. and Diane v. S. Levy, Thomas and Margot Pritzker, and the Earl and Brenda Shapiro Foundation. The exhibition gala, CD, and commemorative concert are sponsored by RJ O'Brien & Associates LLC and Patricia and John O'Brien.

## 1. *Carolán's Concerto*

CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP)

THIS IS PERHAPS THE BEST-KNOWN composition by Turlough Carolan, or O'Carolan (1674–1738), Ireland's most celebrated composer. Born in County Meath, he moved with his family to County Roscommon, where his father worked at a foundry owned by the MacDermott Roe family. When he was blinded by smallpox at eighteen, Mrs. MacDermott Roe arranged for him to learn to play the harp and supported him until age twenty-one, when she provided him with a guide, a horse, and a stipend, which enabled him to begin an itinerant musical career in the manner of the times. Carolan was treated with the respect and hospitality accorded to harpers of the day by Catholic and Protestant gentry alike.

There is a widely accepted belief that Carolan composed between 200 and 225 melodies in his lifetime in addition to many poems and verses. According to Douglas Gunn, writing in the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, Carolan's work unites three distinct influences that make it unique, adding to the composer's interest and helping him transcend "any convenient musicological category": "the music of the Irish harping tradition, the roots of which extend to the depths of antiquity and which was to die out by the end of the eighteenth century . . . the traditional songs and dance music, and . . . the music of the great Italian composers of his day, in particular, that of Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)."

This version of *Carolán's Concerto* is taken from Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music* (1796). Bunting (1773–1843), a young church pianist and organist born in Armagh, was hired to transcribe

music at the historic Belfast Harp Festival in July 1792. His enthusiasm for the music he heard and the musicians he met resulted in his life's work, which included not only tours to meet and hear other musicians and singers, but also the three important collections of Irish music he assembled and published.

On the experience of playing this version of the melody, Catriona McKay writes, "For my twenty-first birthday, my folks gave me a special-edition reprint of the Bunting Collection, and this project offered an important moment for me to revisit this collection since my father's death and explore the music there. I grew up playing both harp and organ, so the Bunting Collection holds an interesting resonance for me. I hope that somehow I am finding a way to bring an energy from myself to the tune and that it might enhance the experience of those attending the exhibition."

*Carolán's Concerto* relates to a painting in the exhibition entitled *Carolán, the Irish Bard* by James Christopher Timbrell (figure 2). The scene depicts a popular though apocryphal story, first recorded by Oliver Goldsmith in 1760, of a meeting between Carolán and the famed Italian musician, composer, and theorist Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762). W. H. Grattan Flood relates the story in *A History of Irish Music* (1905):

At the house of an Irish nobleman, where Geminiani was present, Carolán challenged that eminent composer to a trial of skill. The musician played over on his violin the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. It was instantly repeated by Carolán on his harp, although he had never heard it before. The surprise of the company was increased when he asserted that he would compose a concerto himself at the moment, and the more so when he actually played that admirable piece known ever since as *Carolán's Concerto*.



The story of the painting's disappearance from Ireland, its long sojourn in Stockholm, Sweden, and return again over a century later is an interesting one. Much like the painter himself, who virtually disappeared from historical records after this painting was exhibited in 1844, there is little knowledge of the specific whereabouts of the painting between 1844 and 1948. It was believed to have been in the possession of a Swedish nobleman until it was acquired in 1948 by a café owner in Stockholm from a local antique dealer. It hung on the wall of his café until the mid-1970s when, by virtue of the keen eye of the Reverend Joseph Maguire, a cleric from Downpatrick, County Down, it was purchased and brought to Ireland. The priest's correspondence with

the Irish Ambassador to Sweden—for the purpose of researching the provenance of the piece—yielded some important facts about the painting's history; it also resulted in the painting being depicted on the Series B banknotes being designed at the time, which featured important historical themes and persons. The scene illustrated here was represented on the verso of the Series B fifty-pound note, which remained in circulation from 1977 until 1992, when it was replaced by the final Series C banknotes, which stayed in circulation until the advent of the Euro currency in 2002. (Marty Fahey)

## 2. *Blind Daniel the Piper (March)* *Crow Street (Reel)*

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BMI)

KIERAN O'HARE (UIJLEANN PIPES), TRÍONA NÍ  
DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP),  
LIZ CARROLL AND LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLES), JACKIE  
MORAN (BODHRÁN)

A DRAWING OF *Blind Daniel the Piper* appears in Hugh Douglas Hamilton's *The Cries of Dublin*, a volume of sixty-seven drawings Hamilton made of Dubliners going about their lives in the eighteenth century. It is said of him in the *Dictionary of Irish Artists*, "His little portraits, being faithful likenesses, full of expression and charm, quickly done and cheap, became the vogue, and the artist soon obtained a considerable practice." Following a chance discovery in Australia of an album of these drawings, a wonderful book was published in 2003 by the Churchill Press entitled *The Cries of Dublin, Drawn from the Life by Hugh Douglas Hamilton*.

Hamilton (1740–1808) was born in the Temple Bar area of Dublin on Crow Street. He was highly regarded and sought after in his day as a society portraitist as well. (Liz Carroll)

One can imagine this measured, stately melody—*Blind Daniel the Piper*—as a soundtrack for Hamilton as he sought out subjects to depict, or perhaps for a portraitist as he or she painstakingly depicted clients who often posed for endless hours in succession. In this era of instantly produced digital images, it is hard to imagine the preparation and patience that was required of artist and subject alike to see a portrait through from conception to completion. (MF)



### 3. *Lady Gordon's Minuet*

LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLE), LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE), KIERAN O'HARE (FLUTE), TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP)

*LADY GORDON'S MINUET* intrigues me. It has a lively, playful melody, very much in keeping with the sound and flavor of the Irish music we play today, but the minuet form is not found in today's repertoire. A minuet is a stately ballroom dance in 3/4 time originating in France. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections of Irish music include minuets, and one wonders if the lines between what today we would call traditional music and the classical music of the day were much more blurred. Might a social dance, whether at the crossroads or in a ballroom, have included minuets alongside the reels and jigs we now know so well? (Liz Knowles)

Little is known of this tune, which comes from the Petrie Collection and is listed as "set by Forde in the Co. of Mayo." William Forde (1795–1850) was a composer, teacher, concert promoter, and collector of Irish music.

*The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* suggests that, "in addition to transcribing tunes in Munster, he toured the Western counties of Sligo, Leitrim, Galway, Roscommon, and Mayo, filling his notebooks with c. 1,900 airs," some of which were published by the folk collectors George Petrie and Patrick Weston Joyce.

Dublin-born George Petrie (1790–1866) was a true Renaissance man who boasted accomplishments in music, archeology, art, and antiquarianism. He was a noted and accomplished artist, especially in watercolors, and several of his pieces reside in the National Gallery of Ireland. While employed by the Ordnance Survey, whose role was to produce de-tailed maps of Ireland, he was able to travel widely and encounter a great variety of musicians and regional musical styles.

In 1851 he helped to form and became president of The Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland. In 1855 it issued

the first volume of *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. Subsequent and posthumous volumes of Irish music collected by Petrie appeared in 1877 and 1882, and a three-volume compendium, published between 1902 and 1905, contains an impressive 1,600 melodies. (MF)





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## DUBLIN AND BOOKBINDINGS

### 4. *A View from the North (Air)*

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BMI)

CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP), LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE),  
KIERAN O'HARE (TINWHISTLE), LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLE)

MANY IMAGES of Dublin simply describe the artists' point of view. The title of this tune comes from Francis Place's *View of Dublin from the North* (fig. 5). Place (1647–1728) was a man of many talents: trained as a lawyer, he was a skilled draftsman, engraver, and artist, and later even spent time manufacturing ceramics. Like many other artists from England and the Continent, Place spent time in Ireland and recorded what he saw there. In *Ireland's Painters, 1600–1940*, Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin remark that “His views are not only topographically accurate but have a clarity of

vision and virtuosity which is not found again for several decades.” (LC)

Though it incorporated much older, even ancient, settlements, by the middle of the eighteenth century, much of central Dublin was taking the shape of a model Georgian city. In the British Empire, Dublin was second only to London in population.

Hearing this courtly melody, it is not hard to imagine an elegant candlelit drawing room on North Great George's Street or in Merrion Square, as musicians tuned



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their instruments, awaiting the signal from the host to commence . . . or even shiny, dark carriages slowly crossing the River Liffey as it danced with reflections of the clouds, buildings, and passersby. When the piece moves on, its musical motions are perhaps reminiscent of the studied, gentle, repetitive motions of a gilder embossing a leather binding. As in the technique itself, a repeating pattern takes shape, but in each repetition a new, complimentary color or detail is added. (MF)



## 5. *Soft Mild Morning*

MARTY FAHEY (PIANO)

THIS TUNE WAS COLLECTED by Edward Bunting from noted harper Denis Hempson, or O'Hampsey (1695–1807). Though he transcribed it in 1796, when Hempson was already 101 years old, Bunting did not publish it until the 1840 edition of his collection, where it is classified as being “very ancient, author and date unknown,” and with the side note that the piece is to be played “distinctly and animated.” Bunting collected many important melodies from Hempson, including “A Young Man’s Dream,” which is believed to be an earlier form of “The Londonderry Air,” itself an earlier form of the popular melody, “Danny Boy.”

Bunting reports that Hempson was the only harper of the ten who appeared at the historic Belfast Harp Festival in 1792 who still played in the old style, with long, crooked fingernails on strings of brass. While others played by pulling the strings with the fleshy part of the finger alone, Hempson caught the strings between the flesh and fingernails, which Bunting regarded as a vestige of an older and noble practice. Bunting also observed that Hempson’s abilities in combining staccato and legato passages, rapid divisions, double slurs, shakes, turns, and graces were, taken together, demonstrative of an astonishing level of technique and skill. This high opinion of Hempson’s musical skill and style was echoed by the harpist himself, who allegedly remarked that when he played the old tunes, “not another of the harpers would play after me.” In the

notes for this tune on his CD *Ancient Music for the Irish Harp*, Derek Bell, the famous harper and late member of the Chieftains, remarked that Hempson “disparaged the compositions of Carolan, regarding them as too modern.” (MF)

RELIGION, METALWORK, AND CERAMICS

## 6. *The Lough Derg Cross (Air)* *A Tale of a Tub (Reel)* *The Potter’s Wheel (Reel)*

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BMI)

LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE), LIZ KNOWLES (STRINGS: FIDDLE AND HARDANGER D’AMORE 5+5), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP), TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), KIERAN O’HARE (UIILLEANN PIPES), JACKIE MORAN (BODHRÁN)



LOUGH DERG, in County Donegal, has been an area of sanctuary and Christian pilgrimage since the Middle Ages. (LC)

For me, *The Lough Derg Cross* conjures images of a small church in a town in Ireland; as the congregation settles, a musician plays along with the harmonium, setting a reverential and meditative tone and creating a meeting place of the earthbound and the eternal. (MF)

*A Tale of a Tub* takes its name from a rather scandalous satirical play written by Jonathan Swift, published in 1704. The tub in the title



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(LC)

Ceramics: an alchemy of clay dug from the earth, shaped by human touch, exposed to extreme heat, finished by hand again, and then baked in extreme heat once more—all under the watchful eye of an artisan whose goal it is to render a beautiful idea incarnate, decorative, and useful. Yet for all of that noble effort, the result is always at risk, a fragile object requiring steadfast safekeeping. (MF)

## 7. *The Droning Old-Aged Woman (Jig)* *Byrns March*

LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLE), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP),  
TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), KIERAN O'HARE  
(UIILLEANN PIPES), LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE), JACKIE MORAN  
(BODHRÁN/TAMBOURINE/WAVE DRUM)

THE DRONING OLD-AGED WOMAN, from the Goodman Collection, is written as a jig but is notated to be played “slowly,” perhaps indicating that this might be the melody of a song. These tunes intrigue me both

was a word used to describe a religious (and sometimes political) dissenter’s pulpit.

*The Potter’s Wheel* celebrates the beautiful pieces in the exhibition and the coarse, everyday earthenware that served all the people of the island.

in style and harmonic content; they give a small insight into the grander scope of what music was played at this time in Ireland. *Byrns March* has two distinct sections, but there is a rhythmic figure at the end of both which repeats. It is curious, and this sort of figure does not exist in any other march that I am aware of in Irish music today. (LK)

The first tune is number 166 from the Goodman Collection (see notes to Track 13). The second tune, *Byrns March*, comes from *O’Farrell’s Collection of National Irish Music for the Union Pipes*, published in 1804 in London. This work contained fifty-three popular Irish tunes of the day and a piping tutor. While little is known of O’Farrell, he seems to have been born in Clonmel, Tipperary, around 1760 and to have been a piper of some renown. His work *The Pocket Companion for the Irish or Union Pipes*, variously published between 1805 and 1810, features 316 popular tunes of the day.

In the *Companion to Traditional Irish Music*, Patrick Sky sums up the importance of O’Farrell’s Collection in the following way:

It represents a number of probable firsts. 1) It is the first significant collection of Irish dance tunes collected and written down by a traditional musician and performer rather than [by] a scholar. 2) It is the first tutor for the union pipes. 3) It is the first Irish dance music collection by an Irishman, containing the earliest examples of many of the tunes that are in our current repertory.

Indeed, many of the popular tunes played by Irish musicians today can first be found in these collections. (MF)



TEXTILES, GLASS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS,  
AND FANCY WORK

## 8. *Planxty Charles Bunworth* *Rose and Kathleen's Slip Jig*

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BM)

LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP),  
KIERAN O'HARE (FLUTE, TINWHISTLES, UILLEANN PIPES),  
TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), LIZ KNOWLES  
(FIDDLE, HARDANGER D'AMORE 5+5), TREVOR  
HUTCHINSON (ACOUSTIC BASS)



CHARLES BUNWORTH (1704–1772), from County Cork, was a great proponent of Irish music, especially harp music, and was also a harpist himself. The instrument by John Kelly featured in the exhibition (fig. 18) was made for Reverend Bunworth.

A *planxty* is a tune that honors or thanks someone. In respect to the word's origin, Donal O'Sullivan writes the following in *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*:

The tunes called Planxties . . . owe their origin, if not, as I believe, their names, to Carolan; and are to be regarded as a class of festive harp-tunes composed in honour of his patrons or hospitable entertainers, and, as such, only differing from his other airs composed for the same purpose in the greater gaiety and playfulness of their movements.

The slip jig is a uniquely Irish dance to a tune in 9/8 time. *Rose and Kathleen's Slip Jig* honors two of my fellow musicians, Rose Conway Flanagan (fiddle) and Kathleen Conneely (tinwhistle), wonderful players and teachers. The melody of the tune contains my own bow to Chicago in a blues progression to end the twelve-bar first part. (LC)

The variety of skills involved in designing and making musical instruments is quite broad: a working knowledge is needed of aesthetics, acoustical engineering, physics, mathematics, metalworking, music, woodworking, and even chemistry. Put all of those diverse skills in the hands of an artisan or two, and you may get a noteworthy instrument, or you may not. There is a certain ineffable and elusive quality that separates acceptable instruments from great ones, and opinions differ: what delights one musician is perhaps not as pleasing to



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the next one. Musicians too can make magic happen with one instrument and yet not with another. Personal taste plays a large part in the final analysis.

The same can be said of musical compositions, arrangements, and performances: backgrounds, tastes, and moods, as well as the nature of the acoustic environment where music is played, all play a role in the “success” of a musical experience. Indeed, an amazing number of factors have to coincide for the entire experience to be deemed a pleasurable one.

This beautiful pair of melodies and their complex, multilayered arrangements celebrate the complicated, wonderful experience of music making and its appreciation by the listener. (MF)

## 9. *The Dark Slender Boy (Air)*

KIERAN O'HARE (UILLEANN PIPES)

THIS BEAUTIFUL AIR, called in Irish “An Buachaill Caol Dubh,” exists in many different versions in various historical collections of Irish music. Lyrics to be sung to the melody were composed in the mid-eighteenth century by Seán Ó Seanacháin, “whose eccentric character and general irresponsibility”, according to Donal O’Sullivan in *Songs of the Irish*, “earned for him the sobriquet of ‘Seán Aerach’ or ‘Flighty Jack.’” It is clear that the boy of the piece’s title is an allegorical reference to the



bottle and to alcoholism. The tune has historically been a favorite among uilleann pipers, as its melodic structure lends itself beautifully to the sort of simple chordal self-accompaniment the piper has at his or her disposal. (Kieran O'Hare)

## THE UILLEANN PIPES

The uilleann pipes, which developed at some point in the eighteenth century, are the most sophisticated form of bagpipe in existence. Their complexity and innovation are a testament to the ingenuity of the period's great instrument makers, including Kenna, Egan, Coyne, and Taylor, who had a hand in their evolution. *Uilleann*, the Irish word for elbow, refers to the piper's right elbow, which is strapped to a bellows that is used to supply air through a tube to a bag under the piper's other arm. This bag in turn serves as a reservoir for air supplying the instrument's three components: the pipe upon which the melody is played, called the chanter; three drones, which sound three octaves of a constant background note; and three regulators, which are modified versions of the chanter bearing wrist-operated keys that the piper uses to provide rudimentary rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. While the uilleann pipes have long been used to play dance music, they are also beloved because their distinctive tone enables a good piper to give beautiful expression to the airs of songs in both the English and Irish languages. (KO)





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## FURNITURE

### 10. *The Plane of the Plank (Hornpipe)* *The Knight of Glin's Jig*

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BMI)

LIZ CARROLL (FIDDLE), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP),  
KIERAN O'HARE (FLUTE, UILLEANN PIPES), TRÍONA NÍ  
DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLE),  
JACKIE MORAN (BODHRÁN)

THE PLANE OF THE PLANK is a stair-making term that describes the angle or pitch of a circular handrail.

The 29th Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald, who died in September 2011, was a guiding light of this exhibition and a lifelong collector and champion of Irish painting and furniture. The books he coauthored on those subjects are highly esteemed reference materials. (LC)

The set starts with a lovely, lyrical hornpipe that seems to celebrate finished pieces of Irish furniture, which featured the finest selection of walnut, mahogany, and other varieties of wood. Skilled craftsman employed



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techniques such as carving, turning, and punching in order to achieve incomparable motifs including swags, flowers, shells, masks, birds, and hairy paw feet.

But before furniture could be fashioned, a tree had to be found and felled, and the music takes us backward to the beginning of the process.

According to Chantal O'Sullivan and Chris Johnston, veteran dealers of Irish antiques, the raw timber—then safely aboard ships from Cuba or somewhere equally far afield—rode the high seas until docking in Cork and Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) harbors en route to London. As a consequence, Irish cabinetmakers enjoyed the first opportunity to sort through the valuable cargo and to choose unrivaled materials from which to begin their projects. The availability of old-growth timber of this character and caliber was a boon for Irish artisans and is, sadly, a thing of the past. (MF)

*This track is dedicated to the memory of Paul Johnston of Johnston Antiques, Dublin. Since the early 1960s, Paul, together with his father and brother, Chris, did much to raise awareness of, and appreciation for, the unique character and beauty of Irish furniture.*

## 11. *Sir Ullick Burke (Lament)*

LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLE)

SIR ULICK BURKE, composed by Turlough Carolan, is a wonderful melody that to me has a structure almost reminiscent of a piece by Johann Sebastian Bach. It allows tremendous scope for the player to bring his or her own sense of embellishment and personal style to its interpretation. (LK)

Most of the two hundred or more tunes that are now attributed to Carolan bear the name of the patrons to whom they were dedicated, suggesting that the musician enjoyed the hospitality and goodwill of a great many people during his time. The depth of this affection is demonstrated in a special way by this plaintive lament, which he composed for Sir Ullick Burke (d. 1708). The story of its genesis appears in Donal O'Sullivan's *Carolan: The Life, Times and Music of an Irish Harper*:

Carolan proceeded from Mr. Maguire's of Tempo to Glink in the County of Galway, the seat of Sir Ullick Burke, but on his way, through the severity of the weather, he was forced to stop at a place called Glean Geivle. . . with difficulty he succeeded in going to Glink, but unfortunately for Carolan, Sir Ullick was dead and buried some days before he arrived there. Lady Burke gave a strict charge to all in the house not to inform Carolan of his death until she would communicate it herself after some time. Carolan, however, was not forgetful of Sir Ullick while he was by storm bound at Glean Geivle, as he composed two verses of the song for Sir Ullick; and, after some days' resting and making fruitless inquiries about him, he strung his harp and began to sing his verses. His followers and domestics being assembled about him, notwithstanding the restraint which was

laid upon them, when they heard his name mentioned by our bard in his song their stifled sobs and cries soon informed him of the fate of Sir Ullick. He then laid down his harp and after indulging himself in shedding tears of real sorrow for his loss he again took up his harp and sang the last verse in elegiac style, far surpassing the two first verses. (MF)

## LANDSCAPES AND TOURISM

### 12. *Irishtown (March)*

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KIERAN O'HARE (UIILLEANN PIPES), TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP), LIZ CARROLL AND LIZ KNOWLES (FIDDLES), JACKIE MORAN (TOM)

DUBLIN IS A CITY founded by Viking invaders and then taken over by Norman raiders. With the Norman invasion, native Gaelic residents of Dublin were moved out to an area south of the River Liffey, and that area became known as “Irishtown” (see fig. 15). (LC)

This march conveys the sense of movement over the ancient and rugged coastline through to the awe-inspiring hills, valleys, and lakes of the Irish countryside, whose beauty, power, and majesty have enchanted visitors for millennia.

One of the very first popular tourist destinations in Ireland was the Lakes of Killarney, which Jonathan Fisher beautifully depicted in a painting included in the exhibition (fig. 16). (MF)



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### 13. *[It was] A Magic Mist that came over me one night and put me astray*

MICK O'BRIEN (UIILLEANN PIPES), EMER MAYOCK (FLUTE), AOIFE NÍ BHRIAIN (FIDDLE)

THIS HAUNTING MELODY WAS COLLECTED by Canon James Goodman (1828–1896) and is recorded in his *Tunes of The Munster Pipers, Volume 1*. Goodman's family were Protestants of English extraction, and his father and grandfather before him were Church of Ireland curates for over eighty years in Dingle. As a Church of Ireland clergyman, professor of Irish at Trinity College, and an accomplished singer and uilleann piper, Goodman was a remarkable figure in his day, steeped in the traditions, customs, and music of his predominantly Catholic neighbors. As a result of his collecting activities, he was able to produce four manuscripts containing some 2,200 tunes. Amazingly, these works remained largely





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unknown, as they were kept in storage at Trinity College after his death. They were brought to public prominence first by Breandán Breathnach, a noted scholar, author, and collector of Irish music, and later when they were edited by Hugh and Lisa Shields and published by the Irish Traditional Music Archive in 1998 and 2013.

According to the archive, “Most of these performers were probably born in pre-Famine Ireland, most of them were Irish-speaking, many were pipers in a period when uilleann piping was already at an advanced stage of its development.” (MF)

## 14. *The True Love of my Heart* (*Slow Piece*)

© LIZ CARROLL / GROW YOUR OWN MUSIC (BMI)

LIZ KNOWLES (HARDANGER D'AMORE 5+5), CATRIONA MCKAY (HARP), TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD)

### A MELODY for a bygone era. (LC)

This is a simply stunning composition with equally wonderful arrangements and execution by Liz Knowles, Catriona McKay, and Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill.

Both the melody and the performance are evocative of an imaginary party in one of Ireland's great houses of the era. Such homes were the hub for many gatherings that featured wonderful music performed by talented musicians and singers. In the harp interlude, one might even hear both the soft ringing of bells downstairs, alerting the staff to newly arriving guests, and of the crystals on the chandelier gently clinking together as the front door opens to welcome them. (MF)

## 15. *Carolan's Farewell to Music*

TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL (KEYBOARD)

MUSICIAN TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL writes, "I think I first heard this piece from a recording of the harpist Gráinne Yeats. I instantly loved the piece and her treatment of it—I've always felt there's something very lonesome and poignant about this particular tune

of Carolan's that makes me think of and imagine this blind harper in his last days on earth composing such a masterful piece of music."

This melody is purported to be the last that Turlough Carolan composed. It is a melancholy but fitting testament to his remarkable talent and career, and also a fitting end to this recording.

Thank you for listening. (MF)





## THE EGAN HARP

In the early nineteenth century, the leading harp maker in Ireland was John Egan (active 1801–41), who in 1821 attained the prestigious royal warrant of Harp Maker to His Majesty George IV, which the monarch bestowed upon his historic visit to Ireland. Egan first manufactured French-style pedal harps with decorative Neoclassical designs, which were popular with aristocratic ladies; later, he invented his new Portable Harp (see the cover of this booklet), a small gut-strung instrument formed in an Irish harp shape—which is to say with a high head and a bowed pillar—and covered in patriotic golden shamrocks. Egan also contributed to the Irish harp revival movement by supplying newly designed wire-strung harps to Dublin's Irish Harp Society (1809–12) and the Belfast Harp Society (1819–39) for their charitable schools, where the ancient harp music was taught to poor blind boys. However, his crowning achievement was the petite Royal Portable Irish Harp, capable of key changes via ring stops or ivory ditals; this model was copied by succeeding generations of harp makers including Morley and Clark, evolving into today's Irish or Celtic harp. (Nancy Hurrell)



## THE BUNWORTH HARP

An inscription on the fore pillar of the Bunworth Harp (fig. 18) informs us that the instrument was made by John Kelly in 1734 for the Reverend Charles Bunworth of Baltdaniel (Baltydaniel), County Cork. Its original color scheme was red and black with white highlights and touches of blue (lapis lazuli), green (malachite), and other pigments. At some later time, the harp was covered in brown varnish; this was probably to obscure the carved decorations that overtly declared the strong Jacobite leanings held by both Bunworth and the poets

who attended the Munster competitions, which he presided over for some forty years. Though an Anglican rector, Bunworth was known as an excellent performer on the Irish harp, and as the presider at Munster, he would have needed to compose and extemporize verse in Irish, English, Latin, and perhaps Greek. Like the harp played by Turlough O'Carolan, this example was strung mostly in brass wire, and its form is the final development of the Irish harp (*clairseach*) that appears on every Irish coin. This type was indigenous to Gaelic-speaking areas of Ireland and Scotland; performers relied upon it both for ceremony and entertainment, using it to play instrumental music and accompany the singing of bardic poetry and genealogy. (Ann Heymann)



## CULTURAL NEXUS: THE COUNTRY HOUSE IN IRELAND

During the period from 1690 to 1840 and beyond, the country house in Ireland served as a functional institution in the rural landscape. Notwithstanding the social, economic and political inequalities it represented—and continues to represent in some quarters—it was not somehow separate or entirely isolated behind its demesne walls. Rather, by virtue of its lands, contents, inhabitants, employees, agents, tenants, and all who

were part of the landed estate system, it was entrenched in the local economy and connected to wider networks of supply and demand.

Patronage, consumption, and display played an important role in everyday life and in the creation of social identities during this period. Motivations were manifold, but landowning families were the most influential cultural patrons, consumers, and collectors of

their age. They employed natives and immigrants to paint portraits and views of their estates; to design, build, decorate and furnish their homes; and to educate and entertain their relatives, friends, and associates. The celebrated Irish harper Turlough Carolan did not compose and play music exclusively for Catholics or Protestants, Gaelic-Irish or Anglo-Irish, but for people who had the resources to acquire his services and provide him with a living.

Although levels of interest varied among individual landowners, the intellectual and cultural milieu of the country house—real and imagined—fostered creativity. It inspired architects, plasterers, furniture makers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, among others, to develop their skills to levels of sophistication comparable, if not superior, to contemporaries in England and on the Continent. Consequently, the country house was a rich cultural nexus that influenced and was influenced by a complex set of factors.

Suppliers of cultural goods and services actively sought the custom and patronage of the so-called nobility and gentry, encouraging transmission among a broader section of the population and ultimately enabling commodification. This allowed urban centers across the island to sustain flourishing trades in the manufacture of musical instruments and printing of sheet music. It was in this context that Irish men such as John Egan produced his distinctive Royal Portable Harp and Thomas Moore published his *Irish Melodies*, both acting as cultural mediators while capitalizing on the patronage of persons who possessed—or aspired to—wealth and status.

The past is our shared inheritance, and history is a process of enquiry offering ways of understanding

the past that change over time. According to the latest available tourism figures, visiting country houses and castles is currently the most popular passive pursuit for Irish domestic holidaymakers. This cultural shift (coupled with the current enthusiasm for family, social, and cultural history) challenges custodians and scholars to think differently and more inclusively about these historic properties and their contents in order to meet visitor expectations.

Until recently, the history of the country house in Ireland focused largely on contentious issues of land-ownership, religion, politics, and power, presenting singular narratives of opposition and destruction, of monuments and treasure houses of artifacts. The scholarly and collaborative study of the arts and music in the context of the country house offers alternative perspectives on the place of landowning families in their communities, as well as the social relationships fostered by activities like music making, singing, and dancing. It enables us to think less in terms of division and more in terms of mutuality, thereby creating more sophisticated interpretations that acknowledge difference but highlight interdependence at local, national, and international levels.

The commodification of culture and gentrification of the Irish landscape in the long eighteenth century required native cultural providers, Carolan's several anonymous contemporaries and successors among them, to adapt to new realities; it is our responsibility to retrieve them from historical obscurity and acknowledge their achievements. (Dr. Karol Mullaney-Dignam)

Karol Mullaney-Dignam, Ph.D., is a historian and historical consultant who teaches in the Department of History at the University of Limerick.

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