



**NUI MAYNOOTH**

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

**STATE, NATION AND MUSIC IN INDEPENDENT  
IRELAND, 1922-51**

by

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## Abbreviations

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| B.B.C.                           | British Broadcasting Corporation                                  |
| C.C.D.B.                         | Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests                |
| C.S.M.                           | Cork School of Music  |
| C.T.I.C.                         | Cork Technical Instruction Committee                              |
| <i>Dáil Éireann deb.</i> [etc]   | <i>Dáil Éireann parliamentary debates official report</i> [etc]   |
| dept.                            | department (of)   |
| D.M.G.C.B.                       | Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilidhe Band                           |
| D.M.P.                           | Dublin Metropolitan Police  |
| D.M.S.M.                         | Dublin Municipal School of Music                                  |
| D.P.S.                           | Dublin Philharmonic Society                                       |
| ed.                              | education(al)   |
| (ed.)                            | editor(s), edited by, edition                                     |
| <i>F.J.</i>                      | <i>Freeman's Journal</i>  |
| G.A.A.                           | Gaelic Athletic Association                                       |
| H.M.V.                           | His Master's Voice (record company)                               |
| I.B.C.                           | Irish Broadcasting Company  |
| I.F.C.                           | Irish Folklore Commission   |
| I.F.M.                           | Irish Federation of Musicians                                     |
| <i>I.I.</i>                      | <i>Irish Independent</i>  |
| I.N.M.L.                         | Irish National Music League                                       |
| I.R.A.                           | Irish Republican Army   |
| I.R.B.                           | Irish Republican Brotherhood                                      |
| <i>I.P.</i>                      | <i>Irish Press</i>  |
| <i>Ir. Statesman</i>             | <i>Irish Statesman</i>  |
| <i>I.T.</i>                      | <i>Irish Times</i>  |
| <i>Leader</i>                    | <i>Leader</i> newspaper   |
| M.A.I.                           | Music Association of Ireland                                      |
| mus.                             | music, musical  |
| N.A.I.                           | National Archives of Ireland                                      |
| n.d.                             | no date/not dated   |
| N.L.I.                           | National Library of Ireland                                       |
| N.U.I.                           | National University of Ireland                                    |
| p&t                              | posts and telegraphs (department)                                 |
| P.R.S.                           | Performing Rights Society (London)                                |
| R.A.M.                           | Royal Academy of Music (London)                                   |
| R.D.S.                           | Royal Dublin Society  |
| rep.                             | report  |
| R.H.A.                           | Royal Hibernian Academy (of arts)                                 |
| R.I.A.M.                         | Royal Irish Academy of Music                                      |
| R.T.É, P.A.                      | Radio Teilifís Éireann, Printed Archive                           |
| <i>Seanad Éireann deb.</i> [etc] | <i>Seanad Éireann parliamentary debates official report</i> [etc] |
| T.C.D.                           | Trinity College, Dublin (University of Dublin)                    |
| T.D.                             | Teachta Dála (member of the Dáil)                                 |
| U.C.C.                           | University College, Cork  |
| U.C.D.                           | University College, Dublin  |
| V.E.C.(s)                        | Vocational Education Committee(s)                                 |
| W.A.A.M.A.                       | Writers', Actors', Artists' and Musicians' Association            |

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will examine the relationship between state, nation and music in independent Ireland in the years between 1922 and 1951. It seeks to draw together these three elements, to establish the nature of their tripartite relationship in that period and to register the level of compromise and reciprocity within that relationship where appropriate.

This study does not purport to be a historical survey of music or musical activity in independent Ireland from 1922 to 1951, although many of the major musical events and developments are chronicled. It does not purport to be a study of the nature of music in independent Ireland either, in terms of developments in harmonic and rhythmic structure and arrangement, composition, recorded sound, printed musical scores, or lyrical content, although references to these will be made where suitable or necessary. The term 'music', as it is used here, generally refers to the practical art of producing sound, both instrumental and vocal, and the sound so produced, as well as any academic engagement with or general activity related to that art.

Incidentally, the term 'state' as used in this dissertation refers mainly to the civil government of independent Ireland after 1922, although it should be clear when it is used to denote the territory of the island. The term 'nation', altogether more difficult to define, largely refers, in this context, to the people of independent Ireland united somehow by ideas of common descent or language, or simply by virtue of inhabitancy within the state. Indeed the various attempts by the civil government of the newly independent state to project a definition of the Irish nation and Irish nationality after 1922, and the role that music played therein, forms a central tenet of this thesis.

The primary objectives of this study, then, are to investigate to what extent music was used by the Irish state after 1922 for the purposes of defining, inculcating, expressing or projecting Irish nationality, to establish thereby a political framework for certain developments in musical activity and to determine to what extent and end such developments were affected, intentionally or otherwise, by the state. Issues central to the development of a new independent polity attempting to express a sense of identity, in an era of international advances in the purpose and methods of education and in relevant technologies such as the radio, will provide a wider

perspective for examining music and musical activity in the first three decades of independence in Ireland.

In that regard, the time frame chosen for this study is significant in itself. It spans three different government administrations, from the Cumann na nGaedheal party, which worked between 1922 and 1932 to consolidate and legitimise the new independent state, to the Fianna Fáil party, which consistently pointed to the inadequacy of the efforts of their predecessors and undid the extant constitutional ties of the state with the former United Kingdom in the period from 1932, to the first coalition, or inter-party, government of independent Ireland, which comprised five parties, Fine Gael, the Labour Party, Clann na Poblachta, Clann na Talmhan and National Labour, and lasted until June 1951, the point at which this study ends.

This period between 1922 and 1951 also saw many notable occurrences such as the civil war, the introduction of sound films, the establishment of the national broadcasting service and Irish neutrality amongst many others, as well as some of the most momentous world events of the twentieth century such as the Great Depression of the 1930s, the growth of popular and jazz music, shifting attitudes towards women, the evolution of international political ideologies such as fascism and communism, the apotheosis of the nation-state and the Second World War. The period was thereby a period of tremendous social and cultural change.

Accordingly, much of the relationship that the Irish state had with music and musical activity was informed by attempts to prevent such changes from permeating the apparently traditional, and thereby inherently 'national', values of the Irish nation. This study will, then, also attempt to understand the complex tripartite relationship between state, nation and music, not only in terms of the domestic implications of that relationship but also in terms of some contemporary historical events, with particular regard to the relationship of the independent Irish state with Great Britain.

The primary sources of information regarding these various correlations are the records created by the relevant state departments, and the reports published by certain bodies under the auspices of these departments, such as Radio Éireann or the revenue commissioners, in addition to the official parliamentary reports of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann. Departmental, personal and party attitudes towards music as a cultural endeavour in its own right or as a facilitator of the national agenda of the state are discernible, with different levels of subtlety and transparency,

within these records. Indeed many of the departmental files, which are available at the National Archives of Ireland, present sufficient detailed information to construct a number of pertinent case studies illustrating the central themes of this dissertation.

Private papers for the main protagonists of this narrative are used to a lesser degree for a number of reasons. Firstly, some of the papers of the main musical figures are inaccessible and those of the relevant political figures feature little about the working relationship between state, nation and music. Mulcahy's papers are a notable exception. However, the relevant sections of such papers have been dealt with by others such as Joseph J. Ryan or Richard Pine, as mentioned below. Thus, to avoid overlap, citations from private papers are kept to a minimum and the relevant secondary treatment referenced in footnote form.

Periodicals and newspapers, regional and national, daily and weekly, provide contemporary interpretations of many of these attitudes and resultant policies as well as a register of public sentiment regarding any developments, or lack thereof, in music or musical activity right across the period in question here. Reports published by other relevant bodies such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin also highlight the extent to which certain state endeavours impacted upon specific musical developments in Ireland. These annual publications, along with the annual published reports of the department of education and the reports of the census of population taken in 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951, also provide pertinent statistical information.

This empirical data, detailing, for example, the numbers of musicians and music teachers in employment, or the numbers of pupils who sat secondary school examinations in music, or the numbers attending music classes at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, or the various personnel involved with that institution, in independent Ireland across the period in question here, has been compiled and presented in the form of appendices to this study. The appendices, which also contain excerpts of certain apposite primary documents written by contemporary commentators, serve a dual function in that they are directly relevant to this study and are referenced on numerous instances within, yet they can also be utilised as a separate historical resource or work of reference.

Academics in Ireland have, until very recently, been complicit in disregarding cultural activity as a relevant factor in the emergence and establishment of the independent Irish state or in the evolution of national ideology in Ireland during the

period from independence to the 1950s, let alone in regarding the relevance of a study of the reciprocal influence of the state on cultural activities in that period. Music seems to have been particularly affected in this regard and few, if any, of the standard general historical surveys of developments in independent Ireland in the period in question here, which afford greater importance to political and economic considerations, even register music as a relevant cultural endeavour, apart from two notable exceptions.

*A new history of Ireland, vii: Ireland 1921-1984* edited by J. R. Hill and published in 2003, which provides in a single-volume survey of twentieth-century Ireland, the most comprehensive coverage of political, economic, social and cultural developments in Ireland, north and south, to date, offers two specific chapters on music. The first chapter by Joseph J. Ryan, entitled 'Music in independent Ireland since 1921', and the second by Roy Johnston on 'Music in Northern Ireland since 1921' provide a concise and insightful treatment of developments in musical activity in Ireland to 1984 and present a useful starting point for endeavouring to research the subject area. R.V. Comerford's *Ireland: inventing the nation* (London, 2003) which presents an account of the on-going invention of Ireland as a nation from a number of different perspectives also conveys the relevance of music as a cultural activity relative to the evolution of 'national' ideology in this process in a chapter entitled 'Music, song and dance'.

The first comprehensive academic survey exclusively regarding the general state of musical activity and disorganisation within the music profession in independent Ireland did not emerge until Aloys Fleischmann edited a book of symposium proceedings entitled *Music in Ireland* in 1952. This exhaustive work, compiled by mid-June 1951 and whose contributors were the foremost musicians, composers, music teachers, musical commentators and experts that could have possibly been assembled, has been used here both as a primary source and a contemporary work of reference.

It was not until the late 1980s, though, that the areas of music in history and music history in Ireland came to be discussed in any intense, scholarly way. The pioneer in this development was Harry White, who advocated the study of musicology in Ireland as a serious academic discipline and argued the need for a comprehensive and academic examination of music as a relevant cultural agent in recent Irish history. White, whose articles have featured in international journals

such as the *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* and the *Journal of American Studies* was also instrumental in establishing what was, essentially, the first forum for the discussion of musicology in Ireland.

This was *Irish Musical Studies*, initiated by White along a series of volumes devoted to publishing musical scholarship undertaken in Ireland, inaugurated in 1990, and of which White is the joint general editor with Professor Gerard Gillen, formerly of the department of music at N.U.I. Maynooth. Incidentally, in December 2003, White was nominated as joint general editor, with Dr Barra Boydell, also of the department of music at N.U.I. Maynooth, of the forthcoming *Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, a project for which White had made a case in the 1980s.

It was White's *The Keeper's Recital*, published in Cork in 1998, though, which was the first publication to connect music in Ireland with its political environment and to survey the development of musical thought in Irish cultural history. This book traced the development and apparent cultural dislocation of music in Ireland from the late eighteenth century to about 1970 and identified the function and status of music in the political ideology of nationalism. White's *The progress of music in Ireland* published in 2005 also addressed the correlation of political ideology, in terms of nationalism, colonialism and ethnicity, and music and highlighted how the Irish difficulties in addressing these problems have impacted developments both on music itself and musical scholarship, relating the Irish experience to a wider European context.

A very small number of other publications dealing with specific aspects of musical activity, wherein a relationship between music, nation and state can be discerned but is not explicitly surveyed, have emerged in the last decade also. Marie McCarthy's *Passing it On: The transmission of music in Irish culture* (Cork, 1998), for example, examines the nation's musical and cultural life by assessing the manner in which music has been 'passed on' through recent generations by means of an interaction between musical heritage and musical innovation which, she contends, is central to shaping a nation's cultural identity. Being primarily concerned with the issue of music education, the nature of this interaction is examined in a variety of contexts ranging from traditional music education in community based settings, to the teaching of classical music in public and private schools and academies.

Richard Pine examines the relationship between music and broadcasting in Ireland from 1926 in *Music and broadcasting in Ireland*, published in Dublin in

2005. Although this work largely concerns itself with the development of live performance practice patronised by the national broadcasting service, it makes extensive use of largely inaccessible primary source material, from the Radio Teilifis Éireann, Printed Archive, relating to the department of posts and telegraphs under whose auspices the service functioned. Pine, therefore, points to some of the issues which underpinned the relationship between the state and music and which are developed further in this study.

The work of Joseph J. Ryan, however, much of which remains unpublished, has been most valuable and influential in terms of this particular study. Ryan's M.A. thesis 'The army school of music, 1922-1940' (2 vols, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1987), although ostensibly an assessment of a specific institution, highlights certain key aspects of the relationship between the state, nation and music and provided much of the inspiration for the second chapter of this thesis. Ryan's Ph.D thesis, 'Nationalism and music in Ireland' (National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991) was also a groundbreaking examination of musical activity and its relationship with national ideology in Ireland.

Where this study differs from the current bibliography in the general subject area, though, is that it assesses the elements of state, nation and music as three parts of the one process and attempts to determine the reciprocity within that relationship. It does not deal with ideologies per se but attempts to make a comprehensive assessment of the actual roles, policies, attitudes or influences of the state in relation to music and attempts to differentiate where and when that relationship served the national or the musical agenda, for which empirical substantiation is provided.

It is also contended that music is a very practical prism through which to explore some of the key themes of twentieth century Irish history and a model with which to assess state attitudes to cultural endeavours and the arts in general in the newly independent state. Thus, this is the first occasion that many of the primary sources utilised for this study have served this purpose.

The first chapter then will deal with the relationship between state and music in terms of where that relationship stirred national, or at least, political feeling, intentionally or otherwise. It will highlight certain aspects of Irish 'nationality' and a number of instances where the Irish state attempted to express the nationality of the newly independent polity through its relationship with music, musicians or music institutions. The second chapter continues this theme and investigates to what extent

the police and army bands of the newly independent Irish state were viewed as 'state' bands actually intended to consolidate the national or state agenda, and to what extent they came to serve the musical. The relationship between the department of defence and music is very significant for it was under the aegis of this department that the very first state initiative for the explicit purposes of the development of music and musical activity in the newly independent state was actually conducted.

By chapter three, the significance of the role that the department of finance, as the primary state department, played in encouraging or constraining musical endeavours which served the purpose of expressing and projecting nationality and consolidating and legitimising the apparatus of the state will have been noted. Any investigation of the complex tripartite relationship between the state, nation and music in independent Ireland in the period between 1922 and 1951 then must also consider the direct role of the ubiquitous department of finance, not only in terms of the projection of nationality and consolidation of the state through music, but in the development and the regulation of music. Some other examples of state regulation of musical activity will also be discussed in this context.

The state initiative that was the national broadcasting service will be discussed in chapter four. This initiative would prove, above all others, to be the most significant in terms of its effects on the development of music and musical activity in independent Ireland. However, as will be contended, these developments were largely determined by the contemporary political climate as well as the parsimony of the department of finance and the particular musical interests, or lack thereof, of the relevant minister for posts and telegraphs. The extent, to which developments in music and musical activity were affected within the state educational system, and particularly in the primary schools, will be examined in chapter five. In the context of the relationship between state, nation and music, it will also highlight the prevalent level of uncertainty regarding the place and function of music within the education system and the very nature of music education itself.

Having discussed the relationship between the state and music in terms of the expression or projection of Irish nationality, the 'national' role of music in the consolidation of the state and three key areas where state departments interacted with musical activity which may or may not have had intentional consequences for that activity, chapter six will attempt to determine to what extent there was any overall

state policy for the development of music and musical activity in the period in question here or, at least, what attempts, if any, were made to create such a policy.

This begs the question of whether or not it was the duty of the state to cater for music or to support developments in music or musical activity. This is answered by the fact that the state voluntarily engaged with such activity in certain innovative efforts on the part of certain individual ministers because the cultural agenda, although largely unappreciated, was seen as concurrent with political and national consolidation. Furthermore, the leading members of the music profession believed that the correct and most useful location for directing improvements in music, musical culture and musical activities in independent Ireland was with the state.

What this study also suggests, then, is that there is a need to rethink the task of Irish historiography in an exploration of representations of and engagements with the past in certain cultural and artistic fields such as music. This thesis hopes to show the possibilities that exist in terms of applying explorations of the artistic, the cultural, or the musical, aspects of the past which have fallen outside of what has been monumentalised as historically significant, to standard theoretical accounts and points to the role that the arts in general have in enhancing accounts of Irish history.

## Chapter 1

### STATE, MUSIC AND IRISH NATIONALITY

This chapter deals with the relationship between state and music, not expressly in terms of government policy towards the development of music, musical activity or the music profession in the Irish state, but in terms of highlighting where that relationship stirred national, or at least, political feeling, intentionally or otherwise, in turn highlighting certain aspects of Irish 'nationality' which might never otherwise have been discussed in the public domain. A number of instances where the first three successive governments of the Irish state attempted to express the nationality of the newly independent polity through its relationship with music, musicians or music institutions will be identified.

Some of the examples provided, such as the playing of the correct national anthem in the presence of the governor-general of the Irish Free State in the late 1920s or the links between the state and the Royal Irish Academy of Music from the late 1930s following the abolition of that office, serve to identify where the relationship of the state with music raised questions about Irish nationality and even the very constitutionality of the state itself, in its various forms, over the period in question here. Other examples detail deliberate attempts by the administrators of the state to project, both domestically and abroad, images of an Irish nation, modern and stable while rooted in 'tradition', through a variety of events such as the annual Feis Ceoil, the Aonach Tailteann held in Dublin in 1924, 1928 and 1932, and the Eucharistic Congress of the latter year.

Whilst the place and use of a variety of musical activities as integral features of events such as these highlights the fact that music, for the most part, functioned simply for the purposes of the favourable projection of the nation, it also shows the range and extent of musical resources in the state throughout the period in question. More obvious correlations with music, such as the adoption of a suitable musical statement of nationality, or national anthem, will also be discussed in this context.

## 1.1 A plea for music, 1923

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Irish Free State in 1922 was the planning of the Aonach Tailteann, a revival of an ancient festival held at Tara.<sup>1</sup> The idea of such a revival had been first mooted in the 1880s by prominent nationalist politicians and founding patrons of the Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.) established in 1884.<sup>2</sup> The Sinn Féin party also embraced the idea and so plans to stage the festival were discussed in Dáil Éireann on a number of occasions between 1919 and 1921.<sup>3</sup> J. J. Walsh, a leading G.A.A. personality in Cork, and later the postmaster-general of the Irish Free State, had been nominated as director of the games by the president of Dáil Éireann, Éamon de Valera, and the finance minister of the provisional government of the Irish Free State, Michael Collins, granted Walsh £6,000 to commence the project which would be undertaken as 'a public service', with the cooperation of the G.A.A.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst no deputy had opposed the idea of the Aonach Tailteann or the further expenditure of a grant-in-aid of £10,000 to the G.A.A. to provide facilities for athletes and spectators in Croke Park, one, Mary McSwiney, representing Cork Borough, suggested that the games might be downscaled for the first occasion and the money 'better spent' on alleviating unemployment, poverty and 'terrible want' in places such as Mayo and Donegal. Walsh, however, countered that any money received by the general council of the Aonach Tailteann would and had been spent in providing employment.<sup>5</sup> Constance de Markievicz, representing Dublin South, also pointed out that any money granted was an investment in 'the nation' and besides because things had 'gone so far' it would be a bad financial move for the country 'to stop the thing now'. However, because of the political and military circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> See T. H. Nally, *The Aonach Tailteann and the Tailteann games: their origin, history and ancient associations* (Dublin, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> See W. F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Irish nationalist politics, 1884-1924* (London, 1987) and Marcus de Búrca, *The G. A. A.: a history* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> The 1921 general elections, provided for by the 1920 Government of Ireland act, to the parliament of Southern Ireland were not contested and the Sinn Féin party members who had been elected to, but abstained from, the House of Commons in 1918 thereby remained the elected representatives. They constituted themselves as Dáil Éireann, later recognised as the legitimate parliament under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

<sup>4</sup> For further details see Mike Cronin, 'Projecting the nation through sport and culture: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924-32' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xxxviii, no.3 (2003), pp 399-400. See also Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: nation and state* (Dublin, 1994), p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> The general council consisted of J. J. Walsh T.D. (Chairman and Director of the Games), C. Gilford Wilson (secretary), D. J. Burke, Sir John Irwin, J. V. Lawless, Prionsias O Fathaigh, L. J. O'Toole and Mr Justice Wylie. There were also overseas councils in the U.S.A. and various parts of Britain and the British dominions who ensured the participation of visiting teams of athletes.

and the 'heavy details' involved in planning, it was decided in November 1921 to postpone the festival until August 1922.<sup>6</sup>

Thus it was that in March 1922 J. J. Walsh submitted to Dáil Éireann a provisional programme for the Aonach Tailteann. The form that the revived Aonach Tailteann would take had, according to Walsh, evolved since 1919 from a programme of 'items strictly common to the Greek Olympiad, embracing the Gaelic race at home and abroad' to a programme 'far beyond anything attempted at the Greek Olympiads'.<sup>7</sup> The games were to be confined to competitors of Irish birth or descent but whether the Aonach Tailteann would remain 'confined to the Irish race henceforth or blossom out as an international feature like the Greek Olympic [sic]' was a matter which representatives of the various countries would decide when they met at the first Aonach Tailteann.<sup>8</sup> This was something which de Valera disapproved of from the outset stating: 'I think we ought to keep them as definitely Irish games.'<sup>9</sup>

In any case, Irish competitors would still take part in the Olympics scheduled to take place in Paris in 1924 but the Irish event would serve a different purpose, being explicitly designed as 'the surest means of permanently cementing the scattered units of the Gael'.<sup>10</sup> The central aim of the games was, according to Walsh himself, 'to make for the organisation, cohesion and solidarity of the Gaelic race at home and, in particular, abroad'.<sup>11</sup> Because of the general unrest brought about by the civil war, within which many of the political architects of the state and members of the G.A.A. participated, though, the Aonach Tailteann was again postponed until the week after the Olympics had been finished in Paris and after the Dublin Horse Show, one of the city's largest annual social events, had ended in August 1924.

In the interim though, the ministry of finance of the Irish Free State received, from the education ministry, two extensive documents penned by Dr John Larchet, the professor of music at University College Dublin. In addition to holding this post and a variety of other teaching positions in various schools across the city of Dublin,

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<sup>6</sup> *Dáil Éireann parliamentary debates official report* (Stationery Office, Dublin), ii, 490 (8 June 1922), (hereafter cited as *Dáil Éireann deb.*).

<sup>7</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ii, 490 (8 June 1922).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 485. National competitors had to be of Irish birth and resident in Ireland for a year prior to the games whilst the international section was open to persons of Irish birth and either of whose parents or both of whose grandparents on either side were of Irish birth. See 'Summary of general rules' in *Tailteann Games, Dublin, 2<sup>nd</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> August 1924, handbook and syllabus* (Kenny's Advertising Agency, Dublin, 1924) (G.A.A. Museum, Croke Park, Dublin).

<sup>9</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ii, 489 (8 June 1922).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 165-6 (1 Mar. 1922).

<sup>11</sup> J. J. Walsh, *Recollections of a rebel* (Tralee, 1944), pp 77-8.

Larchet was also the musical director of the Abbey Theatre, the professor of composition and senior music examiner at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (R.I.A.M.), a governor and, later, a vice-president of that institution and the founder-director of Dublin Grand Opera Society.<sup>12</sup>

His first document was a memorandum outlining ‘the present position of music in Ireland, and the needs of the future’, in which he informed the government that there was ‘a signal lack of musical culture in Ireland’ and that it was ‘the duty of the state to come forward’ to encourage music and musical bodies, for, he held ‘the importance of art in a general scheme of education cannot be over estimated, and to the appeal of music, above all the arts, man is most responsive.’ Appealing to the administrators of the nascent state, he implored: ‘When Ireland has fully developed her newly gained freedom, and demands her place amongst the great nations of the world, do not let the land of the bards be found wanting in the art of music.’<sup>13</sup> The second document was a proposal, created in this context by Larchet, along with his R.I.A.M. colleague, the violinist and music collector Arthur Darley, for the establishment of a national academy of music in Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

The response of William T. Cosgrave, the president of the government and the acting finance minister following Collins’s death in August 1922, to Larchet’s comprehensive documents, relayed through the education ministry in February 1923, was simply that ‘the present financial conditions’ were such that he would ‘not be justified in making such grants as are proposed in the memoranda under consideration.’<sup>15</sup> This was very much an omen for the subsequent relationship of the finance ministry with things of a cultural nature, and in particular with music.

Of course, it could reasonably be argued that at the height of the civil war, the ministry of finance had more pressing concerns than proposals for musical or cultural expression at this turbulent time in Ireland’s political history. However, no explanation of this nature was given in response to such individuals as Larchet, who would naturally have been aware of the situation but was offering to the government

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<sup>12</sup> Harry White, *The keeper’s recital: music and cultural history in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork, 1998), pp 130-132 (hereafter cited as White, *The keeper’s recital*); Joseph Ryan, ‘Nationalism and music in Ireland’ (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991), pp 350-73 (hereafter cited as Ryan, ‘Nationalism and music’).

<sup>13</sup> John F. Larchet, ‘A plea for music: an analysis of the present position of music in Ireland, and the needs of the future’ (National Archives of Ireland [henceforth N.A.I.], FIN/1/2794). See Appendix A for the full text of this document.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix J for the full text of this document.

<sup>15</sup> Secretary, ministry of finance to office of national education, 15 Feb 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2794).

an institution that would aid in their 'nation-building' task by providing a focus for 'national' identity through the art to which he claimed people responded best, in addition to elevating Ireland to a level of cultural and musical learning and achievement comparable to other European countries.

Besides, such cultural concurrence with the political and military process had been recognised as a necessary element in establishing the new Irish polity by the former army commander-in-chief Michael Collins, who, in his role as finance minister, had viewed state-funded cultural activity as 'a public service'. Not only had he readily granted the finance for the Tailteann Games but he had also granted finance specifically for musical endeavours as evidenced by his approval, in December 1921, of an application made by the Cork Technical Instruction Committee to the education department for a grant of £1,425 to be paid to the Cork School of Music for the teaching, printing and publication of 'Irish traditional music'.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, unless the ministry of education was merely attempting to pass on the responsibility of dealing with such proposals as offered by Larchet to another department, it must have seriously regarded these as viable possibilities for the future of music within the education system in forwarding them to the finance ministry for consideration at such a politically volatile time. At any rate, by the time that the first Aonach Tailteann eventually occurred in August 1924, it was being widely touted as the cultural symbol of a 'return to peaceful and more stable conditions in the country' and the means by which the hostilities of the civil war could be erased.

Whilst the underlying tenet of the Aonach Tailteann in 1922 was the presentation abroad of a modern independent nation, and although this was still the basis of the festival in 1924, its potential as a means of instilling 'a more brotherly feeling amongst the Irish people, regardless of political or religious differences' at a time when there were 'too many forces out to cultivate the spirit of hatred and distrust' appears to have been appreciated more at this time.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Collins to F.B. Giltinan, secretary, Cork Technical Instruction Committee, 2 Dec 1921; Prionsiaís Ó Dubhthaigh, education ministry to finance ministry, 16 Feb. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795). See ch. 4 for further details.

<sup>17</sup> See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 2019 (5 June 1924).

## 1.2 'Restoring nationhood': the Aonach Tailteann, 1922-4

This revived festival of games and cultural pursuits, then, with its 'historic associations of peace and goodwill amongst Irishmen of all sections', was held by many, and the Farmers' Party in particular, as 'one of the biggest things now before all-Ireland'. Patrick Baxter, a Farmers' Party Teachta Dála (T.D.) for Cavan suggested in Dáil Éireann, for example, that the fact that the games had been 'the greatest event in the lives of the people' of 'ancient Ireland' up until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries was surely an 'incentive to every Irishman, no matter what his political views may be, to make them what they were in the Ireland of old'.<sup>18</sup> D. J. Gorey, his party colleague representing Carlow-Kilkenny, also pointed out that the Aonach Tailteann, 'the greatest national festival we had', which was being revived in connection with 'restored nationhood' might 'help to take away little minds and little men from the narrow and personal ruts they were, probably, running in'.<sup>19</sup>

The *Irish Independent* also declared that the festival was 'a celebration that would leave its mark on our social life and our national history' rather than 'a mere entertainment to chase the gloom of a dark season in the national life'.<sup>20</sup> They claimed that it was 'from every viewpoint, a triumph beyond expectation'.<sup>21</sup> The *Irish Times* praised the vision of the organisers and concluded that the Aonach Tailteann gave the people of the Irish Free State 'a new confidence' in themselves. It claimed that the opening ceremony of the festival 'well may prove to have been, in the strictest sense, the most important psychological moment in the history of the Free State'.<sup>22</sup>

The festival itself consisted of various competitions under the headings of 'sports and pastimes' and 'cultural branches', the latter including arts and crafts, dancing, fiannúocht, literature, music and national costume.<sup>23</sup> Music featured prominently at the various prize-giving events held around the city and at the opening and closing ceremonies held in Croke Park with a specially assembled mass Tailteann Choir performing a chorus, 'Fáilte róimh go h-Éireann', specially written

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1111 and 1115-6 (21 May 1924).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1145-6.

<sup>20</sup> *I.I.*, 4 Aug. 1924.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 Aug. 1924.

<sup>22</sup> *I.T.*, 4 Aug. 1924.

<sup>23</sup> *Tailteann Games, Dublin, 2<sup>nd</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> August 1924, handbook and syllabus* (Kenny's Advertising Agency, Dublin, 1924) (G.A.A. Museum, Croke Park, Dublin).

for the occasion by John Larchet.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the competitions, a variety of non-competitive musical events, including a week-long opera festival and concerts by the renowned tenor Count John McCormack, who was also the president of the Aonach Tailteann music committee, were also held at the Theatre Royal in Dublin in connection with the festival.<sup>25</sup> The opening festival consisted of the production of three 'Irish' operas at the Theatre Royal between 11 and 17 August: Charles Villiers Stanford's 'Shamus O'Brien', Molyneux Palmer's 'Sruth na Maoile', conducted by Vincent O'Brien, and the premiere of Harold White's 'Shaun the post'.<sup>26</sup> Although the operas were well received, the attendances were not very large.<sup>27</sup>

McCormack's concerts, on the other hand, packed the Theatre Royal beyond comfortable capacity. The composer Harold White, also known by the pseudonym Dermot McMorrough, was a music critic for the *Irish Independent* and reported that the theatre was more packed than on any other occasion in the history of the theatre. White wrote that the audience enjoyed 'a programme of interest, charm and variety', which included Italian arias and songs by Rachmaninov, Hugo Wolf's 'Wo find'ich trost' and Hageman's 'Christ went up into the hills' as well as Irish songs such as 'Kathleen mavourneen'. White pointed out that McCormack had that 'special quality' which forced him to enjoy songs, such as the latter, to which he usually objected 'on artistic principle'. He stated: 'It is not because we have not heard him, but because we have heard him, that we flock to his recitals.'<sup>28</sup>

White also praised McCormack for interpreting the musical intent of the composers and the words of the lyricists, producing 'the exact and full expression of the meaning contained in these words in connection with their context' and for not seeking to thrill his audience with cheap technical tricks or virtuosic displays.<sup>29</sup> This was something which John Larchet had also been concerned about in his 'plea for music' of 1923 as 'a cause of injury rather than of benefit to the musical taste of the city'. He claimed that 'largely advertised vocalists' performing 'sentimental ballads' laden with vocal gymnastics solely for the admiration and 'ill-timed' applause of an audience were as clear as any indication of the 'very low level of good taste and

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<sup>24</sup> *I.T.*, 4 Aug. 1924.

<sup>25</sup> The musical committee of the 1924 Aonach Tailteann also included Vincent O'Brien, the future musical director of the national broadcasting station, Superintendent D. J. Delaney of the Garda Síochána Band, Brendan Rogers and J. Mooney.

<sup>26</sup> 'Music in the provinces – Ireland' in *Musical Times*, lxxv, no. 979 (1 Sept. 1924), p. 844.

<sup>27</sup> See *I.I.*, 15 Aug. 1924.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 Aug. 1924.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

artistic appreciation prevalent in Dublin'.<sup>30</sup> That there was a low level of musical appreciation or indeed musical culture prevalent in Dublin city, and the country at large, appears to have been evidenced by the rather low attendance figures at the musical competitions of the Aonach Tailteann, held at various venues around the city.

The *Freeman's Journal* estimated that a total of about 4,000 people attended these competitions, not including those who attended the various associated performances, such as the opening and closing concerts, the opera productions and John McCormack's concerts. By comparison with other events this was a similar total number to those who attended boxing matches around the city but was only about half the total number which attended events such as the swimming competitions. The attendance figure at music competitions also paled in comparison with the 72,000 which were estimated to have attended the athletics events at Croke Park in total whilst the motor cycle races and aerial tournament held at the Phoenix Park attracted the largest attendances for single events, of about 20,000, for each event.<sup>31</sup>

It is significant to note that the band competitions, military, brass and reed, flute, pipe and drum, held at the Royal Dublin Society's grounds in Ballsbridge on 13 and 14 August 1924, attracted the greatest excitement and highest attendances of all the music competitions.<sup>32</sup> These types of bands and the type of music that they played had been part of the musical culture of Ireland since the eighteenth century when British military bands had, in the summer months, provided musical entertainment to the wealthier people of Dublin in outdoor venues such as the Rotunda Gardens, usually for charitable causes.<sup>33</sup> Nationally, British army bands also played an important role in the sporting and social life of garrison towns, such as Boyle in County Roscommon, for example, where youths with musical ability joined the local Connaught Rangers regiment, which had a number of bands, as 'band

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>31</sup> *F.J.*, 18 Aug. 1924.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix B for the details of the various categories of band competitions.

<sup>33</sup> Jim Cooke, *Coláiste an cheoil/College of music: a musical journey 1890-1993* (Dublin, 1994), pp 1-2 (hereafter cited as Cooke, *College of music*); Richard Pine and Charles Acton (eds), *To talent alone: the Royal Irish Academy of Music, 1848-1998* (Dublin, 1998), pp 18-19 (hereafter cited as Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*). See also Ita Hogan, *Anglo-Irish music 1780-1830* (Cork, 1966), pp 69-70.

boys'.<sup>34</sup> Civilian brass and reed instrument bands modelled on the military bands were formed among trade unions members and 'workingmen's clubs' from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

The prolificacy of this band movement amongst the working classes in Dublin city was addressed to some degree by the establishment in 1890 of the Dublin Municipal School of Music which offered musical instruction in brass, woodwind and percussion instruments. Although the school was established under the auspices of the R.I.A.M., with its royal patronage and complement of vice-presidents and governors representing a veritable register of the city's social elites, which was, as shall be observed later, identified with a particular type of musical activity the academy did address, as Harry White has observed, 'a musical subculture effectively remote' from the academy's musical concerns.<sup>36</sup>

The military band model was also adopted on a nationwide scale by the temperance movement founded by the Franciscan, Fr Theobald Mathew, in 1838 and was such a successful tool in promoting abstinence that almost every local society in the country had its own band by 1841. By the late nineteenth century, any movement that claimed to have a relevant political or social significance on a nationwide basis were almost expected to have some sort of musical herald. In 1887, for example, calls were made for each parish club of the G.A.A., formed only three years previously, to have a band which would play at games 'to promote feelings of friendship and good-fellowship amongst the players' whilst providing 'delightful entertainment to the spectators in the intervals between the contests'.<sup>37</sup>

By the early twentieth century bands had become associated with the independence or 'national' movement itself, playing at political gatherings, parades and the funerals of various prominent republicans and indeed the popularity of these bands appears to have been strengthened by their political association. Bands came from around the country then to compete at the Aonach Tailteann, and many from Northern Ireland, with 'splendid performances' reported from bands such as St Joseph's Band and St Catherine's Band, both from Newry, Artane and Carriglea industrial school bands, Sligo Town Band, Boherbouy Band (Limerick), the Legion

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<sup>34</sup> Jack Fallon, 'Boyle Military Barracks', in Moylurg Writers, *Boyle, the origins, the buildings, the times* (Boyle, 1988), pp 47-56.

<sup>35</sup> Cooke, *College of music*, pp 2-7.

<sup>36</sup> White, *The keeper's recital*, p. 103.

<sup>37</sup> 'Gaelic music and Gaelic pastimes', *Celtic Times*, 26 Feb. 1887.

of Ex-servicemen Band, St James' Band and Ireland's Own Band, both from Dublin. Of course, because these bands employed whatever instruments people brought to them, there was no standard instrumentation or even a standard repertoire to emulate, perhaps, the nature of their popular or political association.

Most bands copied the style and repertoire of the British military bands with bands of a higher standard in Dublin, such as the Ireland's Own Band, being equipped to play versions of marches such as Alford's 'The Cameronians' and O'Keefe's 'Blaze away', assorted dances such as waltzes and gavottes, fantasias such as Kappy's 'Hibernian bouquet', overtures such as Auber's 'Le domino noir' or popular operatic selections such as Wallace's 'Maritana' or Sullivan's 'The Mikado'. Occasionally featured were novelty pieces such as Eckenberg's 'Battle of Waterloo', described as an interesting 'grand potpourri' of music and sounds including a *reveille*, sounded by trumpet, and cannon fire, sounded by percussion, depicting the British army's victory over Napoleon Bonaparte's French army at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.<sup>38</sup> For the Aonach Tailteann, however, test pieces, which were not far removed from the type of item listed above, were prescribed.<sup>39</sup>

The most anticipated musical competition of the Aonach Tailteann, however, was the military band competition held on 14 August, the prize for which was the John McCormack Cup. This featured a small number of bands, described in the newspapers as 'famous', such as the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) Band and the more recently formed Garda Siochána (Civic Guards) Band and Army School of Music Band.<sup>40</sup> Although the army band was deemed by the adjudicator, Lieutenant-Colonel McKenzie Rogan, to have won the competition, objections were lodged by the other two entrants against the decision. The objection was made on the grounds that the version of the test piece, Mendelssohn's 'Fingal's cave', was not the prescribed Winterbottom transcription but an arrangement by Colonel Fritz Brase, the German director of the Irish army school of music. This was found to be the case

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<sup>38</sup> Ireland's Own Band recital programmes, 17 May 1925 and 24 May 1925 (N.A.I., AG1/E9015/25).

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix B for details.

<sup>40</sup> See ch. 2 for details of the formation of these bands. The Army School of Music Band mentioned here was officially known as the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band but because the competitions rules disqualified the director of the army school of music, Colonel Fritz Brase, a German, from conducting, Brase altered the title of this band, which was conducted in his stead by Lieutenant Arthur Duff, for the purposes of the competition.

and the adjudicator disqualified the army band and declared the D.M.P. Band victors.<sup>41</sup>

### 1.3 Assisting 'the cultured life of the country', 1924-32

Besides the generally poor attendances, concerns were expressed by musicians also that the sporting competitions, which were open to professional international competitors of Irish heritage, overshadowed the cultural aspects which were open to amateur nationals only. Although competitions in musical composition had been included in the Olympic Games in 1924, the inclusion of various competitions in musical performance in the Tailteann Games, as well as water sports, motor cycle racing and dancing competitions, however, appear to have been more in deference to the cultural variety supposedly espoused by the ancient festival itself without having to depart from the G.A.A.'s definition of 'foreign' games by including soccer, rugby, hockey and the likes.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, J. J. Walsh himself admitted that the inclusion of elements such as modern motor and aerial sports, dancing and music, was intended to 'vary the attractions of the carnival and give national colour as well as stimulus to these widely divergent forms of public amusement' explicitly referring to the music competitions as a means 'to help the cultured life of the country'.<sup>43</sup> The inclusion of such competitions in the Aonach Tailteann as a means of stimulating music culture was an acknowledgement by Walsh and the festival organisers of the general need to do so, but the outcome was more akin to the mere presentation of an alternative attraction to the sporting activities.

Moreover, the range of competitions offered in the Aonach Tailteann music section appears to have reflected both the perceived nature and actual extent of musical activity in Ireland, which the lack of competitors in each category, and none in some, showed was actually quite poor. The *Musical Times* reported that while traditional piping and fiddle-playing 'made a fair show', by contrast traditional singing was 'poor'. And because there was only one entry for the string orchestra competition and the harp competitions did not produce a single entrant, the journal

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<sup>41</sup> *J.I.* and *J.T.*, 15 Aug. 1924. See also Appendix B.

<sup>42</sup> See R. V. Comerford, *Ireland* (London, 2003), pp 223-27 (hereafter cited as Comerford, *Ireland*) for a succinct treatment of this issue.

<sup>43</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ii, 165-6 (1 Mar. 1922).

commented: 'It must be presumed that the theme of Tom Moore's 'Harp that once thro' Tara's halls' cannot be far astray'.<sup>44</sup>

The general format of the Aonach Tailteann music competitions appears to have been largely based on the programme and structure of the Feis Ceoil, the first competitive musical festival instituted in Ireland in 1897 by a committee of interested persons including members of the National Literary Society and the Gaelic League. Amongst its aims were 'the cultivation of Irish music, and its presentation to the public in a becoming manner' and 'the advancement of musical education and activity in Ireland generally, so as to regain for this country, if possible, its old eminence among musical nations'.<sup>45</sup> This sentiment harking back to a perceived glorious age of music in ancient Ireland and looking forward to Ireland's future as an international leader in music was also echoed by John Larchet in 'A plea for music' in 1923.

The Feis Ceoil was feted in an *Irish Times* editorial in May 1924, three months prior to the commencement of the Aonach Tailteann, as 'one of Ireland's most valuable institutions' which had continued to 'flourish' despite the recent political turmoil. It stated that whilst politicians had been 'busily engaged' in the partition of the island, the Feis Ceoil held annually in Dublin had been having the opposite effect, 'acting as a magnet to draw north and south together'. It pointed out that many of the entrants were from Northern Ireland, as they were in the Aonach Tailteann music competition, and that the friendly rivalry displayed by musicians from both north and south was 'a reproach to all trying to make discord for political purposes'. Thus, it continued:

The revival of musical culture in Ireland never can be achieved by the parochial methods of 'Irish Irelanders' and the Feis Ceoil recognised this fact long ago. Only through the study of the masters – of Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Bach and the rest – can the Irish people learn really to appreciate their own lovely songs and to recapture the atmosphere of the old Celtic bards. If the syllabus of the Feis Ceoil were confined to Irish music, it would be undone. Its admirable catholicity is its most valuable feature.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 'Music in the provinces – Ireland' in *Musical Times*, lxxv, no. 979 (1 Sept. 1924), p. 844; see Appendix B.

<sup>45</sup> Feis Ceoil syllabus, 1897, cited in 'The principal feiseanna and musical festivals' in Aloys Fleischmann (ed.) *Music in Ireland* (Cork, 1952), p. 214 (hereafter cited as Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*). See also Fintan Vallely (ed.), *The companion to Irish traditional music*, (Cork, 1999), pp 121-2 (hereafter cited as Vallely (ed.), *Irish trad. music*).

<sup>46</sup> *I.T.*, 15 May 1924.

From its inception, the pronounced involvement with the festival of major personalities associated with non-Irish music or music of the 'art' genre, such as Dr Annie Patterson, the honorary secretary of the Feis Ceoil committee who was a leading professor at the R.I.A.M., an institution solely devoted to that type of music, embodied an ambiguous, if not simply a pragmatic, view for the future of musical activity in Ireland at the time. The administrators of the Feis Ceoil in Dublin appear to have been rather more concerned with celebrating talent and providing a competitive arena for young performers, which would in turn develop musical activity, than with the intentional cultivating of any particular forms of musical identity.

Not only were notable figures associated with the R.I.A.M. involved in the planning and administration of the Feis Ceoil, but the academy itself provided numerous entrants in the competition each year whilst the governors of the academy offered a number of scholarships to the R.I.A.M. in Dublin to various prize winners who were not already pupils thereby affirming the non-essentialist, or non-Irish-Ireland' character of the festival.<sup>47</sup> The Feis Ceoil could then be viewed as an attempt by its founders to incorporate all claimed manifestations of 'Irishness' in recognising a plurality of musical genres and to strike a balance between tradition and innovation, replicating that which had occurred, to a large degree, in the sphere of literature.<sup>48</sup> However, this was something which caused the withdrawal of the support of the Gaelic League at a very early stage and the subsequent establishment of their own festival, an tOireachtas which, as Harry White points out, 'not only confined its interests [musical] to the traditional repertory but regarded that repertory as a secondary manifestation of the Irish language'.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, whilst the Aonach Tailteann was also intended to be an expression of 'Irishness' to the world, its music competitions, like the Feis Ceoil, were not confined to any particular form of 'Irishness', even in terms of the designated categories of instrumental and vocal competition or the test pieces to be performed.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, it could be argued, as Mike Cronin has done in relation to the more 'modern' sports such as motorcycle and aeroplane racing which drew the greatest numbers of

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<sup>47</sup> See annual reports of the R.I.A.M. and Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone, passim*.

<sup>48</sup> See Comerford, *Ireland*, pp 167-80 for a treatment of the literary movement in Ireland and of literature as a national cultural endeavour and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>49</sup> See White, *The keeper's recital*, pp 111-3; see also Ryan, 'Nationalism and music', pp 284-94.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix B for details.

spectators, that because the military and civilian band competitions, which proved the most popular, were of relatively recent British and not 'ancient' Irish or traditional 'Gaelic' origin, they actually 'contradicted the Gaelic culture which the event was supposed to champion'.<sup>51</sup>

Significantly too, the organisers of the Feis Ceoil had cooperated with the musical organisers of the Aonach Tailteann so that the Feis Ceoil would not hold any band competitions, which would only ever draw two or three of the best bands per competition, as part of its festival and would provide some of the prizes for those competitions at the Aonach.<sup>52</sup> This intentional, and frankly, pragmatic, prevention of duplication in certain competitions and displays might help to explain why there were larger crowds in attendance at these particular competitions and perhaps why there were so few competitors in others where this was not done.

This does not explain, though, why solo competitions in musical subjects guaranteed to draw larger numbers of competitors, such as piano, violin and cello, were not held - unless that there was some underlying intention to promote 'team' music, particularly with the emphasis on bands and choirs or that the type of music played on these solo instruments was identified as being 'foreign' in some way.<sup>53</sup> Both of these possibilities are, however, contradicted in turn by the fact that competitions in the solo singing of Italian arias and recitatives, of the 'art' genre generally played on piano or strings, were held. Then again, this may simply have been as a result of the influence of John McCormack, himself a world-renowned tenor, as the ex-officio president of the Tailteann musical committee.

Whilst the range and extent of musical activity in Ireland was highlighted in a negative way by the lack of competitiveness, and indeed competitors, in the Aonach Tailteann music competitions, the reverse applied to the Feis Ceoil with the number of entrants increasing dramatically each year, from 417 in 1897 to 796 in 1923 and from that number to 937 in 1924.<sup>54</sup> Ironically the sheer proximity of the two festivals and the usual success of the Feis Ceoil, held in May before the Aonach Tailteann, may account more simply for the comparative lack of success of the Aonach Tailteann music section.

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<sup>51</sup> Cronin, 'Projecting the nation through sport and culture' in *JCH*, xxxviii, no.3 (2003), p. 411.

<sup>52</sup> *I.T.*, 25 Jan. 1924.

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix B for details of the numbers who entered the competitions of the various music subjects in the Feis Ceoil in May 1924, for example.

<sup>54</sup> Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 214 and *I.T.*, 19 Apr. 1924.

The judgement of the success or failure of such a festival solely based on the number of entrants was criticised by the composer and the successor to John Larchet as the director of music at the Abbey Theatre, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair. He also claimed that more effort should be put into attempting to integrate competitive musical festivals such as the Feis Ceoil into 'a scheme of general music education' and to use the first-hand knowledge of prevailing standards of technical efficiency garnered at these festivals to form the basic criterion for evaluation by music schools and teachers.<sup>55</sup>

Larchet himself also criticised festivals like the Feis Ceoil stating that their competitive nature meant that they could not 'be regarded as musical festivals in the true sense of the words'. He added that the 'great musical festivals', important 'in fostering a knowledge and appreciation of music (and incidentally a strong corporate spirit)' and found in practically all of 'the principal continental cities and even in some English cities such as Leeds, Sheffield and Gloucester' were simply unknown in Ireland.<sup>56</sup>

Both Larchet and Ó Gallchobhair admitted though that competitiveness did often stimulate musicality and enhanced musical expression, and, at the very least, competitive music festivals provided outlets for musical activity around the country. Notably, of the fifteen principal feiseanna or musical festivals held in independent Ireland by the end of the period in question here, seven were established prior to 1922 and the other eight thereafter, the majority of those in the 1940s. By comparison, not only were there, at seventeen, more festivals held in Northern Ireland in the same period but ten, as opposed to eight in the south, of those were established during 1922 or thereafter.<sup>57</sup>

Nonetheless, the lack of competitors and the low attendances at the Aonach Tailteann music competitions were attributed by contemporary musical commentators to the attitudes of the festival organisers, which notably were not members of a private committee such as that involved with the Feis Ceoil, to the musical section. H. L. Morrow, for example, said that the music competitions had obviously not been afforded the same effort or resources as other sections, including

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<sup>55</sup> Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 211.

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>57</sup> Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 215-17. The festivals established in independent Ireland between 1922 and 1951 were Feis Maitiú, Cork (1927), Feis Shligigh, Sligo (1930), Feis Cheoil an Iarthar, Galway (1937), Feis na Bóinne, Drogheda (1941), Féile Luimnighe, Limerick (1944), Féile Cluain Meala, Clonmel (1945), Oireachtas na Mumhan, Cork (1946), Cor-fhéile na Sgol, Cork (1948).

the musical aspects of the opening ceremony, the purpose of which, of course, was the provision of 'national colour' and variety as opposed to a display of national musical competence.

Morrow was also highly critical of the concert held at the Theatre Royal on 3 August 1924 which inaugurated the competitive music section of the Aonach Tailteann. The concert featured John Larchet's 'Failte' chorus and his 'Lament for youth' as well as a premiere performance of a musical setting by Louis O'Brien to Senator Oliver St John Gogarty's 'Ode to the Tailteann Games', which had won third prize at the Olympic Games literary composition competition in Paris earlier in the month. The musical piece featuring the soloists Joseph O'Mara and Michael Gallagher, a chorus and an orchestra was criticised by Morrow for the 'obvious' lack of practice whilst the concert itself was criticised for its tardiness in starting, its poor musical presentation, the unavailability of musical programmes and general disorganisation. Morrow said: 'surely music doesn't necessarily go hand in hand with – well, to put it bluntly – slovenliness.'<sup>58</sup>

'C.Sharp', writing in the *Leader*, also commented on the haphazardness of the music competitions, particularly by comparison with the annual Feis Ceoil. 'Numbered cards and sheet programmes with details would have been appreciated', he said, not only for the audience and competitors, but for the judges who were disorganised and not 'up to our expectation not to Feis Ceoil standard'. 'C.Sharp' concurred with Morrow about the general lack of musical rehearsal but he also pointed to differences in aspects of musical preparation between Dublin city and other areas of the independent state and Northern Ireland.

Just as in every other art those who work hardest go farthest, and nowhere is the converse more noticeable than in Dublin. Because we are metropolitans we seem to think we have a right-of-way to success without working for it, and all of us who mix in musical circles have heard the old tag: 'It will be all right on the night.' Result – Sligo mops the floor with us orchestrally, Derry chorally, Waterford vocally...Newry and Boherbuoy bowl over our best and biggest bands and our one hard-working flute band (New Ireland) alone holds pride of place.<sup>59</sup>

'If genius be termed the infinite capacity for taking pains', 'C.Sharp' concluded, 'the wonder is how we are linguistically or musically gifted at all.'<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *I.I.*, 4 Aug. 1924.

<sup>59</sup> *Leader*, 13 Sept. 1924.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

'C.Sharp's' greatest grievance, though, was with the band competitions at Ballsbridge where he reported 'bandsmen unpunctual, delays in starting, errors in test pieces, judgements postponed for days and the air live with objections'. He pointed that the only reason why the festival could be deemed successful overall was that it provided 'a perfect object lesson for a great advance' in music and musical activity.<sup>61</sup>

However, the Aonach Tailteann music committee, as might be expected, was pleased with the way that the music competitions and concerts had turned out. One of the committee members, Vincent O'Brien, for example, stated that while 'musical work had always been dear to the Irish nation', the Aonach Tailteann had just 'proved that the present generation was no exception to those which had gone before'.<sup>62</sup> O'Brien made this statement at a musical performance given at the close of the Aonach Tailteann by some of the music competition prize-winners and others such as Séamus Clandillon, the future director of the national broadcasting station who sang some traditional airs and the Tailteann Choir which sang a selection of songs including, yet again, John Larchet's 'Fáilte' as well as Dr T.R.G. Jozé's 'Bright Sun' and Brendan Rogers's 'Mo thír', accompanied by the Garda Síochána Band.<sup>63</sup>

#### **1.4 'New life and vigour' to the nation?**

Although the Aonach Tailteann did not make a profit for the government, whereas the privately organised Feis Ceoil continued to increase its substantial annual profit, the festival was generally considered to have been a success. Walsh declared it not 'only a success but a triumph' which had given 'new life and vigour' to the nation and had told 'the world over that in Ireland – and when he spoke of Ireland, he spoke of all-Ireland – notwithstanding their trials and difficulties in recent times had once again got on their feet and were marching on to that glory which awaited their people'.<sup>64</sup> The *Irish Independent* commented: 'There have been few happier inspirations than the decision that the emergence of a new Ireland should be followed by the revival of Aonach Tailteann.'<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> *F.J.*, 18 Aug. 1924.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> *I.I.*, 13 Aug. 1928.

Very soon though, the future of the Aonach Tailteann was cast in doubt for a number of reasons. Firstly, disputes had arisen about whether or not monies voted on a number of occasions by Dáil Éireann for the purposes of the festival had been 'granted' or 'loaned' and whether the GAA, which had received money to make Croke Park suitable for the occasion, was responsible for its repayment. The Cumann na nGaedheal finance minister, Ernest Blythe, was very reluctant to provide any further financial support for a repeat of the festival, which was initially intended as a triennial event, arguing that the original grants had, in fact, been loans which could not be repaid.<sup>66</sup>

Secondly, J. J. Walsh himself, the chairman of the festival committee, and the minister for posts and telegraphs was also becoming increasingly at odds with the party and eventually resigned in 1927.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the festival committee also owed the revenue commissioners about £3,000 in entertainments taxes - which the government had effectively imposed upon itself! This was, however, quickly settled by the department of finance so as to prevent any negative publicity for the government.<sup>68</sup>

The Aonach Tailteann did go ahead again, both in 1928 and 1932, and while music competitions continued to feature, the primary function of music was to add colour and dramatic effect to the opening, closing and prize-giving ceremonies. The band competitions, providing spectacles of uniforms, costumes, movement, marching and drills, also continued to be most popular musical events. Fewer international competitors took part and the attendances for all of the competitions in 1928 and 1932 were much smaller than in 1924.

The non-attendance of state ministers and foreign diplomats, who had attended in their droves in 1924, though, was much more significant for it indicated that the official or state attitude towards the festival was one of financial burden which the government were not evidently prepared to support to ensure its success. Thus, while the Cumann na nGaedheal administration were, as Mike Cronin points out, more than willing to 'take the kudos offered by such a major event, and content to project an image of an Ireland on the wider stage' they were very hesitant to

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<sup>66</sup> See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2209-10 (16 Nov. 1922) for the origins of those disputes. See also FIN/1/741 (N.A.I.) which deals with the matter of financing the Aonach Tailteann.

<sup>67</sup> Walsh, *Recollections*, p.71.

<sup>68</sup> Cronin, 'Projecting the nation through sport and culture' in *JCH*, xxxviii, no.3 (2003), pp 407-8. See also ch. 3 for details of entertainments taxation and a treatment of the attitude of the state department of finance towards music and musical activity throughout the period 1922-51.

actually fund the event.<sup>69</sup> Such ambivalence was, as will be repeatedly found in this investigation of the relationship between state, nation and music, damagingly inherent in every musical endeavour in the Irish state.

It must be noted that the 1932 Aonach Tailteann was overshadowed not only by the Los Angeles Olympics but more importantly by the International Eucharistic Congress held in Dublin in June 1932. Both the Aonach Tailteann and the Eucharistic Congress had been planned under the Cumann na nGaedheal administration but were held under Fianna Fáil government following the success of that party in the general election held in February of that year. Indeed, the Aonach Tailteann was brought forward to occur in the week after the congress, rather than during the usual fortnight in August, in order to capitalise on the fact that there were thousands of visitors in the country for the congress and hundreds of thousands of people attending the various religious services around the capital city.<sup>70</sup>

The economic significance of the Eucharistic Congress to businesses in the state was undoubtedly enormous, particularly if the number of advertisements published in the newspapers relating to travel, to accommodation and to all kinds of products, including paraphernalia and literature associated with the congress, are any evidence.<sup>71</sup> The national significance of the congress though, was marked by what R. V. Comerford has described as ‘an impeccable display by the forces of the state’ from the municipal authorities to the police and national army and the attendance of all government ministers, state officials and diplomats at the major ceremonies.<sup>72</sup>

It was, as Diarmaid Ferriter put it, the ‘least divisive event as could be found’ at that time demonstrating the union of ‘national endeavour’ and Christian, if not necessarily Catholic, ideals.<sup>73</sup> Unlike the Aonach Tailteann, the Eucharistic Congress was supported by all political factions in the Irish Free State as a prestigious national event and the decoration of even the poorest tenements with fresh flowers and bunting was proof of the widespread popular support. The fireworks, sky-writing and the nightly lighting of all major buildings in the city, none of which occurred during the international festival that the Aonach Tailteann was supposed to be, suggests that the government viewed the presentation of the new Irish Free State as a modern

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<sup>69</sup> Cronin, ‘Projecting the nation through sport and culture’ in *JCH*, xxxviii, no.3 (2003), p. 400.

<sup>70</sup> *I.T.*, 28 June 1932.

<sup>71</sup> See *I.I.*, 23 June 1932 for some good examples.

<sup>72</sup> Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 116.

<sup>73</sup> Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2005), p. 334.

nation in the Catholic world as a more important feat than the celebration of the sporting and cultural abilities of the Irish diaspora.

However, music, and in particular choral music and singing, featured to a large degree throughout the Eucharistic Congress from choirs singing hymns and parts of the mass at all ceremonies held around the city to the participation of a massed choir of children at a special 'Mass of the angels' held in the Phoenix Park on 25 June 1932. The latter had been planned for some time in advance with children being taught the sung parts of the mass and practising hymns in schools.<sup>74</sup> In fact, it was intended that 100,000 of the nation's children dressed in white would sing a special congress hymn in Irish at the children's mass but only 2,700 could be assembled in the end.<sup>75</sup> Examples of the type of music and singing heard in Dublin were Aichenger's 'Jubilato Deo', Vittoria's 'Tantum ergo' and Palestrina's 'Missa lauda Sion' rendered at the 'Solemn pontifical mass' held at the Pro-Cathedral by the resident choir under the direction of Vincent O'Brien.<sup>76</sup>

The biggest musical event, also one of the biggest spectacles ever to occur in the state, however, was the 'Pontifical mass' held in the Phoenix Park on 26 June 1932 which was attended by an estimated one million people from all around the country and from all parts of the world.<sup>77</sup> The choral music and chanting was provided by a massed choir of 2,000 men and women under the direction of Vincent O'Brien whilst the organ accompaniment was provided mainly by Louis O'Brien. Ireland's leading musical celebrity of the time, John McCormack, sang 'Panis angelicus' in what was reported to have been his finest rendition. That evening, a well-organised 'Procession of the Blessed Sacrament' was held from the altar in the Phoenix Park, broken into various sections throughout the city to assemble again at an altar on O'Connell Bridge.

The army and Garda Síochána bands participated in this protracted procession playing instrumental music and providing relevant trumpet salutes. Hymns honouring the Blessed Sacrament such as 'Adoremus' and 'Laudate Dominum' sung by the 2,000 strong Congress choir who remained in the park were relayed throughout the city by means of positioned loudspeakers and the largest

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<sup>74</sup> *I.T.*, 23 Jan. 1932.

<sup>75</sup> Maurice Gorham, *Forty years of Irish broadcasting* (Dublin, 1967), pp 84-5 (hereafter cited as Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*).

<sup>76</sup> *I.L.*, 23 June 1932.

<sup>77</sup> See *ibid.*, 27 June 1932 for details of the places where people came from to attend the Congress.

public address network system known in the world at the time. Spontaneous singing of 'God bless our pope' and what the *Irish Times* described as 'the more militant "Faith of our fathers"' was reported amongst the hundreds of thousands who observed or participated in the various sections of the procession through the city.<sup>78</sup>

What is also relevant to note here is that radio broadcasting was used effectively at this congress with the national broadcasting service, established in 1926, providing daily outside broadcasts of announcements and commentaries on the different ceremonies from various locations around Dublin for the week. The 'Pontifical mass', during which Pope Pius XI broadcast a live message to the congregation and the people of Ireland from the Vatican in Rome, was also relayed back to the Continent and broadcast by all of the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) stations. This, of course, heightened the appeal of wireless and being, as Maurice Gorham put it, 'a convincing manifestation of the power of broadcasting' brought wireless sets to many communities and homes where they had not been before.<sup>79</sup>

There was a renewed attempt by J. J. Walsh to organise another Aonach Tailteann in 1939, arguing, as he had from the outset, that state investment in an event which brought domestic pride and international prestige to the nation was invaluable but the Fianna Fáil government refused to support it.<sup>80</sup> No similar event attempting to portray the culture and modernity of the state or to instil pride or prestige to the nation, were initiated by either of the successive Fianna Fáil and inter-party governments for the rest of the period in question here. Privately-run musical enterprises such as the various feiseanna held around the country during that period appear to have achieved this, though, on a smaller scale.

### **1.5 'One of the declarations of nationhood': the national anthem 1924-9**

Whilst the national cultural events undertaken in the early years of the newly independent Irish state may have acted as a gauge for the range, type and extent of musical activity in the nascent state, and incidentally the state relationship with that activity, there was also the issue of the ultimate musical statement of nationality, the

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<sup>78</sup> *I.T.*, 27 Jan. 1932. See also the *I.I.* for that date.

<sup>79</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 84-5. See Appendix E, table 4 for details of receipts from imported wireless apparatus which indicates a substantial increase in the numbers of new wireless sets, and thereby listeners, in the country after 1932.

<sup>80</sup> Walsh, *Recollections*, p. 85.

national anthem. It was the participation of Irish athletes at the Aonach Tailteann and particularly at the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924 which initially raised the question of a suitable national anthem for the newly independent political state.

In February 1924, the director of publicity at the department of external affairs, Sean Lester, wrote to the head of the Irish government, the president of the executive council of the Irish Free State, W. T. Cosgrave, informing him that his department had been requested by the directors of the Olympic Games in Paris to supply copies of the music of the Irish national anthem to be played as the Irish competitors entered the field. Lester pointed out that there was 'no accepted Irish national anthem' and intimated that neither 'A nation once again' or 'The soldier's song' were suitable 'either in words or music'. He recommended that 'Let Erin remember' was more suitable and should be used for the time being but proposed that a competition be held to find 'a national anthem, words and music'. This, he said, could 'easily be arranged' with 'say the Royal Irish Academy of Music, or some similar institution, or a specially selected body of musicians and critics'. Alternatively he proposed that if the music of 'Let Erin remember' be found suitable as it was, the president might personally request Irish words to be written to the tune.<sup>81</sup>

Although there is no evidence of the president's response, Lester wrote a similar letter, although stronger in 'national' sentiment, to the secretary of the executive council requesting him to put the issue on the agenda of the next Irish Free State cabinet meeting. On this occasion he pointed out that the absence of an officially 'recognised' anthem made it easier 'for the pro-British elements to sing the British national anthem' whereas

a national anthem which had official sanction would, it is believed, be a psychological factor of importance especially in connection with the younger generation at home and as one of the declarations of nationhood when used abroad. It is doubtful if an anthem satisfactory for national purposes will be arrived at in the process of evolution, and while good music and good words have been written in periods of national emotion this condition does not seem to be an essential matter.<sup>82</sup>

Lester pointed out that some 'existing air' such as the music of 'Let Erin remember', being both 'traditional in origin' and 'lending itself to magnificent orchestration'

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<sup>81</sup> Sean Lester, director of publicity to the president's office, 1 Feb. 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>82</sup> Lester to the secretary, executive council, 24 Apr. 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

should be accepted as the air or music of the anthem.<sup>83</sup> Thus only words written in either English or Irish by 'any writer of Irish blood' would be required. If new music were 'wanted', Lester advised that it be written first and the words added afterwards. However, some musicians and music critics, such as Harold White, dismissed the idea of holding a competition to produce suitable music words for a national anthem as 'futile'. White held that a national song should not be contrived but be of 'spontaneous growth', reflecting 'the temperament of a free people'.<sup>84</sup>

The fact that both 'A nation once again' and 'The soldier's song' had been explicitly mentioned by the Irish Free State director of publicity as unsuitable anthems points to the fact that those songs were being used for that purpose.<sup>85</sup> The words of 'The soldier's song', which is of concern here, were written in 1907 by Peadar Kearney, a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), and music put to it around the same time by Patrick Heaney. The text was published in 1912 in *Irish Freedom*, a radical newspaper run by Bulmer Hobson of the IRB, following Heaney's death. It was adopted as a marching song by the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and after the 1916 rising, in which Kearney fought, the song became the anthem of the independence movement.<sup>86</sup> Whilst the song itself may have been, as Lester claimed, 'excellent as a revolutionary song', there was, as R. V. Comerford points out, little to distinguish the lyrical, sentimental or melodic form of this song from earlier 'nationalist' anthems such as 'A nation once again', T. D. Sullivan's 'God save Ireland', used by the Irish Parliamentary Party, or even 'Let Erin remember', recommended by more moderate and more musical commentators.<sup>87</sup>

Yet, with the leaders of each side coming from the same movement, the song was claimed by both sides during the civil war. The *Sunday Chronicle* commented in 1951 that 'in attack and counter-attack Kearney's song was defiantly sung by the

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<sup>83</sup> 'Let Erin remember' was actually the air traditionally known as 'The little red fox', but titled so after lyrics by that title were added to the air by Thomas Moore in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>84</sup> *Irish Statesman*, 16 Jan. 1926. In the summer of 1924, however, the *Dublin Evening Mail* ran a competition to find 'a national hymn to the glory of Ireland' which does not appear to have produced any suitable tune or poem which could be rendered as the national hymn.

<sup>85</sup> 'The soldier's song', as in the single possessive case (although it is not these exact words but 'a soldier's song' that actually features), was the original form and official title of the song, although official state and other correspondence over the years in question here contained such variants as 'A soldier's song', 'The soldiers' song' and 'The soldiers song'. Incongruously though, the Irish translation of the title, namely 'Amhrán na bhFiann', made in November 1951 by the Oireachtas Translation Branch denotes the plural possessive case, 'The soldiers' song'. See 'Note' by Dr N. S. Ó Nualain, 9 Nov. 1951 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767B).

<sup>86</sup> See Kearney's obituary, *I.T.*, 25 Nov. 1942; see also *Sunday Chronicle*, 25 Nov. 1951 for details.

<sup>87</sup> Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 263.

besiegers and the besieged. "A soldier's song" was the common denominator and rallying song of the erstwhile friends as they fought one another, believing their cause was just.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps then, by 1924, this song, of three verses and a refrain, in the English language, conveniently transcended the divisions brought about by the recent civil war with its references to the struggle for independence and the unity of Irishmen against a foreign foe, its militant words befitting the militant climate.<sup>89</sup>

'The soldier's song' appears to have become publicly recognised as *the* national anthem following a concert given by musicians from the recently-formed army school of music at the Theatre Royal in Dublin on 3 February 1924.<sup>90</sup> Following requests for an encore, the director of the school of music and conductor of the band, Colonel Fritz Brase, obliged with a recent composition of his own, 'Irish march, no.1', which was essentially an orchestrated collection of popular and traditional airs such as 'The minstrel boy', 'Who fears to speak of '98' and 'The soldier's song' which concluded the piece. Members of the audience, including the governor-general of the Irish Free State, Timothy Healy, the head of the executive council, W. T. Cosgrave, and other government ministers who were in attendance, stood up in recognition of the latter song which was consequently taken as recognition of the song as an anthem.<sup>91</sup> Notably though, General Richard Mulcahy, the minister for defence, and other army authorities did not stand to the song.<sup>92</sup>

There appears to have been little or no public discussion, in so far as this was reflected in the main Irish daily newspapers, about the choice of a national anthem for the newly independent Irish state at this point. Lester's request was circulated to all members of the executive council for their informal views before the matter was formally brought to the cabinet table. Cosgrave's terse yet elusive response, however, ensured that no further action was taken by the government until 1926: 'I am against any change in the present air "Soldier's song" [sic]'.<sup>93</sup> The music of the song 'The soldier's song' appears then to have been 'informally adopted by the

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<sup>88</sup> *Sunday Chronicle*, 25 Nov. 1951.

<sup>89</sup> See Padraic de Búrca 'The soldier's song' in W. G. Fitzgerald (ed.), *The voice of Ireland/Glór na hÉireann: a survey of the race and nation from all angles by the foremost leaders at home and abroad* (Dublin, Manchester, London and Blackburn, n.d. [1924]), pp 151-53 (hereafter cited as Fitzgerald (ed.) *The voice of Ire.*).

<sup>90</sup> See ch. 2.

<sup>91</sup> *F.J.*, 4 Feb. 1924; *Leader*, 9 Feb. 1924.

<sup>92</sup> Mulcahy papers (University College Dublin, Archives Department [henceforth U.C.D., A.D.], P7/D/31).

<sup>93</sup> Cosgrave to secretary, executive council, 28 Apr. 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

government for use as the national anthem within the state' then from this time.<sup>94</sup> Thus, and because it was 'intimated' to the publicity department that 'in the president's opinion, "The soldier's song" should, for the present, be retained as national anthem within the Saorstát, and that for use at the European functions, the air of "Let Erin remember" should be supplied', these were used respectively as the national anthems for the Tailteann Games and the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924.<sup>95</sup>

In July 1926, however, the government of the Irish Free State were compelled to make some formal decision on the anthem following a number of requests to the director of publicity from various quarters in the United States of America (U.S.A.) to supply printed copies of the recognised national anthem of Ireland. On 12 July 1926, the director of publicity, Sean Lester, informed Cosgrave that the minister of external affairs wanted confirmation of Cosgrave's previous intimations and requested that the general question be considered on a more formal basis. On that very day, the executive council had met to discuss a response to an issue raised by Osmond Grattan Esmonde who had submitted a parliamentary question, to be answered in Dáil Éireann, querying whether or not the president was aware of the fact the army bands were playing different tunes 'purporting to be the national anthem' at various state functions.<sup>96</sup>

The decision that the cabinet came to was that "'The soldiers song" [sic] alone should be used'.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Cosgrave's brusque response to Lester's request: 'I have to inform you that there must be uniformity in regard to the national anthem and that for the present the "Soldier's song" [sic] is to be used for this purpose both at home and abroad'.<sup>98</sup> In Dáil Éireann, Cosgrave managed to avoid speaking on the issue which was, rather remarkably, only discussed on one occasion in the ten or so years that Cumann na nGaedheal were in government.

Osmond Grattan Esmonde had also requested that the president state what the official national anthem was to prevent the 'confusion and irritation', which often occurred, particularly at sporting events, as a result of the 'prevalent uncertainty'. However, the president did not attend the relevant question-and-answer session in Dáil Éireann and Richard Mulcahy's successor as minister of defence, Peter Hughes,

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<sup>94</sup> Michael McDunphy, memo entitled 'The national anthem: 'The soldier's song'', 31 Mar. 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395)

<sup>95</sup> Lester to president's office, 3 July 1926 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395).

<sup>96</sup> Copy of Osmond Grattan Esmonde's 'ceist chun an uachtaráin', July 1926 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395).

<sup>97</sup> Extract from executive council minutes, 12 July 1926 (Cab. 2/278), (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395).

<sup>98</sup> President's office to external affairs, 12 July 1926 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

simply responded that *he* was not aware of the bands of the army playing different national anthems. Esmonde accused the minister of refusing to answer his question and complained to the *ceann comhairle* (speaker) that his question was not being answered the president from whom 'a definite assurance' should be received as to what the national anthem was: 'I find it is put down to the minister for defence as if it were an army matter, whereas it is a matter that affects everybody outside the army.'<sup>99</sup>

The *ceann comhairle* replied that the president was 'not responsible as matter of fact or policy for an answer as to what is the national anthem...[T]he president cannot be asked to define what is the national anthem. It is not part of his functions'. Esmonde asked him to state what person had the authority to officially declare the national anthem, to which the *ceann comhairle* responded: 'I am not able to say that, but I am quite clear that the president of the executive council is not in a position to answer a question on the matter'. The question was therefore referred to the minister of defence with regard only to the tunes played by the military bands. Whilst criticising the 'considerable hilarity' expressed in the Dáil by other deputies at him for his pertinence, Esmonde requested Hughes, the defence minister, to state, as far as the army was concerned, what the national anthem was. Hughes simply said: 'The "Soldier's song" [sic]'.<sup>100</sup>

Curiously though, it was the president's office which had drafted the response that the minister of defence would give to the question on the national anthem posed by Esmonde. Significantly, a number of draft responses, which stated that 'while no final decision has been come to' 'The soldier's song' was 'at present accepted as the national anthem' were rejected by Cosgrave and the eventual response given by Hughes to Esmonde differed substantially from those drafts.<sup>101</sup> However, 'The soldier's song' had now been officially stated, albeit not by the head of the government, as the national anthem of the Irish Free State and was 'officially programmed' as such for the first time at a music concert held in a public theatre as early as August 1926.<sup>102</sup> However, as Michael McDunphy, secretary to the president's office, later pointed out, the adoption of 'The soldier's song' as the

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<sup>99</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 2196 (20 July 1926).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2197-8.

<sup>101</sup> See handwritten draft responses to Osmond Grattan Esmonde's 'ceist chun an uachtaráin', July 1926 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>102</sup> *II.*, 9 Aug. 1926.

national anthem of the Irish Free State in July 1926 was not 'gazetted nor otherwise formally promulgated at the time. It was simply put into effect for official purposes'.<sup>103</sup>

'Requests' were made, however, to certain bodies which promoted popular public functions, such as the Royal Dublin Society, to ensure that the tricolour flag of the Irish Free State and 'The soldier's song' was played at all events, under the implicit threat of the removal of government support for events such as the annual Dublin Horse Show.<sup>104</sup> There was, therefore, very little in the way of public debate on the anthem at this point apart from some opinions expressed by writers to the *Irish Times*. One particular letter to that paper 'deplored', from a musical point of view, the fact that 'The soldier's song' was to be the national anthem. It read:

There is nothing in our Irish inheritance in which we can take more pride than our national music which is, perhaps, richer and more plentiful than that of any other nation. Why, then, do our rulers set aside this glorious inheritance and choose a piece of modern clap-trap as the national anthem, instead of drawing upon our boundless store of native melodies and choosing, for instance, 'The boys of Wexford' or 'Let Erin remember' or 'Awake, awake Fianna'?<sup>105</sup>

There the matter lay, however, until October 1928 when Peter Hughes's successor as minister for defence, Desmond Fitzgerald, wrote to the executive council suggesting that certain changes be made to the national anthem.

Representations had apparently been made to him that the rendering of the song as the national anthem was too long 'to permit of the words being generally known and sung by the people' when played. The British national anthem, 'God save the king', had been cited as 'being one in which the brevity of the refrain lends itself to such participation'. The defence minister suggested to the cabinet that the Irish national anthem open with its refrain and be published and taught as such, so as to encourage public participation in its rendering. The minister added that Colonel Fritz Brase, the director of the Irish army school of music, could be asked to 'arrange it for school singing in one, two, three and four voices'.<sup>106</sup>

The matter was considered by the cabinet which decided to reserve judgement until Brase had orchestrated and re-arranged the air of 'The soldier's

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<sup>103</sup> McDunphy, memo, 31 Mar. 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395).

<sup>104</sup> *I.T.*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>105</sup> *I.T.*, 16 Feb. 1928.

<sup>106</sup> Department of defence to secretary, executive council, 19 Oct. 1928 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

song' as the Irish national anthem, putting the refrain first. Whilst Brase worked on his musical arrangement, further requests were made for copies of the musical score of the official national anthem of the Irish Free State to be made to various bodies such as the B.B.C. and the French consul-general for use at the Nice Horse Show at which an Irish team was competing in April 1929.<sup>107</sup> The chief justice of the Irish Free State, Hugh Kennedy, also recommended that the national anthem be published as soon as possible for distribution, particularly in the U.S.A. and Canada, where he himself had had to supply the notes of the air to be played on a recent official visit.

More significantly though, Kennedy also introduced a legal aspect to the case suggesting that it was proper that the copyright of words and music of the song be purchased from the original composer and author on behalf of the nation.<sup>108</sup> The defence minister agreed that it was 'undesirable that a private individual' should have copyright in respect of the national song of the state and requested that the executive council take the necessary action to acquire the copyright of both the words and music before Fritz Brase's arrangement, which was now ready for approval by the council, would be published.<sup>109</sup>

However, no action to acquire either the lyrical or the musical copyright was taken at this stage although the executive council did approve Brase's version of the 'anthem as played by the No. 1 Army Band' for the cabinet ministers at McKee Barracks on 11 March 1929, and copies of the draft musical score for military brass and reed band were submitted for their approval before printing.<sup>110</sup> This duly occurred and the Stationery Office was advised to provide a quotation for printing costs to the department of finance after which printing was authorised on 30 April 1929.<sup>111</sup> Almost immediately though, the question was raised by the secretary of the executive as to whether or not the appearance of words 'arranged by Colonel Fritz Brase' on the musical score would confer any rights with regard to the arrangement on Brase himself. Although the Stationery Office did not think that it would, for that office held the copyright in all official government publications, it was advised that

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<sup>107</sup> Lester to secretary of president's office, 21 Jan. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>108</sup> Copy of letter from department of external affairs to president containing extracts of personal letter from Chief Justice Hugh Kennedy, 6 Dec. 1928 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S7395).

<sup>109</sup> Dept of defence to secretary, executive council, 14 Feb. 1929 and 3 Apr. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>110</sup> External affairs to defence, 12 Mar. 1929; defence to executive council, 3 Apr. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>111</sup> Department of defence to Stationery Office, 8 Apr. 1929; finance to executive council, 1 May 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

the wording be amended to state ‘arranged by the Officer Commanding, army school of music (Stationery Office copyright)’ so as to ensure ‘that improper liberty were not taken with the score at any time’.<sup>112</sup>

On 10 May 1929, however, it came to the attention of the government that the author of ‘The soldier’s song’, Peadar Kearney, had instituted High Court proceedings against the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, Inc., claiming damages for the infringement of his copyright of the words of the song in a book issued by the society in connection with the Catholic emancipation centenary celebrations of that year. The printing of the music of the song by the government was suspended accordingly pending an enquiry into the matter.<sup>113</sup> In the interim though, another particularly controversial incident occurred in the summer of 1929 concerning the rendering of ‘The soldier’s song’ as the national anthem. The incident centred on the declining by James McNeill, the new governor-general of the Irish Free State, of an invitation by Trinity College, Dublin (T.C.D.) to attend the annual college races there on 12 June 1929. Although the actual reason was never officially stated, it was understood that McNeill’s non-attendance was due to the fact that ‘God save the king’, the British national anthem, would be played upon his arrival instead of ‘The soldier’s song’.

### **1.6 The Trinity College incident, 1929**

The issue of the rendering of the appropriate anthem at functions attended by the Irish representative of the British monarchy had been of concern to the governor-general of the Irish Free State, James Mc Neill, throughout 1928. In September 1928 he informed the president of the Irish Free State government, W. T. Cosgrave that the British national anthem had been played at a number of events at various institutions that he had recently attended in his capacity as governor-general. This had apparently been the unquestioned practice under the governorship of McNeill’s predecessor, Timothy Healy.

However, on occasions where McNeill had learned in advance that ‘God save the king’ would be played, it had generally been arranged by his aide-de-camp, Captain O’Sullivan, that no anthem be played at all whilst McNeill was in

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<sup>112</sup> Professor Whelehan, Stationery Office to McDunphy, secretary, executive council, 30 Apr. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>113</sup> Handwritten note on file, 10 May 1929; McDunphy to private secretary, minister of defence, 10 Oct. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A). See also *I.T.*, 15 May 1929.

attendance. McNeill personally held that the playing of 'God save the king' for the attendance of an Irish governor-general at an official event was 'not an expression of loyalty to the king but an act of discourtesy to the government of the Saorstát'. However, as this was 'such an obviously controversial point' McNeill felt that it was not a matter for his personal decision and requested that he be 'responsibly advised' by W.T. Cosgrave.<sup>114</sup> An executive council cabinet motion, arising out of McNeill's enquiry, was tabled on 4 October 1928 and the government decided to advise him that the national anthem was 'for all purposes' 'The soldier's song' and that only the music of this anthem was to be played 'on the occasion of formal visits' by the governor-general.<sup>115</sup>

Thus, when in May 1929, James McNeill, in his capacity as governor-general, was invited by the T.C.D. sports committee to attend the annual college races the committee was informed by Captain O'Sullivan of the official government policy on the playing of the Irish national anthem. This appears to have occurred verbally and the government record shows that the committee was actually informed that even if no anthem was played at all the governor-general would be 'satisfied'.<sup>116</sup> The response of the T.C.D. sports committee, however, was that 'procedure' on the day of the college races, 12 June, 1929, would be 'as usual'.<sup>117</sup> McNeill, not wishing to respond negatively, personally asked Lord Glenavy, the vice-chancellor of T.C.D. to 'help in having the matter considered further' before he issued his reply. McNeill's notes show that Glenavy told him that the general impression at T.C.D. was that 'the sports committee were required unconditionally to have 'The soldier's song' played if the governor-general attended' the college races. McNeill reiterated, however, that the rendering of this song was not insisted upon by him and indeed that 'no anthem need be played' at all if he were to attend.<sup>118</sup>

Because of the verbal nature of the initial communications, this 'message' was not apparently interpreted by the T.C.D. sports committee as the government official policy but rather as McNeill's 'personal wish'.<sup>119</sup> This perceived 'personal wish' on the part of the governor-general was in turn regarded with 'deep regret' by

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<sup>114</sup> James McNeill to Cosgrave, 17 Sep. 1928 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>115</sup> Cosgrave to McNeill, 19 Oct. 1928 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>116</sup> James McNeill, 'Statement of facts', 12 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>117</sup> T. R. F. Cox, hon. sec. of T.C.D. sports committee to McNeill, 16 May 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>118</sup> McNeill's 'Statement of facts' to Cosgrave, 12 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>119</sup> *I.I.*, 17 June 1929.

the board of T.C.D., which had become involved in the matter. On 25 May, the provost, E. J. Gwynn, personally attended McNeill's official residence, the Vice-regal Lodge, to present a letter of protestation to McNeill. The letter outlined the importance of the tradition of playing 'God save the king' at functions at Trinity College as both 'an expression of its traditional loyalty to the throne, and an act of courtesy and respect to the king's representative' in the Irish Free State. If it was not played at the college races again in 1929, the board of T.C.D. feared that the college would 'incur much discredit in the eyes of its friends, both at home and beyond the boundaries of the Free State'. The board conceded, however, that should McNeill desire to be present at the races, T.C.D. would be 'bound to defer to his expressed wishes', regarding them as 'a command from His Majesty's representative'.<sup>120</sup>

The T.C.D. board's letter was considered at a cabinet meeting on 28 May 1929 when the executive council of the Irish Free State decided that the governor-general should simply 'decline' the invitation to attend the T.C.D. races altogether. McNeill's secretary informed the provost of T.C.D. 'that in view of the statements made' in his letter, the king's representative was 'compelled to decline the invitation to the college sports'.<sup>121</sup> Although McNeill's declination to attend the T.C.D. races was fully sanctioned by the Irish Free State government, it caused a significant public reaction both in Ireland and in Britain. Indeed, the conflicting contemporary interpretations of the controversy revealed the wider questions posed, by this incident, about the nature of a national anthem, the constitutional position of the Irish Free State and the political attitudes of various factions of Irish society by the late 1920s.

The reaction to McNeill's action turned out to be more significant than the incident itself and the incident itself was interpreted in very different ways by various different sources over the next two months. What was particularly remarkable was the conflicting coverage of the one incident by the main national newspapers in the Irish Free State itself. The *Irish Times*, for instance, marvelled at the 'novel and disturbing claim that the king's representative in the Free State may disown the highest privilege of his office' and accused the government of having an 'anti-

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<sup>120</sup> E. J. Gwynn, provost T.C.D. to McNeill, 25 May 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>121</sup> E. M. Coulson, private secretary, Vice-regal Lodge, Dublin to Gwynn, 28 May 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

imperial policy' which was 'not only tyrannous, but foolish'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed the paper's first article on the incident, which was replicated in the *Times* (London), reported that T.C.D. had been willing to compromise by offering that no anthem be played but that this had been rejected by the governor-general.<sup>123</sup>

The *Irish Independent*, on the other hand, reported under a headline entitled 'T.C.D. ban on the "Soldier's Song"', that the governor-general had been obliged to decline the T.C.D. invitation because only 'God save the king' was to be played as the anthem.<sup>124</sup> Whilst the *Irish Independent* markedly allied itself with McNeill's stance by reproaching T.C.D. throughout the controversy, the more hostile sentiments displayed by the *Irish Times*, towards the government for example, were not evident. Although it was hoped that T.C.D. would 'display a better sense of citizenship and a little more common sense next year', the paper attributed the 'blunder' to a mere 'misunderstanding' of the position of the Irish Free State government and not to any intentional hostility.<sup>125</sup>

Hostility does not appear to have been intended either by the Trinity College authorities or by the sports committee which had initially issued the invitation to James McNeill. The chairman of the committee, Dr A. A. Luce, stated that the decision to proceed with the anthem 'as usual' had been made by a committee which comprised of a mixed group of students who differed in religion and politics but who were 'one and all loyal to Ireland' - as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.<sup>126</sup> Nonetheless, students at T.C.D. itself appear to have been divided on the issue too and a row was reported to have broken out on the night of 8 June 1929 amongst opposing groups of students on campus. Apparently one group who sympathised with McNeill's stance assembled in a number of rooms and started singing 'The soldier's song' whereupon a group of loyalist students threw stones at the windows of the rooms that the singing students were in. Peace was quickly restored but the college authorities refused to comment on the incident or to explicitly acknowledge this incident as a consequence of their stance on the

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<sup>122</sup> *I.T.*, 15 June 1929.

<sup>123</sup> *I.T.* and *Times* (London), 8 June 1929.

<sup>124</sup> *I.I.*, 8 June 1929.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 June 1929. Indeed, the language applied to McNeill's official declination to attend at the Trinity College Races by the press in both Ireland & England is also telling with both the *Irish Times* and the *Times* (London), in particular, referring to McNeill's action as a 'refusal', a word denoting active repulsion or rejection, as opposed to the more courteous non-acceptance of the invitation suggested by the milder word 'decline' used by the *I.I.*, the government and by McNeill himself.

<sup>126</sup> Dr A.A.Luce to the editor of the *I.T.*, 15 June 1929.

anthem.<sup>127</sup> However, policemen were stationed at various locations around the college for the duration of the sports week.<sup>128</sup>

Trinity College's stance on the national anthem also had consequences for the sports events of the week, which were the reason the invitation was offered to the governor-general in the first place. Athletics competitions due to be held on 8 June were officially cancelled due to adverse weather conditions but the newspapers reported that it was really because 'over half the teams entered declined to compete because of the anthem incident'.<sup>129</sup> As the week continued a significant number of swimming, boxing and rowing clubs from around Dublin city and from places as far apart as Leitrim and Waterford also withdrew their teams from competitions at the college for the same reason. Most of the clubs who withdrew deplored the necessity of their own actions but were adamant that as long as the British national anthem was insisted upon at T.C.D. they had no other choice. One club spokesperson said: 'this is a national rather than a political issue'.<sup>130</sup>

This was, however, both a national and a political issue which had resonance far beyond T.C.D. itself and far beyond its sports week. The *Meath Chronicle*, for instance, reported that there was serious dissatisfaction amongst Protestants and loyalists in the Free State particularly at the lack of response by the representatives of the T.C.D. in the Dáil whose 'character and personality had vanished in the political seas which they had entered'. One Reverend Brother MacAlister felt that Orange Lodges everywhere should have protested at the governor-general's action which was felt to be 'a direct insult to Protestantism and loyalists'.<sup>131</sup> Whilst none of the T.C.D. parliamentary representatives spoke out on the incident or raised the issue in the Dáil, other prominent persons at T.C.D. did - but not all as might be expected.

Professor Edward Culverwell, for example, in a letter to the national newspapers, attributed the whole controversy to a general 'misunderstanding' of the constitutional position of the Free State. The government had, he believed, taken the best course of action available to them and whilst he did not agree with their particular choice of national anthem, he could understand why the Free State would reject a song which was not merely 'an expression of a pious wish' for the king's

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<sup>127</sup> *Connacht Sentinel* and *I.I.*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>128</sup> *I.I.*, 13 June 1929.

<sup>129</sup> *Connacht Sentinel*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>130</sup> *I.I.*, 14 June 1929.

<sup>131</sup> *Meath Chronicle*, 20 July 1929.

welfare but was a party song in itself with words 'not free from offence'. Besides, as Culverwell pointed out, the governor-general was the official, not the personal, representative of the British monarchy and had to act, not as he believed that the king might desire, but 'in accord with the policy of the Free State ministers'.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, because the Irish Free State government had advised that McNeill decline the T.C.D. invitation, their initial response to the press coverage of the controversy was to ignore it. The matter was not raised in Dáil either, despite statements from Osmond Grattan Esmonde, the Wexford T.D., that it would be and the gathering of large crowds in the public galleries of Leinster House hoping to hear a debate on the issue. The *Irish Independent* claimed that the Irish government was 'not disposed to take too serious a view of the question at present' which, of course, they would not hesitate to do 'if they believed the incident represented a considered attitude of hostility on the part of the university'.<sup>133</sup> The political correspondent of the *Irish Times* concurred that there would be no discussion of the matter if the executive council could avoid it as the 'official attitude' was that the issues, if there were any, raised by McNeill's 'action' were 'trivial and unworthy of comment or excitement'.<sup>134</sup>

As already noted, no discussion about any aspect of the adoption of the national anthem, let alone a controversy as politically sensitive as this one, was ever held in Dáil Éireann with Cosgrave, as head of the Irish Free State government, employing the non-confrontational tactic of evasion, thus providing a veneer of unity and uniformity on the part of the parliamentary representatives of the newly independent state. Because of the extensive and diverse coverage of the T.C.D. incident in the newspapers both in Ireland and abroad though, the president of the executive council would be forced to comment on the issue in June 1929. By this time it was being widely reported that there was, in fact, a conflict of opinion between the head of the Irish government and the governor-general on the issue of the anthem, a story which appears to have been propagated largely in Britain.

The *Sunday Chronicle* newspaper there, for example, reported quite sensationally that 'consequences of far-reaching importance' might follow McNeill's 'attitude' towards the playing of 'God save the king' at public functions. The front

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<sup>132</sup> Prof. Edward P. Culverwell to the *I.T.*, 15 June 1929.

<sup>133</sup> *I.I.*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>134</sup> *I.T.*, 11 June 1929.

page headline article explained that McNeill had declined ‘the customary invitation to attend Trinity College races because the committee refused his request to have “The soldier’s song”, the famous Sinn Féin “hymn”, played on his entry’. It went on to say that Cosgrave ‘strongly disapproved’ of McNeill’s attitude and had ‘transmitted his views to him in emphatic terms’. Proof of Cosgrave’s position was a tenuous link drawn to an unrelated article that he had written in the paper a month earlier on the constitutional position of the Irish Free State in which he stated: ‘The king is the king of all [the British Commonwealth of Nations] and the king of each’.<sup>135</sup>

In response to such reports the following statement was made by Cosgrave to the main Irish newspapers on 12 June 1929:

In this as in all other matters, His Excellency the governor-general has acted on the advice of the executive council. Any suggestion to the contrary is entirely devoid of foundation, and of course the statement that there was a conflict of opinion between His Excellency and myself on this subject is untrue.<sup>136</sup>

### 1.7 ‘The soldier’s song’, 1929

Although it appears that the notion of a conflict of opinion between McNeill and Cosgrave was propagated to greater effect in Britain than it was in Ireland, it appears that the idea itself may have been initiated by opposition party supporters in Ireland. One regional Irish newspaper, the *Connacht Sentinel*, reported that Fianna Fáil had seized upon and propagated an idea initially spread by ‘apologists for Trinity College’, as just another ‘proof of the alleged pro-British tendencies of the government’.<sup>137</sup> The *Irish Times*, on the other hand, claimed that Fianna Fáil had refused to associate itself with what it termed ‘the present attack on Trinity College Dublin’ because ‘the use of “The soldier’s song” would be a slight upon the “Marseillaise” of Easter Week’.<sup>138</sup> However, because the issue was not discussed at all in the Dáil, it is difficult to gauge the reactions of the main political parties on the issue.

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<sup>135</sup> *Sunday Chronicle*, 9 June 1929

<sup>136</sup> *I.I.*, *Cork Examiner* and *I.T.* (whose political correspondent also furnished reports to the *Times* (London) and the *New York Tribune*), 12 June 1929.

<sup>137</sup> *Connacht Sentinel*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>138</sup> *I.T.*, 15 June 1929.

What the issue did do though was to bring to the fore questions about the nature and merits of an Irish national anthem itself as a musical statement of Irish nationality, something which the majority of moderate public opinion appears to have been more concerned about than matters of diplomatic etiquette or constitutional questions. Although the majority opinion was that 'The soldier's song' should be played at official occasions whilst it was the official anthem, many called for a new compromise anthem, acceptable to unionists, loyalists, republicans and supporters of the government alike, to be adopted.

One letter to the *Irish Independent* suggested, for example, that 'a national anthem should not be merely the song of any particular party or section, but should be symbolical of, and acknowledged by, the whole nation' - criteria which 'The soldier's song' did not fulfil.<sup>139</sup> The *Irish Statesman* criticised 'The soldier's song' as being 'most lugubrious and commonplace', with 'dull' and 'tenth rate' music which no 'musician of repute' could defend in good conscience when there were so much 'beautiful and stirring Irish music to choose from' and which, 'if wedded to passable words, would have made our national anthem popular over the world as "The Marseillaise"'.<sup>140</sup>

More specific suggestions were made in the *Irish Times*, with a T.C.D. professor, ironically, claiming that 'well would it be if both sides could unite in a truly national anthem, such as "God save Ireland"'.<sup>141</sup> Another writer proposed 'Let Erin Remember' for its 'impressive' words and music and 'historic origin' that was 'symbolical of the whole of Ireland' and would be acceptable, as one of the 'attributes of nationhood', to 'Irishmen of all parties'.<sup>142</sup> A *Times* (London) article stated that 'God save the king' was for the unionist minority in the Free State 'the national anthem of the Empire' and while they had respectfully received officials of the Free State by playing the tune of 'The soldier's song' at many events, that song was not satisfactory because of its association with the 1916 rebellion and with 'the later crimes and outrages of the Civil War'. The reported view was that friction could

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<sup>139</sup> D.F. Curran in *I.I.*, 13 June 1929. Of course, many letters written to the newspapers pointed out that many national anthems, including 'God save the king' in Britain and 'The star-spangled banner' in the U.S.A., were originally political party songs. See also 'Musical notes: genesis of national anthems' in *I.T.*, 24 May 1937 for details.

<sup>140</sup> *Irish Statesman*, 15 June 1929. 'The Marseillaise' was itself a violent political party song whose rendering in France had been banned by law in the reign of Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. See again 'Musical notes: genesis of national anthems' in *I.T.*, 24 May 1937.

<sup>141</sup> Prof. Edward P. Culverwell, *I.T.*, 14 June 1929.

<sup>142</sup> D.F. Curran, *I.I.*, 13 June 1929.

have been avoided had the Free State government chosen as an anthem 'some song, such as one of Moore's melodies, which would not have been charged with these unhappy memories'.<sup>143</sup>

On the other hand, The *Connacht Sentinel* commented that the Irish government had, to date, been anxious not to 'push the "loyalists" too hard' into the acceptance of "The soldier's song". This was indeed the case, as we have seen, with no formal announcements about the adoption of the anthem, reluctance by the government to make statements on the matter, and little or no discussion in Dáil Éireann. The *Connacht Sentinel* wondered whether or not it was now time for the government to pass legislation officially declaring 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem of the Free State.<sup>144</sup> It was this aspect of the anthem controversy which appears to have caused the most debate in Northern Ireland.

A Presbyterian minister, J. W. Gibson, for instance, was quoted as stating that 'never would the people of Northern Ireland accept as their national anthem "The soldier's song"'.<sup>145</sup> A Captain W. H. Fyffe stated that 'the six counties would never pass to the control of those who would dare substitute "The soldier's song" for "God save the king"'.<sup>146</sup> J. M. Andrews, the Northern Irish minister of labour, was reported to have said that people of Northern Ireland 'might feel thankful' that they had their own parliament as the 'matter had shown clearly how different were the views of those in the Free State and Northern Ireland'.<sup>147</sup> Of course the reverse of this sentiment was considered in the Free State where it was felt in some quarters that Cosgrave's government was sacrificing reconciliation with Northern Ireland and the ultimate attainment of Irish unity to some exclusive form of Irish nationality epitomised by its apparent insistence on 'The soldier's song' as the Irish anthem.<sup>148</sup>

There were, naturally, many defenders of 'The soldier's song', but one letter in particular was considered by the government to be a 'sensible' reading of the entire situation and was, in fact, referred to by those who had written personally to Cosgrave expressing their concerns about the entire anthem controversy. The letter written to the *Times* (London) by Cyril Jackson stated that Irish people were not 'anti-imperial' at all and acknowledged that although it had 'very little to recommend

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<sup>143</sup> *Times* (London), 10 June 1929.

<sup>144</sup> *Connacht Sentinel*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>145</sup> *I.I.*, 2 July 1929.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July 1929.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 June 1929.

<sup>148</sup> See letters to the *I.T.*, 15 June 1929 and 19 June 1929; *I.I.*, 20 June 1929.

it as a national anthem', particularly in musical terms, 'The Soldier's Song' was an Irish song for Irish people, 'the fighting song of the men who, all things said and done, did lay the foundations of the Irish Free State in their own blood' and as such made 'a far greater appeal than any "Moore's Melodies" could.'<sup>149</sup>

This opinion was not necessarily representative of general public sentiment in Britain and as well as the various and radical views evident in the multitude of correspondence on the anthem issue in the newspapers, many letters were also received by various Irish government departments towards the end of June 1929. Most of these letters were written by such esteemed 'friends of Ireland' as Lord Granard, Lady Ardee, Lord Midleton and Lady Adare, who all expressed their general support for Cosgrave's administration but lamented the stance of the administration with regard to the T.C.D. incident. Lord Granard, to take a more moderate example, also highlighted another consequence of the anthem controversy in expressing concern that harm would be done to tourism in Ireland and to the sale of Irish goods in Britain. 'It seems', he said, 'a very stupid policy to quarrel with your best customer.'<sup>150</sup>

Coincidentally, the Irish High Commissioner in London, J. W. Dulanty, had placed an advertisement in all of the main British newspapers appealing to people's sense of imperial affinity by encouraging them to buy Irish products just at the same time that the anthem controversy was being discussed in mid-June 1929. Dulanty consequently reported receiving a large number of what he called 'foolish' and 'unreasonable' letters in response to the advertisement in light of that controversy.<sup>151</sup> 'A group of loyal British housekeepers', for example, sent a defaced advertisement from the *Radio Times* to him stating that English women would boycott Irish products as long as Irish people 'refused to listen to "God save the king"' while another letter stated: 'the Free State repudiates the national anthem [British]...such conduct is ill-calculated to attract purchasers for your produce, and certain to repel scores of people who would gladly otherwise visit the state as travellers'.<sup>152</sup> Dulanty suggested to Cosgrave that, 'in the interest of Irish trade' with Britain, if nothing

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<sup>149</sup> Cyril W. Jackson in the *Times* (London), 20 June 1929.

<sup>150</sup> Lord Granard to Cosgrave, 12 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>151</sup> J. W. Dulanty, Irish Free State High Commissioner in London, to the secretary, executive council, 26 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>152</sup> Copy of letter from Mr. A. J. Butler to Dulanty, 23 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

else, there ought to be some standard reply he could give on the matter of the anthem question.<sup>153</sup>

That standard reply took the form of a lengthy letter drafted by Cosgrave himself on 19 June 1929 which was sent with varying cover letters to all of those who had written to him about the anthem incident, to all of the Irish Free State executive council ministers, and to the department of foreign affairs to be forwarded to anyone who requested any information on the government's position on the Irish national anthem and on other issues which had been raised by the T.C.D. incident. Regarding the question of the constitutional position of the state, Cosgrave said that the government's policy was based on the idea 'that the group co-operation of the members of the Commonwealth' assumed 'the preservation of the separate national identity of the individual members themselves.' Therefore all and any association of the Irish Free State with the Commonwealth had to be reconciled with 'Irish national aspirations' and the existence of the state itself depended on the extent to which 'national ideals and sentiments' were preserved and fostered within.<sup>154</sup>

On the nature of a national anthem, Cosgrave said that a national song was 'a spontaneous and natural outpouring of national feeling', something which 'by its definition, it creates for itself' and could not be imposed. 'To have *not* chosen an anthem long associated with political opposition to the realisation of Irish aspirations and ideals would not only have been improper but must inevitably have had consequences involving the very existence of the state itself', he said. Cosgrave also claimed that in insisting on the rendering 'The soldier's song' for the governor-general as the king's representative in Ireland, the Irish Free State government was actually doing the king 'the highest honour' in its power.<sup>155</sup>

Although the Irish Free State, as a dominion of the British Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations, was modelled on the Canadian precedent, the musical practice regarding the rendering of the national anthem there was not followed in Ireland. In Canada and the other dominions, the governor-general was received with both 'God save the king' followed by some bars of the national anthem of that dominion.<sup>156</sup> Cosgrave took the view, however, that by virtue of the fact that the

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<sup>153</sup> Dulanty to secretary, executive council 26 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>154</sup> Cosgrave to Lord Granard, 19 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Lord Granard to Cosgrave, 12 June 1929; Passfield to Professor Smiddy, Dominions Office, London, 5 July 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

governor-general of the Irish Free State was the Irish representative of the king and the head of the Irish state, the rendering of 'The soldier's song' alone was appropriate, something which would also be done if the king himself were to visit. If any British politician visited, on the other hand, 'God save the king' would be rendered as the appropriate tune.<sup>157</sup> Cosgrave was, from the outset, clearly personally in favour of rendering 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem of the state yet he had been very reluctant to make any formal statement of that fact until forced, by the turn of events, to do so by the end of June 1929.

The press coverage and the letters to the press and to the government dwindled substantially after Cosgrave's statement on the issue on 19 June, which concluded by stating that the Cumann na nGaedheal government had done much to better relations between Ireland and Great Britain and that more could be done if there was 'a proper appreciation of the circumstances of this country' and extremists were kept at bay.<sup>158</sup> After this event, the rendering of 'The soldier's song' opened proceedings at which the governor-general attended at T.C.D. and 'God save the king' closed them, once he had left the grounds.<sup>159</sup>

### **1.8 'An Irish comedy': the national anthem story, 1929-32**

The stalemate over the rendering of the appropriate national anthem for the Irish representative of the British monarchy had stirred much political feeling and had caused to be brought to the fore questions about the Irish 'nation' and the constitutional position of the Irish Free State which might never otherwise have been discussed in such a public manner. The controversy which had reigned for the summer of 1929 had highlighted the general uncertainty, in various quarters, about the particular circumstances of the Irish Free State, the reluctance of the government to address that uncertainty. In addition, it had, at very least, caused the merits of 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem to be discussed at length in the Irish newspapers. The question of the publication of the national anthem now also came to be addressed.

In October 1929, the government had been advised that the legal claim made by the author of the words of 'The soldier's song', Peadar Kearney, against the

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<sup>157</sup> *I.T.*, 11 June 1929.

<sup>158</sup> Cosgrave to Granard, 19 June 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

<sup>159</sup> President's office to McNeill, 15 May 1931 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S6535).

Catholic Truth Society was confined solely to the words and not the music of the song composed by Patrick Heaney, who had died in 1911. Although the office of the secretary to the president of the Irish Free State had not 'eliminated all possibility of a claim being made by persons claiming to be the representatives of the composer of the music', instructions were given to the Stationery Office to proceed with the printing of the music of the national anthem as arranged by Fritz Brase.<sup>160</sup>

However, the department of justice informed the executive council that the bandmaster of the Garda Síochána Band, Superintendent D. J. Delaney, who had been forwarded copies of the orchestrated score for proof-reading, had found that, as well as containing some minor technical musical errors in the orchestration for brass and reed band, 'the original melody of "The soldier's song", as written for the pianoforte by the composer' had been 'slightly departed from' by Brase.<sup>161</sup>

Meanwhile, requests continued to be made from around the world about the anthem, not now about an official version of the music, which was forthcoming, but about an official version of the words of 'The soldier's song', in both the English and Irish languages. There was no known 'official' Irish version but on the advice of the attorney-general all such requests were referred to Peadar Kearney's own *The soldier's song and other poems*, published in 1928 by Talbot Press, so that there could be no infringement of copyright claimed by Kearney.<sup>162</sup> Months of further proof-reading of Brase's musical arrangement, requested by both the secretary of the executive council, Michael McDunphy and the department of defence, was undertaken by D. J. Delaney of the D.M.P. Band. All errors on the original proofs were eventually corrected by March 1930 and the music scores, in thirty parts, for military brass and reed band were available in printed form by 31 May.<sup>163</sup>

The musical arrangement, however, proved unsatisfactory for musical instruments other than those for which it was scored. The *Daily Express* commented that the tune of 'The soldier's song', which incidentally it stated 'may be adopted as the national anthem', could not be played on the 'Irish pipes', 'the most Irish of all musical instruments', because the range of the melody extended much further than

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<sup>160</sup> McDunphy to department of defence, 10 Oct. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>161</sup> Department of justice to executive council, 11 Oct. 1929 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>162</sup> McDunphy to external affairs, 17 June 1930; McDunphy, memo, 10 July 1930 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>163</sup> Brase to adjutant-general, dept of defence, 14 Feb. 1930; defence to the president's office, 22 Feb. 1930; McDunphy to defence 8 Mar. 1930; McDunphy to Stationery Office, 18 Mar. 1930; memo, president's office, 31 May 1930 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A). See also Appendix C.

that of the pipe.<sup>164</sup> Representations were made to the department of defence, under the administration of the new Fianna Fáil government from February 1932, for arrangements for other orchestral instruments. This prompted the department to seek permission for settings of 'The soldier's song' to be arranged by Brase for orchestra, fife and drum bands and other instruments 'as the need for such' arose rather than seeking specific sanction on each occasion.<sup>165</sup> It was agreed that an approved orchestral setting be made 'for use by orchestras generally'.<sup>166</sup> However, the printing of these musical arrangements was delayed owing to new questions about the form and length of the anthem as was being played on gramophone records and by orchestras at the close of performances in theatres and cinemas in Dublin. In addition a new copyright case was being brought by Peadar Kearney against Dublin theatres and cinemas for playing the anthem.

It came to the attention of the new Fianna Fáil executive council that cinemas and theatres in Dublin had started the practice of playing the anthem at the close of performances following a report in the *Irish Independent* on 1 April 1932. The paper reported that the practice, which had apparently been under consideration for some time by cinema and theatre managers, was 'cordially received' by the public. However, managers were concerned that some means might be devised or agreed upon to play 'only a portion of the anthem' for those 'in a hurry to catch trams, trains, or buses for the suburbs were inclined to become a bit restless'.<sup>167</sup> This was, following the months of proof-reading and the precautions which had been undertaken to ensure a definitive official version, a natural cause of concern for the department of defence.

The new minister for defence, Frank Aiken, a former I.R.A. chief of staff, requested that the executive council release a press statement, requiring all venues who wished to play the anthem to use the officially approved arrangement 'to secure uniformity in the playing of the national anthem by bands and orchestras throughout the country'. Where a gramophone record had to be employed, only the official arrangement of 'The soldier's song' played by the Army School of Music, No.1 Band, and recorded by The Gramophone Company, Ltd. (His Master's Voice) in

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<sup>164</sup> *Daily Express*, 12 Sep. 1930 [my emphasis]. Significantly, the type of pipe actually being referred to here was the more universal and commonplace bagpipe or 'war' pipe as opposed to the specifically Irish variant, the 'union' or 'uilleann' pipe. See Appendix B.

<sup>165</sup> Department of defence to executive council, 13 Feb. 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>166</sup> Defence to the Stationery Office, 1 Mar. 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>167</sup> *I.I.*, 1 Apr. 1932.

1931, was to be used.<sup>168</sup> Michael McDunphy, the secretary to the office of the new president of the Irish Free State, Eamon de Valera, pointed out to Aiken, in June 1932, that because the approved arrangement was really 'too long' to be played in theatres or cinemas at the termination of performances, 'considerable variation in practise' was still bound to arise.<sup>169</sup> Fritz Brase was of a similar opinion and recommended to the department of defence that an abbreviated version using the majority of the melody of the refrain be arranged for free distribution to places of amusement and people concerned with the running of various entertainments. Brase also took the opportunity to criticise the gramophone version of the national anthem played by various cinemas and theatre and on the national broadcasting station, 2RN, as 'a very undignified' recording by an American band which, he claimed, compromised 'The soldier's song'.<sup>170</sup>

In July 1932 the cabinet authorised the preparation by Brase of an abbreviated arrangement of the national anthem, suitable for playing in cinemas and other such venues, to be published 'for different classes of bands and orchestras', subject to the approval of a rendering of the arrangement.<sup>171</sup> This duly occurred and the new version of the national anthem, now consisting of the music of refrain alone, was sent to the Stationery Office, after which the same exhaustive proof-reading process previously adopted in 1929 and 1930 was repeated. Publication was once again delayed for the same reason that it had been in 1929 when managers of various theatres and cinemas in Dublin and state employees, including the directors of 2RN, the army and Garda Síochána bands, were all threatened with legal action in connection with the payment of royalties for the performance of 'The soldier's song' by solicitors acting on behalf of Peadar Kearney towards the end of 1932.<sup>172</sup>

This time, however, Kearney had joined forces with a legal representative of the composer of the music of the song, Patrick Heaney, claiming copyright infringement both on the use of his words and the performance of Heaney's music. Following the decision by managers of certain Dublin cinemas and theatres to adopt the performance of the national anthem at the termination of performances, court

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<sup>168</sup> Department of defence to executive council, 14 Apr. 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>169</sup> McDunphy, memo, 10 June 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>170</sup> Brase to department of defence, 17 June 1932 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A). Maurice Gorham states that an arrangement of the song by Victor Herbert had been published in America around 1916 and that the American record was a version of that used by the Fighting 69<sup>th</sup> regiment of New York, see Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 128-9.

<sup>171</sup> Extract from cabinet minutes, 11 Jul. 1932 (Cab.4/6, item no.3) (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767A).

<sup>172</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 1, 409 (22 Nov. 1933)

proceedings were eventually taken against the Dublin Theatre Company, Ltd., claiming damages for previous copyright infringement and for an injunction preventing further infringement.<sup>173</sup>

Coincidentally, however, many cinemas and theatres in Dublin and around the country were now actually being forced by members of the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) to play 'The soldier's song' at the close of every performance. Reports from Waterford in October 1932, for example, described 'extraordinary incidents' which had occurred in the three main theatre venues there, including the presence at the end of performances of 'gangs of young men, with their coat-collars turned up, and wearing soft felt hats pulled down over their eyes', guarding all exits and physically preventing the audience from leaving the theatre until the music 'The soldier's song' had been played in full. These men were reported to have sung all of the English words of the song and one 'leader' was reported to have announced to the audience: 'Irish people were not educated to the national anthem and it will have to be instilled into them.'<sup>174</sup> Disturbances of musical and cultural functions by members of the I.R.A. were not discussed very often in Dáil Éireann under the Fianna Fáil administration.<sup>175</sup> These were largely overshadowed by the issue of similar intrusions upon political meetings held by opposition parties and the counter-formation of groups of uniformed men, primarily blue-shirted in the European fashion, to prevent such intrusions.<sup>176</sup>

Although there is no clear evidence that the practice of playing 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem in theatres and cinemas had somehow been instigated by the I.R.A. earlier in 1932 so as to make a case for the payment of royalties to Kearney, a former Cumann na nGaedheal defence minister, Desmond Fitzgerald, alluded to such a conspiracy in Dáil Éireann in 1934. Fitzgerald, then a T.D. for Carlow-Kilkenny, claimed that as a result of recent 'intimidation against picture houses', an 'illegal organisation succeeded in making a law of its own effective, namely that the national anthem must be played, and, as a result of the enforcement of this illegal law of an illegal organisation the government had to pay £1,000 to a

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., col. 409-10; *I.T.*, 19 Nov. 1932.

<sup>174</sup> *I.T.*, 8 Oct. 1932.

<sup>175</sup> See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 1, 1085-6 (13 Dec. 1934) for a good example of the evasive manner in which this issue was generally dealt with in the 1930s.

<sup>176</sup> See *ibid.*, 1, 2351-2506 (1 March 1934) for some examples.

man who claimed to own the copyright of the national anthem'.<sup>177</sup> Many years later, the *Sunday Chronicle*, in a very sympathetic article about Kearney, claimed that he himself had gone 'to entertainers seeking to have performances in cinemas ended with the playing of the tune'. The newspaper claimed that when Irish audiences only 'accepted the innovation half-heartedly', Kearney's 'friends who were prepared to fight for an ideal...took good care that the tune was given proper respect'.<sup>178</sup>

The *Times* (London), however, along with the Irish daily newspapers, reported that cinema and theatre managers had played the song 'of their own free will'. It was claimed that Kearney's solicitors had estimated that the copyright royalties he was due from the rendering of his song amounted to about £20,000 by the winter of 1932. The *Times*, however, described the coincidental ordering by the I.R.A. of the playing of 'The soldier's song' in cinemas and theatres and Kearney's claims to royalties for each rendering as 'an Irish comedy', a rather 'amusing situation' which had, at most, placed venue managers 'in an extremely awkward position'.<sup>179</sup>

### **1.9 'The soldier's song', 1932-51**

With various persons, including state employees, being threatened with legal action regarding the performance of a song which had been officially sanctioned as the national anthem by the Cumann na nGaedheal government, the attorney-general of the Irish Free State was authorised to take legal action to acquire all copyright of that song for the state. After some negotiation, the state entered into an agreement with Kearney and Heaney's representatives 'whereby the state acquired exclusive copyright for the words and music of "The soldier's song"'. This agreement incurred a charge of £1,200 to the state which was immediately paid out of the state contingency fund, to be recouped by retrospective parliamentary authorisation to grant the finance to the department of finance for the copyright settlement.<sup>180</sup>

During the course of a debate on this retrospective authorisation in Dáil Éireann in November 1933, the minister for finance, Seán MacEntee, on behalf of the Fianna Fáil government, officially proclaimed for the first time, that the music of 'The soldier's song' was the national anthem and explained how that had come to be

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<sup>177</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liv, 1086 (13 Dec. 1934).

<sup>178</sup> *Sunday Chronicle*, 25 Nov. 1951.

<sup>179</sup> *Times* (London), 19 Nov. 1932.

<sup>180</sup> See file TAOIS/S7395 (N.A.I.) for particulars.

since 1926.<sup>181</sup> This prompted the first parliamentary discussion, since the foundation of the independent Irish state, on the merits of 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem of Ireland and many of the sentiments expressed clearly echoed those which had been expressed in the public domain following the T.C.D. anthem controversy in 1929.

Frank MacDermot, a Centre Party T.D. for Roscommon, opened the debate by expressing his personal opinion that while he was not opposed to 'The soldier's song' because of its sentimental militaristic and historical associations, he was concerned that both the words but particularly the music of that song were 'unworthy of the high position assigned to it'. He said that just because there was sentimental value attached to the song, it did not necessarily follow that it had to be 'erected into the dignity of a national anthem'. MacDermot suggested that a committee be appointed by the Oireachtas to consider the selection of a national anthem, not necessarily to replace 'The soldier's song' but to exist alongside it as he claimed had occurred in England with 'God save the king', 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of hope, land of glory', in Germany with 'Deutschland über alles' and 'Die wacht am Rhein' and the U.S.A. with 'The star-spangled banner' and 'Sweet land of liberty'. He added:

From both a literary and a musical point of view, I would regard the 'Soldier's song' [sic] as, shall we say, a jaunty little piece of vulgarity, and I think we could have done a lot better. We have got a wide range of genuinely Gaelic melodies to choose from, and whether we want an air that is brisk and martial or an air that is tender and melancholy or one that is grave and majestic, we can find it. We could find a national anthem that corresponded much more neatly to our desire to develop Gaelic civilisation in this country and one also that corresponded to the antiquity of this country and the antiquity of our struggle for self-government.<sup>182</sup>

This was also the view of the majority of musicians and members of the music profession.

Professor Aloys Fleischmann, for example, a composer, conductor and musicologist, and the chair of music at University College, Cork, would later state that it seemed 'regrettable that a nation which was acknowledged to have the finest collection of folk songs in the world should have a cheap and shoddy tune as its national anthem'. He added: 'Let us hope that when the generation of men who

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<sup>181</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 1, 408-9 (22 Nov. 1933).

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 410-13.

associate this tune with their fight for independence have passed away, a new generation will have sufficient sense of standard in such matters to substitute one of the innumerable finely-wrought tunes in which the country abounds'.<sup>183</sup>

On the other hand, 'L.P.', in a lengthy article outlining the problems of generally evolving national anthems from folk songs, published in the *Irish Times* in May 1937, argued that the Irish national anthem, as had been rearranged and abbreviated by Brase, was, from a musical point of view, 'technically wrong' for one bar of music was missing. The writer claimed that it was actually a 'good tune', not dissimilar to a chant prepared by Robert Stewart in 1883, but one that was meant to be sung by 'competent soloists' and not by the general populace.<sup>184</sup> This, of course, ultimately led to the question of its reconsideration as a national anthem - but for different reasons.

However, Dr T. F O'Higgins, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Leix-Offaly, argued that 'The soldier's song' was the national anthem simply because it 'happened to be the anthem on the lips of the people when they came into their own and when the outsiders evacuated the country'. Thus, he claimed that because it was adopted by 'the people' before the executive council adopted it as 'the general wish of the people' 'The soldier's song' should remain as the only anthem, regardless of the suitability of the song words or the musical notes.<sup>185</sup> Deputies Norton and Fitzgerald-Kenny, representing Labour in Kildare and Cumann na nGaedheal in Mayo-South respectively, agreed that national anthems, not generally decided by the government of any nation or written 'to order', were naturally imperfect, in musical terms, as the spontaneous expressions 'of the hopes and aspirations' of the people at a particular time.<sup>186</sup>

Interestingly, Richard Mulcahy, then representing the Dublin-North constituency for Cumann na nGaedheal, also warned MacEntee not to 'jump too quickly' at the idea of setting up a committee to consider the anthem question. Mulcahy, the former defence minister and army chief-of-staff who would serve as a future education minister, claimed that such a thing could not be properly done when the standard of music and music education in the country was 'so low' and 'so very

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<sup>183</sup> Aloys Fleischmann to the department of finance, 10 Mar. 1955 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3767B). For details on Fleischmann see White, *The keeper's recital*, p. 200 and Séamas de Barra, *Aloys Fleischmann* (Dublin, 2006).

<sup>184</sup> *I.T.*, 24 May 1937.

<sup>185</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 1, 413-4 (22 Nov. 1933).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 416-18.

little systematically' was being done for music in the schools. Mulcahy, who also had a personal interest in the development of musical culture, instigating the army school of music whilst defence minister in the early 1920s, stated that a better national anthem simply could not be composed unless the standard of 'musical training and education' had been raised.<sup>187</sup> He added: 'We ought to begin and change all that and see that something more is done for musical education than is being done at the present time.'<sup>188</sup>

Richard Anthony, a Labour deputy for Cork, however, felt that it was urgent that a committee be established to ensure that the Irish national anthem would bear greater relation 'to the traditions of Irish music and Irish poetry than "The soldier's song"'. Anthony felt that, without disrespecting the author and composer, 'The soldier's song' was 'an abomination to anyone who knows anything about music', and particularly 'traditional Irish music', being neither 'inspiring' nor 'even musical'. He advocated the adoption of 'Let Erin remember' for, he felt, that it had 'nothing of a partisan character in either the words or the music' - unlike 'The boys of Wexford', which had been adopted by the Parnellite movement and 'God save Ireland', by anti-Parnellites, in the late nineteenth-century.<sup>189</sup>

Questions were also asked of the education minister, Thomas Derrig, regarding the teaching of the words and music of the national anthem in all primary schools in the state under the control of the department of education. The Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Cork West, Eamon O'Neill, for example, asked him why this had not been done to date and whether steps would be taken to do so. Derrig brusquely replied 'I do not propose to take action on the lines indicated' and refused to be drawn into any further questioning. O'Neill expressed his dismay at the fact that it would not be made 'compulsory in the national schools that children should know their own anthem'.<sup>190</sup>

This would, however, also remain the position under the administration of the inter-party government between 1948 and 1951. In November 1949, Richard Mulcahy, the new minister for education, in response to questions posed by a number of deputies, stated that whilst he had given 'careful consideration' to the suggestion that primary school children be taught to respect the national anthem by knowing its

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<sup>187</sup> See ch. 2 for details.

<sup>188</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, I, 414 (22 Nov. 1933).

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 414-5.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 2361-2 (26 Apr. 1934).

words and music, as had occurred in the U.S.A. for many years, he had come to the conclusion that 'no useful purpose would be served by making and enforcing regulations' in that regard.<sup>191</sup> This was, of course, contrary to the policy of the three successive governments considered in the period in question here with regard to other aspects of nationality such as the Irish language.<sup>192</sup> As Mulcahy pointed out, Irish government believed that the most effective way to 'inculcate patriotism' was 'to base it firmly on instruction in our language, our history, our music and song and our folklore...the rooting of our patriotism in the realities of the Irish character and Irish tradition'. Respect for national 'symbols so precious' as the anthem and the flag was expected to 'naturally follow' and be more 'deeply rooted' than if it had been dictated.<sup>193</sup> In reality, this does not appear to have been the case for complaints about the general lack of respect generally afforded to the national anthem would continue to periodically appear in the national newspapers throughout the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>194</sup>

Complaints about the version of the anthem played on the national broadcasting station were also expressed in *Dáil Éireann* during the course of various debates, throughout the 1930s, on the granting of finance to the department of posts and telegraphs under whose auspices the national broadcasting service was operated. In May 1935, for example, Richard Corish, the Labour T.D. for Wexford, complained about 'the ridicule' which the national anthem had, in his opinion, been brought into, by its nightly rendering 'through the medium of tin-can music' on an 'old' gramophone record. He added: 'The tempo at which it is played is something like that of jazz music. It is an insult to the national anthem and to the country to play it under such conditions and if it is not played properly, I should like to see it withdrawn.'<sup>195</sup>

Gerald Boland, the posts and telegraphs minister, responded that while he himself had 'nearly been hit on a few occasions' when he suggested that it sounded like 'tinned music', 'other people' thought it 'the grandest possible rendering of that tune'.<sup>196</sup> The His Master's Voice (H.M.V.) record made by Brase and the Army School of Music, No.1 Band in 1931 appears to have been played on the radio station for some time thereafter. In March 1936, though, Corish complained again that

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, cxviii, 560-1 (9 Nov. 1949).

<sup>192</sup> See ch. 5.

<sup>193</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxviii, 561 (9 Nov. 1949).

<sup>194</sup> See *I.T.*, 16 Oct. 1944 and 28 Jan. 1949 for examples.

<sup>195</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 1031 (15 May 1935).

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1036.

whilst that record had been ‘an immense improvement’ it had recently been replaced by the previous ‘American interpretation’. This, Corish said, was ‘an absolute disgrace’, being essentially ‘the Irish national anthem played in best jazz time’.<sup>197</sup>

The former president of the executive council, W. T. Cosgrave, now serving as a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Cork Borough, agreed that more pride ought to be shown in the national anthem, especially on St Patrick’s Day. He said:

It ought to be rendered on the one day in the year that we regard as our own day, the festival of our patron saint, on something else other than a gramophone record...when we have first-class bands in this country, private bands throughout the city, and at least two state bands.<sup>198</sup>

Of course, that the practice of playing the anthem from a gramophone record had begun under the Cumann na nGaedheal administration when, as a result of stringent financial restrictions imposed on the station by the finance department, the department of posts and telegraphs were unable to pay the station musicians to wait around to play the national anthem ‘live’ at the close of transmission, was not referred to.<sup>199</sup>

Gerald Boland admitted that although he did not like the ‘jazz’ rendering of the national anthem and there was a serious division of opinion on the general issue of the anthem, he could not make the decision to change it: ‘I am not an authority on the question. I am assured that a new rendering is to be produced soon, when I hope deputies and others will be satisfied.’<sup>200</sup> Whilst the new abbreviated versions of the anthem were eventually published in 1935, it would be 1944 before a new recording would be made by the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band.<sup>201</sup> In the interim, the Fianna Fáil government had redrawn the constitution to remove certain appurtenances of the British monarchy in Ireland such as the office of the governor-general as head of state. The Irish Free State was now known as Éire, or Ireland, and the head of state as ‘president’ whilst the head of government as ‘taoiseach’, as opposed to the former title of ‘president’. With these changes in the constitution of the state in 1937, there were renewed calls for a reconsideration of the national anthem as a musical work.

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 385-6.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, lxi, 382-3 (26 Mar. 1936).

<sup>199</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>200</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 397 (26 Mar. 1936).

<sup>201</sup> See Appendix C for details.

One writer to the *Irish Times*, for example, said that with ‘so many new things being introduced into this country’, it was shameful that Ireland was satisfied with ‘so poor an attempt to show our musicianship’. He felt sure that if persons such as Fritz Brase, Dr George Hewson, a renowned organist and teacher of that subject at the R.I.A.M., and Vincent O’Brien, the renowned choral conductor and the musical director at the national broadcasting station who had been awarded an honorary doctorate in music by the National University of Ireland for his musical services at the Eucharistic Congress in 1932, were approached ‘to collaborate, they would turn out something of which we might be proud’.<sup>202</sup> This, however, did not occur and the issues of arrangement, publication and copyright of the national anthem, or the use of any version of ‘The soldier’s song’ as the anthem, did not arise again, at state level, until after the period in question here.

#### **1.10 The Royal Irish Academy of Music, 1922**

Even though many of the appurtenances of the British monarchy had been discarded by the 1937 constitution, certain cultural institutions inherited and endowed by the Irish state faced an anomalous position when the lapse of certain offices representing the monarchy in Ireland, such as that of governor-general, left them devoid of royal association or patronage. Yet they continued to function with the word ‘royal’ in the title of their institution.

One such institution was the R.I.A.M., located by 1922 at Westland Row in Dublin, which from its inception in 1848, appears to have availed itself of every opportunity to offer and promote itself as *the* national academy of music in Ireland in the absence of such a designated institution. The relationship of the academy with the new Irish state from 1922 raised many questions about the government’s attitude towards the promotion of music and musical activity in the state and the possible role of music and of the academy in the nation-building process.

It appears that the academy originated in the establishment of a school for the teaching of instrumental music in Dublin by a small group of musical enthusiasts including John Stanford, a reputable singer and father of the composer C.V. Stanford, and members of the musically industrious Robinson family. The school was organised on a more permanent basis in 1856, under the title ‘Irish Academy of

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<sup>202</sup> *I.T.*, 23 June 1938.

Music', with an administrative council which included members of Dublin Corporation.<sup>203</sup> The establishment at this time of such a music academy in Ireland also appears to have been part of a wider European trend of catering for musical instruction in specialist colleges, academies or conservatories in the mid-nineteenth century following the earlier establishment of such institutions in Paris, Vienna, Prague and London. Whilst some of these mid-century institutions were well-advised ventures by musically concerned patrons, which catered for the intending professional musician, Bernarr Rainbow has argued that others were often independent or municipal music schools catering more generally for amateurs and children which were bestowed with various 'national' or 'royal' designations in 'the upsurge of nationalism common to many countries at this time'.<sup>204</sup>

This appears to have been the case in Ireland too, for, although there is no evidence of a charter for this body or registration of the title 'Irish Academy of Music' which catered mostly for children and was associated with the local municipal authority, in any formal way, the Duke of Leinster in his capacity as president of the academy appears to have been granted the permission of Queen Victoria to attach the prefix 'royal' to the title of the academy in 1872.<sup>205</sup> The prestige which was thus associated with the academy, even after the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922, is evidenced by the particular social standing of many of the patrons of the academy.<sup>206</sup>

Whilst 'national' designation or royal patronage might have added significance to the perceived status of such an academy, the academy in Dublin, like the Royal Academy of Music (R.A.M.) in London, was not financially supported by its patrons and its 'royal' association appears to have done little to persuade the British treasury to provide adequate support.<sup>207</sup> In 1870, when a grant was eventually

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<sup>203</sup> R.I.A.M., 'Historical note' [n. d., c.1945] (N.A.I., TAOIS/97/9/572).

<sup>204</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, *Music in educational thought and practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Suffolk, 1989), pp 216-7. Institutions were founded around this particular time in other European cities such as Madrid (1830), Brussels (1832), Geneva (1835), Lisbon (1836), Copenhagen (1840), Antwerp, (1842), Leipzig [where Fritz Brase would study] (1843), Rotterdam (1845), Munich (1846), Barcelona (1847), Berlin & Cologne (1850), Dresden & Stuttgart (1856) and St Petersburg (1859). See also Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vi (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 2001), (hereafter cited as Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*).

<sup>205</sup> See correspondence on this point between Sealy Jeffares, secretary R.I.A.M. and Michael McDunphy of the office of the secretary to the president towards the end of 1948 & the memorandum compiled, from information furnished by the R.I.A.M. to that office, 11 Jan 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>206</sup> See Appendix D, table 1.

<sup>207</sup> Rainbow, *Music in educational thought*, pp 166-71.

voted by the British parliament for the R.A.M., Irish members of parliament pressed for similar funding for the [R.]I.A.M. and while an annual grant of £150 was conceded, it, unlike that afforded to the R.A.M., was contingent on the raising of £100 in private annual subscriptions, thus making the teaching of music through this institution a joint responsibility of the state, of Dublin Corporation and of private individuals.<sup>208</sup> Of course, it was wealthy private individuals of a particular social status, rather than the general public, who subscribed to and often left bequests to the academy, imbuing it with the type of status suggested by its 'royal' designation.<sup>209</sup>

One of the most significant endowments made to the R.I.A.M. was a bequest in the 1880s of £20,000 by a Miss Elizabeth Streaton Coulson, the administration of which eventually led to the establishment of a constitutional structure and hierarchy of governance to the academy. Coulson desired that an academy of music be founded in Dublin for the education in instrumental music of 'the sons and daughters of respectable Irish parents possessing natural musical talent' and nominated Dublin Corporation to see to it that this was done. However, because members of Dublin Corporation were already involved with the governance of the R.I.A.M. and the Coulson bequest was not considered to be sufficient enough to found another such school, the bequest was held in trust by the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests (C.C.D.B.). Prizes for competitive exhibitions and scholarships to the academy were provided by the C.C.D.B. out of the bequest whilst the council of the R.I.A.M., Dublin Corporation and the Coulson bequest trustees negotiated their next move.

Eventually, it was decided that all three interests apply, under the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885, for joint management, under a single governing body centred in the R.I.A.M., of the Coulson bequest and other endowments administered by both the Corporation and the academy, including the Dublin Municipal School of Music.<sup>210</sup> This scheme, approved in 1889, provided the R.I.A.M. with a constitution and a governing body consisting of a president, ex-officio and elected vice-presidents and a number of governors representing

<sup>208</sup> Ida Starkie, 'The Royal Irish Academy of Music', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p.106.

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix D, table 5a for details of members subscribed to the R.I.A.M. in 1922.

<sup>210</sup> Amongst many other smaller endowments were the Begley fund of 1876, to provide an annual prize, presented by an eminent London physician on behalf of his sister Maria Begley 'who pursued the profession of music in Dublin'; the Albert fund of 1877, a surplus of the Dublin Prince-Consort Memorial Fund presented to the academy for prizes, and the Vandeleur bequest of 1879, presented by Ormsby Vandeleur to be invested and applied to the provision of scholarships at the academy and the purchase of musical instruments.

subscribing members, the Dublin Corporation, the professors or board of studies and the Coulson bequest.<sup>211</sup>

According to Ida Starkie, a 'cello teacher and later a vice-president of the R.I.A.M., the idea of amalgamating the various endowments of the academy 'with a view to founding a national school of music on a proper scale' was also mooted at this time but because the commissioner of national education 'refused to allow the requisite funds to be advanced out of capital', the scope of the institution's musical work would remain, as Starkie put it, 'curtailed' to classes in instrumental music.<sup>212</sup> A general lack of funding in many European music academies, such as the R.A.M. in London, meant that the scope of those institutions was often widened to include general schooling as well musical instruction for fee-paying resident students, in order to meet running costs.<sup>213</sup> This occurred to some extent at the R.I.A.M. with the provision of tuition in elocution, deportment and languages such as German French and Italian. By and large though, it remained dedicated to the teaching of music, even though the receipt of its government endowment, which was increased to £300 following its reconstitution in 1889, remained contingent on the raising of private subscriptions.

It is not surprising, then, that the first contact that the R.I.A.M. had with the new Irish Free State administration in 1922 was in connection with the funding of the academy by the state. A letter from the secretary of the R.I.A.M. on behalf of the governors, addressed to Michael Collins, the finance minister of the provisional government, requested that the governors 'be informed if they may rely upon your government continuing, and it is hoped increasing, this very inadequate grant to this the only national academy of music in Ireland'.<sup>214</sup> Whilst this claim by the governors of the R.I.A.M. that their institution was the sole 'national' academy for music in Ireland had also been made prior to the onset of the new political state and would be consistently made after 1922, it is not clear whether or not the governors were displaying genuine national sentiment or were in fact seeking to capitalise on an opportunity to highlight solely, in self-interest, the insufficient recognition or

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<sup>211</sup> See Appendix D, tables 1-4 for details of the personnel involved in the governing of the R.I.A.M. in the period 1922-51.

<sup>212</sup> Starkie, 'The Royal Irish Academy of Music' in Fleischmann (ed.) *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 108. See ch. 6 for further discussion about the extent to which the R.I.A.M. functioned as a national academy for music in Ireland in the period 1922-51.

<sup>213</sup> Rainbow, *Music in educational thought*, p. 220.

<sup>214</sup> Secretary, R.I.A.M. to Michael Collins, 22 Feb 1922 (N.A.I., 1120/1/25).

financial assistance previously afforded to the institution under British administration. By inventing, if not renewing, the stated role of the academy as the 'national academy' for music in Ireland and subtly pointing out the inadequacy of the previous administration in this regard, the governors were making a rather clever plea for an increase in the terms and amount of funding by the new Irish Free State.

The R.I.A.M. governors did display a practical nationalistic confidence in the government by 'acting upon what they conceived to be their duty to the state', realising the major portion of the academy's investments which were held in British securities, and investing the proceeds, of about £9,000, in the first national loan.<sup>215</sup> This floating of the national loan in 1923, which displayed a general public confidence in the credit and financial stability of the new Irish state by being oversubscribed by about £200,000 by Irish individuals and institutions, was one of the spectacular successes of the ministry of finance and established its primacy in the government of the new state.<sup>216</sup> Despite allying its own financial fortunes with those of the new Irish state, on the occasion of the floating of the first national loan when even the banks of the newly independent state would not, the R.I.A.M. did not achieve a favourable response from the government.

In March 1922, Collins informed the governors of R.I.A.M. that the annual grant of £300 would be continued only 'on the usual conditions'.<sup>217</sup> There were no indications of any change of those conditions either throughout the Cumann na nGaedheal administration despite repeated recommendations made by a government inspector, L. E. Steele, whose duty it was to compile an annual report on the R.I.A.M. to the ministry of local government under the provisions of the Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885, in consecutive annual reports that 'the very meagre grant' be increased and that the 'onerous contingency' of raising £100 a year in voluntary contributions be withdrawn.<sup>218</sup> In 1926, for example, he claimed that it could 'with confidence, be said that the Academy is doing admirable work in the development of music in Ireland, and that the funds at the disposal of the governors

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<sup>215</sup> *Royal Irish Academy of Music annual report for the year 1923*, p. 6 (hereafter cited as *R.I.A.M. annual report*).

<sup>216</sup> Ronan Fanning, *The Irish department of finance 1922-58* (Dublin, 1978), pp 88-98 (hereafter cited as Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*); R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), pp 521-2 (hereafter cited as Foster, *Modern Ire.*).

<sup>217</sup> Michael Collins to the secretary of the R.I.A.M., 13 Mar. 1922 (N.A.I., 1120/1/26).

<sup>218</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1922, pp 10-11.

are judiciously administered and with excellent results'.<sup>219</sup> The following year he reiterated that

in view of the important work of the academy in supplying first-class musical education for the young people of this land, the sum is not commensurate with its importance and position. As the governors are most judicious in the expenditure of the funds, an increased grant would relieve them of anxiety and enable them to extend their work.<sup>220</sup>

On a number of occasions, the R.I.A.M. governors also appealed, in a way that did not draw on any patriotic or exclusivist musical sentiment but in a rather more pluralist dutiful manner, to the subscribing members of the R.I.A.M. themselves to secure the financial position of the Academy by 'inducing their music-loving friends to become members of the Academy, and thus supporting this institution which has done and is doing such good work for musical education in Ireland'.<sup>221</sup>

### **1.11 The R.I.A.M. and state funding, 1926-51**

It was not until June 1926 that the R.I.A.M. was referred to, albeit indirectly, for the first time in Dáil Éireann in connection with the payment of grants-in-aid to certain cultural institutions, tellingly presented under the caption of 'miscellaneous expenses'. In a debate concerning the nature of material presented at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, the perceived role of that particular theatre as the 'national theatre' of Ireland and the issue of financial subsidy to that theatre - all of which the minister for finance Ernest Blythe was adamant were justifiable - Thomas Johnson, the Labour Party leader drew the attention of the minister to other similar institutions such as the R.I.A.M., which he referred to as 'the Irish Academy of Music'. Johnson asked the minister to ensure that the staff of such institutions who were 'engaged in catering for the cultural development of the Irish people' be 'properly paid for their services' and 'in accordance with their merits'. Johnson also subtly alluded to the need for a government check on institutions such as the R.I.A.M., if not a particular government policy, in relation to the nature of music produced by the academy amongst other things. He requested that the minister ensure that 'the artistic

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 1926, p.17.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 1927, p.12.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 1926, p.12.

products' exhibited by these academies were 'of a proper character' and did not hurt 'the susceptibilities of any of the Irish public'.<sup>222</sup>

The particular 'artistic product' offered and promoted by the R.I.A.M. was, from the outset, the teaching of music of the European 'classical' or 'art' genre and the academy does not appear to have considered setting up any particular faculty for the specific promotion and teaching of music of a 'traditional' Irish genre. As we have seen though, many prominent members of the teaching staff were involved with the annual Feis Ceoil, which, even if it perceived to have succeeded more in 'the advancement of musical education and activity in Ireland generally', did aim for 'the cultivation of Irish music, and its presentation to the public in a becoming manner'.<sup>223</sup> Yet this aspect of the musical work of the R.I.A.M. was not discussed any further in Dáil Éireann for the rest of the period in question here.

However, the issue of the grant-in-aid to the academy was discussed to some extent in 1933 when the Fianna Fáil government introduced their second financial budget for the state. The Fianna Fáil government's first budget in the previous year, dubbed by the *Irish Times* as 'the most cynical budget of modern times', having reduced salaries and raised income tax and customs taxes, had been deplored in many quarters as a budget that penalised 'the well-to-do classes', would cause 'injury to the nation's welfare and prospects' and would ' estrange the good-will of the British Commonwealth'.<sup>224</sup> Unperturbed, the Fianna Fáil finance minister, Seán MacEntee, announced the reduction of various grants-in-aid payable to cultural institutions such as the Royal Zoological Society, the Royal Irish Society, the Royal Hibernian Academy and the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1933. The annual government grant to the R.I.A.M. was now a mere £100.

In Seanad Éireann, James Green Douglas, a member of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland who had been a close adviser to Michael Collins during the war of independence and was elected to the senate in 1931, stated that 'the reduction of £200 in their grant may create very serious difficulties' for the R.I.A.M. Whilst Douglas said that he was not inclined to criticise the minister for having to make financial sacrifices, he did think that an opportunity should be given to the bodies

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<sup>222</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 1516 (22 June 1926).

<sup>223</sup> Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 214; Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*; see also Appendix K, tables 1a, 1b and 1c for details of the types of musical subjects taught at the R.I.A.M. and the numbers of pupils attending.

<sup>224</sup> *I.T.*, 12 May 1932.

concerned 'to make representations' so that the finance minister would be 'satisfied' that they would not be seriously or permanently injured' before such reductions were made.<sup>225</sup> In Dáil Éireann, Henry Morgan Dockrell, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Dublin County and a subscribing member of the R.I.A.M., criticised the government more vehemently than Douglas stating: 'We are supposed to be a music-loving race and, presumably, the government wish to promote music. If, however, we are to measure the amount given by the government as the extent of the interest taken in the development of music in this country it is indeed very small.'<sup>226</sup>

Dockrell went on to say that although the wages paid to professors were 'extremely low' the pupils of the academy received an 'excellent education in music' and earned 'commendations in many parts of the world'. He questioned how the academy, which, he claimed, often made certain 'arrangements' regarding fees when they found 'a very promising pupil' unable to pay them, was supposed to continue with this education if the grant was reduced. That 'for the sake of £200 a year', the minister was 'going to do away with the possibility of a certain number of geniuses being brought to the front in the musical profession' was, according to Dockrell, a 'very serious matter'. He pleaded with the finance minister that, on the basis of 'a very trifling sum', the academy would not be 'handicapped' so that teaching and examination standards would suffer and 'the type of examination which was got in the past' would no longer exist.<sup>227</sup>

This was a very significant comment insofar as it points to the 'national' significance of the institution, catering, as will be discussed later, not solely for the musical instruction and examination of those who attended the academy in Dublin city but also for thousands of people around the country who availed of its local centre examination system.<sup>228</sup> MacEntee, the finance minister, responded by stating that Dockrell's comments had illustrated how 'hard, straight and narrow' the path of 'national retrenchment' was and that he did not wish 'to go into the merits or demerits' of any one of the associations or societies which had been affected by reductions in these grants-in-aid. However, in specific reference to the R.I.A.M., he did state:

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<sup>225</sup> *Seanad Éireann parliamentary debates official report* (Stationery Office, Dublin), xvi, (29 March 1933) (cited hereafter as *Seanad Éireann deb.*); see also J. A. Gaughan, *Senator James G Douglas: memoirs* (Dublin, 1998).

<sup>226</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 2172 (11 July 1933).

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2173.

<sup>228</sup> See ch. 6.

While I would not like to put myself in the position of having to say that the grant now paid to them is everything that the government, in happier times, would desire or was at all commensurate with the importance of the work the society is doing, or the efficiency with which that work is being done, nevertheless, this is the maximum amount, taking everything into consideration, that can be allocated for the purpose this year.<sup>229</sup>

The R.I.A.M. governors informed their members that the reduction in the grant was for reasons of 'state economy', adding: 'The governors hope that this will be a purely temporary measure, as the loss of £200 in the annual income of the academy is a very serious matter.'<sup>230</sup> £100 was again granted for the financial year 1934/5 although it was not paid to the academy until 1935/6 when the amount for that year was restored to £300. For the financial years between 1938/9 and 1942/3, the grant was reduced again to £150 although a special grant of £300 was made for the year 1939/40. From 1943/4, the annual amount was once again restored to £300, although from the year 1945/6 the grant was paid one year in arrears.<sup>231</sup>

In September 1950, the R.I.A.M. governors sent a deputation to Patrick McGilligan, the minister of finance of the inter-party government which had replaced the Fianna Fáil administration in 1948, to request a substantial increase in the government grant of £300, which they claimed had 'remained unaltered since 1889' (although it had been decreased on a number of occasions). The governors reported: 'The deputation put up a strong case to the minister, who received them sympathetically. Nothing has since been heard, however, from the department of finance, and the governors can only hope that the government will be able to see its way to make a substantial increase in the present nominal grant.'<sup>232</sup>

If the interest afforded to the development of music and musical activity in Ireland was measured by the financial assistance given by the government to a musical institution such as the R.I.A.M., the only one of its kind in the country, there was indeed, as Dockrell pointed out, very little of it. Much more attention was shown, particularly after 1937, to the title of the institution and its long and continued association with the British monarchy - an issue which posed for the government certain questions about the very constitutionality of the state itself.

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<sup>229</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 2174-5 (11 July 1933).

<sup>230</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1933, p. 6.

<sup>231</sup> See *R.I.A.M. annual reports*, 1933-52.

<sup>232</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1950, p.5. The grant would eventually be doubled by the Fianna Fáil administration in 1952 to £600.

### 1.12 The 'royal' crises, 1938 and 1948

The R.I.A.M. was constituted in 1889, as already noted, with a governing body consisting of a president, *ex-officio* and elected vice-presidents and a number of governors representing the members, the Coulson bequest, Dublin Corporation and the board of studies.<sup>233</sup> The presidency of the academy which had been held by the lord-lieutenant of Ireland prior to 6 December 1922 was held by the governor-general of the Irish Free State thereafter. The first two governor-generals of the state, Timothy M. Healy and James McNeill, actively engaged with the R.I.A.M. in the role of president attending concerts held by the academy and presenting the annual prizes and in 1923, Healy expressed his 'appreciation of the valuable work' which the academy had been doing 'for so many years past'.<sup>234</sup>

Following McNeill's instalment as Healy's successor, three R.I.A.M. governors, W. H. Brayden, Edmond Lupton and Dermot O'Brien, who was also the president of the Royal Hibernian Academy (R.H.A.), visited the Vice-regal Lodge in the Phoenix Park in June 1928 and presented McNeill with the following address:

We, the governors of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, welcome your Excellency as the governor-general of the Irish Free State. By the constitution of the academy, the governor-general is, *ex-officio*, president, and we desire to offer a special welcome to your Excellency in that capacity, and trust that you will honour us, as your predecessor has done, by extending to the academy, as opportunity may afford, the favour of your active interest in its welfare. The academy, founded in 1856, was in 1889 reconstituted under the Educational Endowment Act, and, notwithstanding the limited accommodation available, provides efficient training in the various branches of music for over three hundred young Irishmen and women. The academy is at once for all its pupils a school of culture in the noble art of music, and for many a technical institute, qualifying them for the practical necessity of gaining their livelihood. In addition, it acts as an examining body, testing the results of musical teaching in numerous colleges, convents, and schools throughout the country. Last year it issued over 2,500 certificates of merit. We feel that we can confidently count on the sympathy of your Excellency with the work of the academy in the promotion of musical study.<sup>235</sup>

James McNeill responded by thanking the governors for their address and expressing that he was 'glad' to be 'associated', as president of the R.I.A.M., with the 'fruitful efforts to promote the study of music in Saorstát Éireann'. 'The work of the academy

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<sup>233</sup> See Appendix D, tables 1-4.

<sup>234</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1923, p.4.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 1928, p.18.

will always have my sympathy', he concluded.<sup>236</sup> Little or no sympathy appears to have been shown towards the academy, however, by McNeill's successor, Domhnall O Buachalla, who was installed by the Fianna Fáil government as a *de facto* governor-general in November 1932. In fact, he did not even live at the Vice-regal Lodge nor did he engage in any official acts as governor-general or indeed as president of the R.I.A.M. Of course, this was part of the Fianna Fáil policy of dismantling the monarchical ties with Britain and in doing so the office of governor-general was abolished by the terms of the 1937 constitution.<sup>237</sup>

This posed a problem for the R.I.A.M. because the institution was without a president and so, in July 1938, the secretary, Sealy Jeffares, wrote to the new official head of state, now titled 'President of Éire', Dr Douglas Hyde.<sup>238</sup> Jeffares, on behalf of the governing body of the academy, issued an invitation to Hyde 'to graciously honour the academy by accepting the presidency of the institution', the office formerly occupied by three successive governors-general. The governors stated that they were 'most anxious that the continuity of having the head of state the president of the academy should be preserved'.<sup>239</sup>

In August, the office of the secretary to the president, Michael McDunphy, informed the academy that the matter would be considered and requested that copies of the constitution, by-laws and rules of the institution be forwarded to him.<sup>240</sup> A further request was made for 'copies of the charter or charters or other foundation instrument' to which Jeffares, explained that there was no legal foundation instrument or charter *per se* and detailed the origins of the academy and the scheme approved for its governance in 1889.<sup>241</sup> The government postponed responding to the R.I.A.M. invitation pending settlement of the general question of policy, raised by their invitation, regarding posts and offices offered to the president of Éire, particularly those offices which were considered 'subordinate' to those occupied by King George VI. This particular issue was brought before the government by

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p. 550.

<sup>238</sup> See Janet and Gareth Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: a maker of modern Ireland* (California, 1991) for biographical details.

<sup>239</sup> Sealy Jeffares, secretary, R.I.A.M., to 'The President of Éire, The Presidency, Dublin', 25 July 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>240</sup> Michael McDunphy, office of secretary to the president, to Jeffares, 10 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>241</sup> McDunphy to Jeffares, 18 Aug. 1938 and Jeffares to McDunphy, 20 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

McDunphy, of the office of the secretary to the president, informing Moynihan, the government secretary, that he 'did not think that it would be proper for the head of state to accept' the R.I.A.M. invitation. McDunphy pointed out to Moynihan that, under the Executive Powers (Consequential Provisions) Act of 1937, the king, as patron of the R.I.A.M., had 'now been replaced by the government as successor to the executive council'.<sup>242</sup>

McDunphy stated too that 'in all probability' the R.I.A.M. were simply not aware of the position created by this act which meant that the office of R.I.A.M. president being offered to the president of Éire was actually subordinate to that already occupied by the government as the academy's patron. 'If it were possible to transfer the post of patron from government to the president this would provide a satisfactory solution', he added, 'but it would seem that there is no power in existing law to do that.'<sup>243</sup>

No response was thus given to the R.I.A.M. on the matter until early in 1939 when McDunphy reminded Moynihan of the issue, requesting that the attorney-general be asked for his views on a reply that McDunphy had drafted to the R.I.A.M. invitation. The attorney-general's legal secretary, P.P. O'Donoghue, responded that while the attorney-general had 'no objection on legal grounds' to the general line of the proposed reply by McDunphy, he did suggest an alternative which pointed out that there was 'a case of further examination of the question', of whether the office of president of the academy was in fact available for offer to Hyde as president of Ireland.<sup>244</sup>

In March 1939, the attorney-general's alternative response was sent by McDunphy to the R.I.A.M., by way of response to their invitation of July 1938. Consequently, the R.I.A.M. sought legal advice on the matter and their legal representatives, Miley and Miley Solicitors, wrote to Eamon de Valera, now titled 'taoiseach' as the head of the government, pointing out although the scheme by which the R.I.A.M. had been constituted in 1889 stipulated that the lord-lieutenant was to be the president of the academy, the governors-general of the Irish Free State had always previously accepted the office. Thus, they queried 'who is now the person corresponding for the purposes of the scheme to the lord lieutenant of

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<sup>242</sup> Cited in letter from McDunphy to Moynihan, secretary to the government, 28 Oct. 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>243</sup> McDunphy to Moynihan, 28 Oct. 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>244</sup> See TAOIS/2003/18/03 (N.A.I.).

Ireland?’ The R.I.A.M. maintained that ‘the question as to which person should now become president of the academy’ was ‘a matter to be determined by An Taoiseach’.<sup>245</sup> The legal representatives of the R.I.A.M. were duly informed by the attorney-general that ‘all powers, functions, rights, duties, jurisdictions and prerogatives in relation to the posts of patron or president of the academy are now exercisable by or on the authority of the government’ and therefore the post of president of the R.I.A.M. was not ‘available for offer to the president’.<sup>246</sup>

The attorney-general also mentioned to the taoiseach’s office that now ‘the big question to be considered in the interests of consistency’ was ‘whether the prefix “royal” is to be continued as part of the titles of such institutions and bodies’.<sup>247</sup> The taoiseach’s office, however, were, by their own admission, unwilling to explore the issue at this point. A memo written on 22 May 1939 stated: ‘In view of the awkward consequences inherent in this whole business of amendment it appeared to me that we should endeavour to avoid it if at all possible’. It went on: ‘We might inform the solicitors to the academy what the position in regard to the academy is in our opinion and leave it to their common sense not to pursue the matter further’.<sup>248</sup> No further action was taken in this regard and there the matter lay until 1948.

Meanwhile though, the academy was making greater efforts to identify itself with the ‘Irishness’ of the new state. From the 1930s, for example, Irish language greetings were being used in correspondence with government ministers in particular. The headed paper used by the academy, newspaper advertisements placed by the academy and even the annual reports of the R.I.A.M. carried its main title in Irish, as ‘Acadamh Rioghdha um Ceol i nÉirinn’, with an English subtitle. In fact, the academy had, around 1930, also removed from its published list of persons involved with the governing body, the names of the British monarchy as patrons, even before the patronage was technically transferred to the Irish government in 1937 and before the R.I.A.M. had issued its invitation to the president to accept its presidency in 1938.<sup>249</sup> The matter of the presidency of the R.I.A.M. was raised again

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<sup>245</sup> Miley & Miley, solicitors, to the department of the Taoiseach, 1 May 1939 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>246</sup> Moynihan, to Miley & Miley, 28 Aug. 1939; ‘memo of clarification’ written by the assistant secretary, office of the secretary to the president, 4 Oct. 1939 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>247</sup> P.P. O’Donoghue, attorney-general’s office to Paddy O’Cinnéide, taoiseach’s office, 9 June 1939 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>248</sup> Memo, 22 May 1939 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>249</sup> See Appendix D, table 1. George V was the relevant monarch between 1922 and 1936 and George VI from 1936 to 1952.

in September 1948, however, when Hyde's successor as president and head of state, Seán T. O'Kelly, requested his secretary to consider 'a copy of a new constitution prepared for the R. I. A. Music' in which it was proposed that 'the president should take the place, formerly occupied by the lord lieut. [sic]'.<sup>250</sup>

The proposed new scheme had been submitted to him by one of the vice-presidents of the R.I.A.M., Denis McCullough, a native of Belfast, who had been the leader of the Irish Volunteers in Northern Ireland in 1913 and the president of the I.R.B. Supreme Council in 1916 and who was a piano tuner by trade. As well as setting up his own music business in Dublin in 1922, which would eventually become McCullough-Pigott Ltd. in the 1970s, McCullough had supported the pro-Treaty government, becoming a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Donegal after a by-election in 1924.<sup>251</sup> The scheme, approved by the R.I.A.M. governing body in June 1948, was but a draft proposal submitted to the president for his consideration as a matter of courtesy because it contained a clause providing that 'the president of Ireland for the time being shall be president of the academy' - replacing the provision in the original scheme that the lord lieutenant have that office.<sup>252</sup> For the scheme to come into effect, though, it had to be approved by the C.C.D.B., administered in 1948 by the department of education, under the Educational Endowment (Ireland) Act, 1885.

In response to McCullough's submission, McDunphy requested further information as to the origins of the scheme and again furnished Sealy Jeffares, the R.I.A.M. secretary, with a list of questions very similar to those that had already been posed and answered in 1938. There was, however, more focus now on how and when permission was granted to use the prefix of 'royal' in the title of the academy. McDunphy later noted that, at the time, it seemed to the president that 'in the situation created by the Republic of Ireland Act, 1948, the acceptance by him of office in a purely Irish body, having the word "royal" in its title would be somewhat anomalous, particularly as an entirely new scheme is being framed'.<sup>253</sup> The president himself noted that the matter was 'not urgent, and the question of the retention of the prefix 'Royal' may well wait, in view of the impending repeal of the External

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<sup>250</sup> Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, handwritten note, 15 Sept. 1948 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>251</sup> See Foster, *Modern Ire.* p.474; F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the famine* (2nd ed., London, 1973), pp 315-18 (hereafter cited as Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*).

<sup>252</sup> 'Royal Irish Academy of Music - summary', 14 Sept. 1959 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>253</sup> McDunphy, memo: 'Royal Irish Academy of Music', 11 Jan. 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

Relations act, the effect of which will be to remove the British King from our machinery'.<sup>254</sup>

In the interim, McDunphy met the former Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. Denis McCullough, informally, at Leinster House in November 1948 and had a conversation about the prefix 'royal' in the title of the institution of which he was an elected vice-president. According to McDunphy's records, McCullough intimated that a motion to delete the word 'royal' had actually been passed by the R.I.A.M. governors but that 'on reconsideration' the motion had been rescinded and a decision was made to retain the prefix. According to McCullough, he and the other governors who had made that decision felt that the prefix 'royal' was of 'great value to musicians who had received diplomas etc' and that their value and 'prestige' might be lessened if the prefix were removed. McDunphy admitted that he 'could not see his point'.<sup>255</sup> Interestingly, a post-script appended to this memo by McDunphy in January 1949 reveals: 'The president informed me today that the restoration of the word "Royal" had been agreed on the advocacy and strong recommendation of Dr Larchet'.<sup>256</sup>

Whilst the attorney-general was once again examining the matter for the president's comment on the proposed new R.I.A.M. scheme, the secretary to the office of the president learned that the governors of the R.I.A.M. had already submitted their proposal to the C.C.D.B. for approval. This action was seen by the office of the secretary to the president as 'most improper' and 'very discourteous' to the president, considering that they had asked for his comments. However, as McDunphy noted, 'no great harm was done' because he had requested that the secretary to the government 'made arrangements' with the department of education to ensure that the C.C.D.B. did not consider the proposed R.I.A.M. scheme until the government itself had 'further opportunity for consideration'.<sup>257</sup>

The issue also caused some reaction in the press at the time, with the *Irish Press* in particular, commenting on the anomaly that was the apparent prevalence of the word 'royal' in the new republic. One article in that newspaper, for example, pointed to the fact that when one turned to the pages of the telephone book of the

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<sup>254</sup> O'Kelly, handwritten note, 29 Sept. 1948 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>255</sup> Memo: 'The prefix 'Royal'', 17 Nov. 1948 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>256</sup> Postscript, 10 Jan. 1949, to memo: 'The prefix "Royal"', 17 Nov. 1948 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>257</sup> McDunphy, memo: 'Progress to date', 3 Mar. 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

Irish republic containing names beginning with the letter 'r', there were 136 numbers listed for bodies and institutions associated with the word 'royal'. There were no numbers associated with the word 'republic' whilst there were another 20 associated with the word 'imperial'.<sup>258</sup>

In April 1949, the attorney-general eventually advised the taoiseach's office, which in turn advised the president's office, that it would be competent for the R.I.A.M. to offer the position of president of the academy to the president of Ireland if the relevant clauses relating to the patronage of the British monarchy made under the original scheme of 1889 were amended. The taoiseach's secretary, Moynihan, also added that the taoiseach himself, John A Costello, felt that 'a suggestion by the academy that the president should accept the presidency of the academy should be coupled with a proposal that the word "royal" be deleted from its title', which, according to the attorney-general, it was competent for the C.C.D.B. to do. If this was not done, Costello advised the president Sean T. O'Kelly not to accept the presidency of the R.I.A.M.

Significantly though, Moynihan was anxious to point out that the taoiseach 'did not desire that any formal or official intimation in the sense indicated should be conveyed to the academy' but that 'a hint in this matter should be given to the academy through some personal channel - in other words, through Denis McCullough'.<sup>259</sup> The secretary to the office of the president, McDunphy therefore compiled a memo entitled 'Information which might be conveyed informally to Mr Denis McCullough' which the president, O'Kelly, personally 'showed' to McCullough. The memo stated: 'The president would be willing to accept the office of president of the academy provided that the word 'Royal' is deleted from the title of the academy' and pointed out that the office was to be one of honour only 'without any active or executive powers'.<sup>260</sup> A 'purely informal' note explicitly 'not intended to go record', was subsequently supplied by McDunphy to assist McCullough in discussing the matter with his colleagues at the R.I.A.M.<sup>261</sup> The C.C.D.B. were immediately given permission to consider the new scheme submitted to the board, which was, of course, automatically rejected although the board were

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<sup>258</sup> *I.P.*, 12 Jan. 1949.

<sup>259</sup> Moynihan to the office of the secretary to the president, 25 Apr. 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>260</sup> McDunphy, memo: 'Information which might be conveyed informally to Mr Denis McCullough' (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>261</sup> McDunphy to McCullough, 16 May 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

prepared to further 'consider alteration of clauses regarding recent changes and events'.<sup>262</sup>

Although McDunphy noted that John Larchet had informed him, in conversation, that, he was personally relieved that another amended scheme, 'including the deletion of the word 'Royal' from the title' would be considered by the C.C.D.B. and which he would raise at 'an early opportunity' at the R.I.A.M., nothing further was communicated to the president or the government from the R.I.A.M. on the matter until after the period in question here.<sup>263</sup> Indeed, the academy functioned without a president until the 1980s when the R.I.A.M. scheme of 1889 was eventually amended to allow the appointment of a director and chairman.

The matter does, however, also appear to have been discussed elsewhere after 1949. In April 1950, for example, it was reported in the daily Irish newspapers, that the issue had been raised at a recent meeting of Dublin Corporation upon the nomination of a new governor representing the corporation to the R.I.A.M. governing body to replace Mrs Maud Aiken, a former director of the Dublin Municipal School of Music who had been elected as a vice-president of the governing body. However, the matter was ruled irrelevant to the task before the meeting.<sup>264</sup>

The matter of the anomalous prefix 'royal' was not addressed in Dáil Éireann until December 1949 when Frank Aiken, a former Fianna Fáil defence minister, now serving as a T.D. for Louth and the husband of the above-mentioned Maud Aiken, asked the taoiseach, John A. Costello, if organisations which had that word in their titles and who also received grants-in-aid from the government might be asked to consent 'to eliminating the word "royal" from their names or descriptions'. Costello responded that the government would not 'put any pressure' on organisations to change their titles because 'while anomalous' the word 'royal' was not, in the present circumstances, of any other than historical significance.

Aiken countered by stating that there was some resentment in the country that 'organisations drawing money from the public purse' should continue with the title 'royal', pointing out that even the *Irish Times* had 'dropped the court circular and the royal coat of arms from its court and personal column'. Con Lehane, a Clann na

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<sup>262</sup> Moynihan to McDunphy, 20 May 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>263</sup> McDunphy, memo 'Conversation with Dr Larchet', 24 Aug. 1949 (N.A.I., TAOIS/2003/18/03).

<sup>264</sup> *I.L.* and *I.P.*, 4 Apr. 1950.

Poblachta T.D. for Dublin South-Central, concurred that the retention of 'this objectionable anachronism' was motivated in many instances by a desire 'to parade their hostility to the aspirations of the majority of the people' whilst being subsidised by them. Costello replied that he was not aware of any organisations which were trying 'to parade' the word 'royal', and he personally regarded it merely as an indication of 'the historic evolution' and 'progress' of the country and was thereby a matter of 'no consequence', 'of no importance and not worth wasting time over'.<sup>265</sup>

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This could, then, be construed as the overall attitude of the state, or at least governments of the state, to the questions of music, musical activity and the place of particular music institutions in the affirmation, or even creation, of the Irish nation-state. There was evident reluctance to discuss or re-assess those things, such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music and its royal associations, which had evolved from or were inherited from the recent past, from the British administration. These were consigned to continue as in the past whereas it would appear that more discussion, at least, was afforded to those things that belonged to a more ancient 'Gaelic' past, such as the Aonach Tailteann, things that were rekindled, redeveloped or restored. Yet both of these strategies failed for the same reason, the failure to relate to the realities of the Ireland of the time. Constraints on the size and scope of state ventures, either by self-imposed virtues of ignorance or dictation, usually resulted in their abandonment or failure.

The relationship between state and music offers a fascinating window into the debates surrounding state formation and expressions or projections of nationality, particularly by a newly independent polity, and shows clearly that while music was harnessed for political objectives, little thought was ever put into the development of music, musical activity or the music profession itself. Throughout all of the discussions, at state level, about the R.I.A.M., for example, nothing was said about the actual types of music produced or the potential role that such an established institution could play in creating a national policy for music. Despite the protracted discussions about the national anthem and the repeated complications regarding

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<sup>265</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxviii, 2033-35 (7 Dec. 1950).

copyright and publication, for example, no policy was adopted to ensure the safeguarding of the rights of composers.

In fact, voluntary membership of the Performing Rights Society (P.R.S.), established in Britain in 1914 to administer the rights granted to composers, authors and publishers of musical works under copyright legislation extended to the British dominions, and included almost all Irish composers, authors and music publishers.<sup>266</sup> The issue was only discussed once in Dáil Éireann in the period in question here when it was pointed out in 1950 that in light of the fact that Ireland was now an independent republic, the P.R.S. should not have 'control' or the right to fix the fees for copyright in the Irish republic or take vast amounts of money out of the country without paying income-tax.<sup>267</sup> However, the issue was not dealt with and the situation remained until 1995, when the Irish Music Rights Organisation (I.M.R.O.) took over the operations of the P.R.S. in Ireland.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Performing Rights Society, 'Information Pack' (London, 1987).

<sup>267</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxvii, 578-81 (12 July 1949)

<sup>268</sup> See Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, p. 439.

## Chapter 2

### MUSIC, NATION AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE STATE

The role that the bands of the Irish army and the Garda Síochána played in the various cultural and musical events organised, in the first decade or so after political independence, by the Irish Free State governments, to express and project Irish nationality has been noted. The bands played a particularly active role in inculcating both nationality and musicality through their participation, in the Aonach Tailteann music competitions or the Eucharistic Congress in 1932, for example.

Under the directorate of the German, Colonel Fritz Brase, the army bands, in particular, would also prove instrumental in a purely musical sense, in supporting other musical ensembles, providing wind instrumentation to augment ensembles to orchestra strength, standard and repertoire, recording music on gramophone records, providing musicians and conductors to the national broadcasting service and eventually contributing to the formation of the first and only national symphony orchestra under the auspices of that state service. Brase himself would prove to be one of the most influential, active and outspoken members of the music profession in Ireland until his death in 1940.

Much of the discussion here will focus then on the army bands, for this was where the very first state initiative for the explicit purposes of the development of music and musical activity in the newly independent state conducted, under the aegis of the department of defence in 1922.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which this initiative was promptly revised, however, for the explicit purposes of legitimising the nascent and volatile political state in a congenial cultural manner will be explored along with some consequences of the subjugation of the musical to the national agenda.

In this context, the importance of the role that the bands of the Garda Síochána played in the new state, which was more understated and rather overshadowed by the musical work of the army, will also be discussed, particularly after 1937 when they were found to serve more suitable national and musical roles than the army bands by the office of the secretary to the president of the Ireland. This chapter will investigate then to what extent the police and army bands of the newly

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information and many of the sources used here follow those presented by Joseph J. Ryan in his M.A. thesis, 'The army school of music, 1922-1940' (2 vols, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1987), i (hereafter cited as Ryan, 'Army school of music, 1922-1940')

independent Irish state were viewed as 'state' bands, actually intended to consolidate the national or state agenda, and to what extent they came to serve the musical.

## 2.1 An 'army school of music'

Although an actual figure was never given in Dáil Éireann, the total number of men enlisted in the official Irish state army towards the end of 1922 was estimated to have been 'practically 30,000'.<sup>2</sup> However, with enlistment occurring at a rate of about 1,000 men per day, there were almost 60,000 men in the national army towards the end of the civil war hostilities in April 1923.<sup>3</sup> A force of this size was an unsustainable expense for the government, particularly as over a quarter of the total budget for 1922/3 had been allocated to the army.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the defence ministry was put under pressure by the parsimonious finance ministry to reduce the nation's expenditure by demobilising men and cutting rates of pay something which effected economy right through the army on such articles as armchairs and card-tables.<sup>5</sup> General Richard Mulcahy, the first minister of defence, realised, however, that any immediate wholesale demobilisation of soldiers would have added substantially to the proportion of the population already unemployed in the state, about five per cent.<sup>6</sup> Mulcahy, thus, proposed to initiate a series of national cultural projects designed to be of benefit to the state as a whole and through which soldiers would be retrained to attain the skills and experience required to pursue viable careers once the civil hostilities and demobilisation had occurred.<sup>7</sup>

Among the projects identified by Mulcahy to serve this dual purpose was the training of army personnel to promote equestrian games in Ireland and the fostering of the Irish language through the establishment of an Irish-speaking battalion for the army was, to his mind, a 'pollinising [sic] power in relation to general cultural and educational developments throughout the country both as regards influence and

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<sup>2</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2436 (29 Nov. 1922).

<sup>3</sup> J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 99 (hereafter cited as Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*); Charles Townshend, *Ireland: the twentieth century* (London, 1998), p. 128 (hereafter cited as Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*). See also Michael Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish civil war* (Dublin, 1988), p. 127 and 136.

<sup>4</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2436 (29 Nov. 1922).

<sup>5</sup> Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, pp 113-4.

<sup>6</sup> Based on an approximate total population of 2,900,000 (*Census of population, 1926*).

<sup>7</sup> See Maryann Valiulis, *Portrait of revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the founding of the Irish Free State* (Dublin, 1992), pp 238-39.

educational and technical guidance'.<sup>8</sup> It was to this end in particular that Mulcahy also proposed to offer servicemen an opportunity to study music in the army, which would not only allow soldiers to attain the necessary technical skills to pursue viable professional careers in music outside of the army, but would also supply suitably trained personnel to foster increased musical activity and development throughout the state.

Musicians had enlisted in the national army during a recruitment drive organised by the pro-Treaty government at local and regional level from July 1922, at the height of the civil war campaign.<sup>9</sup> Many of these were Irish men who had served as bandsmen in various British military and police bands and who now, as members of the Special Infantry Corps of the Irish Free State army, organised themselves into bands playing various combinations of brass and woodwind instruments available to them. Others were individual musicians who grouped together into bands whilst certain pipe-and-drum bands, such as the Dublin Guards, enlisted en masse and continued to play as units within the new official Irish army.<sup>10</sup>

The need to organise these various musical groupings within the army soon became apparent to Mulcahy, and he appears to have taken it upon himself to move on designing a project that would not only centralise and standardise the musical ability already within the army but would also contribute to raising the level of musical activity and musical culture outside of the army within the new state.<sup>11</sup> In a letter to the provisional government dated 20 September 1922, Mulcahy notified his ministerial colleagues of this particular project, writing that he hoped 'to make military bands an important factor in musical development in the country'. He requested that 'immediate authority' be granted for 'the equipping of a brass and reed band for the Curragh' at a cost of £300 and informed the cabinet that although the army itself would decide the number of bands to be established within the army, the government would be 'entirely responsible for the provision of instruments and training' to these bands.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Memo (n.d. [1922]), Mulcahy papers P7/D/108 (U.C.D., A.D).

<sup>9</sup> For details of this recruitment drive see Michael Hopkinson, 'Civil war and aftermath' in J.R. Hill (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vii: *Ireland 1921-84* (Oxford, 2003), p. 34. (hereafter cited as *N.H.I.*, vii)

<sup>10</sup> Mulcahy to ministry of finance, 19 May 1923, (N. A. I., FIN/1/2937).

<sup>11</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music, 1922-1940', i, 41.

<sup>12</sup> 'Commander-in-chief, Óglaigh na h-Éireann' to 'government', 20 Sep. 1922, (N.A.I., TAOIS/S8858).

That Mulcahy was evidently preparing for a reduction of the government's forces by initiating projects for the retraining of soldiers before the civil war had even ended is an indication of the government's policy of attempted legitimisation through demilitarisation.<sup>13</sup> It also demonstrates how seriously the finance ministry and its persistent calls for economy appear to have been taken.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, it is somewhat surprising that at a time when pressure was being exerted by the finance ministry on all government departments to reduce expenditure, the cabinet immediately approved the expenditure requested by Mulcahy, deciding that the government would indeed be responsible for the provision of musical instruments and for the training of bands in the army.<sup>15</sup> It is also unexpected considering the attitude of the finance ministry that musical instruments themselves were luxury items which, as will be discussed later, had to be imported and thereby had a relatively high percentage of taxation added to the value of each instrument. Moreover, Mulcahy sought, and was granted, finance to utilise the army to effect cultural innovations for the nation at the height of the civil war without there being any definite design for that project.

Mulcahy did not submit any sort of formal application to the finance ministry to proceed with his music project using the army, nor did he consult with his ministerial colleagues. By granting the finance demanded for one brass and reed band so readily though, the cabinet effectively sanctioned his intentions, and therefore the project in whatever form it would take. It is interesting to note that whilst Mulcahy's tendency to pursue his objectives without consulting his ministerial colleagues may have been an incidental feature of his 'ministerial style',<sup>16</sup> he purposefully distanced himself from his cabinet colleagues in his correspondence in relation to his music project, pointedly addressing them as 'government', as though he himself were not a government minister. As Joseph Ryan has observed, he signed his correspondence with 'commander-in-chief' rather than 'minister of defence', although he held dual offices at the time.<sup>17</sup> It would appear, then, that Mulcahy desired to promote certain enterprises, such as the music project, as 'army'

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<sup>13</sup> Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*, p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, p. 114.

<sup>15</sup> Secretary to the government to Mulcahy, 22 Sep. 1922, (N.A.I., TAOIS/S8858).

<sup>16</sup> Valiulis, *Portrait of revolutionary*, pp 48-9 and 186-7.

<sup>17</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 49-53.

initiatives, if not as his own, owing to the degree of power derived by him from the independent authority of the army at this point.

Certainly, whilst he may have viewed the army as a state resource, Mulcahy administered the army as the autonomous body that it was, for although the majority of the Irish Republican Army headquarters staff, under the influence of Michael Collins, had pledged allegiance to the civil authority of the Irish Free State government in January 1922, it had retained its own executive and operational independence as the official army of the new state. Mulcahy had served as chief-of-staff of the IRA from 1917 until 1922 when he was nominated by Dáil Éireann to serve as the defence minister of the provisional government. In taking this portfolio, which he would hold until March 1924, he was required to relinquish his army position to serve as a civilian minister, although allowed to retain the title of his rank.<sup>18</sup>

However, following Collins's death in August 1922, Mulcahy was re-instated as the commander-in-chief of the government forces and thus held considerable personal power as a government minister. Mulcahy shared, as F.S.L. Lyons has noted, 'the burden of government' with W.T. Cosgrave, the president of the executive council and Kevin O'Higgins, the vice-president and minister for home affairs.<sup>19</sup> Thereby Mulcahy's demand for finance for his music project, in September 1922, carried the weight of both the political and military authority he commanded, which appears to be confirmed by the granting of that finance.

Although Mulcahy did not have a specific design for his project at this stage, he did appear to have three particularly clear objectives for it. Firstly, the project itself was to have a dual nature. On the one hand, it had a vocational purpose insofar as soldiers would be provided with the necessary musical instruction to pursue viable careers as professional musicians once they returned to civilian life. On the other hand, the project was a musical one with national relevance, for those soldiers who had been provided with a standardised musical instruction would in turn influence developments in the musical culture of the nation, by participating in amateur

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<sup>18</sup> J. M. Curran, *The birth of the Irish Free State* (Alabama, 1980), p. 158.

<sup>19</sup> Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, p. 466.

musical activity in their localities. They would, he said, 'dispense music and musical understanding in the highest sense of these terms to the people'.<sup>20</sup>

Secondly, in keeping with his perception of the army as a 'pollinising' agent Mulcahy wanted to ensure that the project would be particularly responsible in some way for 'the collection, preservation, and performance of the native store of folk music'.<sup>21</sup> What constituted 'folk music' or where such a 'native store' was to be found was not clear at this stage.

Thirdly, it was clearly Mulcahy's intention that the extant army bands, whose existence had caused him to consider the role of the army in the development of music in the first place, would play an important role in his music project.<sup>22</sup> However, Lieutenant Colonel James Doyle, the first Irish director of the Irish army school of music, maintained in 1952, that there had been no tradition in the new state 'on which to base initial efforts to form our bands and to ensure that they would be capable of performing in an inspiring manner music of Irish and cultural interest'.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, there could not have been a distinctive Irish army band tradition where there had not been an Irish army but, as already noted, military bands and their music were not unknown to Irish people and were the prominent musical feature of the Aonach Tailteann festival held in 1924, 1928 and 1932. There had been a long-standing predilection for associating causes with bands based on the military band style and it was this successful model with its existing social and political correlations, rather than musical repertoire or suitability, which presumably contributed to Mulcahy's perception of this type of band as an ideal medium to which the nation could entrust both its musical heritage and its musical future. That his music project would furnish the national army itself with bands and marching music appears to have been, for Mulcahy, a consideration second only to the plan for national musical development, a plan which he intended that the government would finance.

Once cabinet approval for £300 had been secured, Mulcahy took this as approval for his entire, and as yet undefined, project and immediately set about formulating a design for his army music project. In October 1922 he sought the

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<sup>20</sup> J.F. Larchet, 'The army school of music: development of Irish art one of its main aims' in *F.J.* (2<sup>nd</sup> section: Irish Free State supplement) [hereafter *F.J.*, (I. F. S. supp.)], 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>21</sup> Memo [n.d.], Mulcahy papers P7/D/108 (U.C.D., A.D.).

<sup>22</sup> 'Commander-in-chief' to 'government', 20 Sept. 1922, (N.A.I., TAOIS/S8858).

<sup>23</sup> James Doyle, 'Music in the army' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 65.

advice of John Larchet, the professor of music at U.C.D. whose 'plea for music' and scheme for a national academy of music would be dismissed a few months later by the finance ministry, owing to the prevailing 'financial conditions'.<sup>24</sup> Not only was Larchet the foremost Irish music academic in the state but he was also the person best placed to comment upon and practically affect developments in the musical activity of the nation, which guaranteed that Mulcahy had procured the best counsel in ensuring the national relevance of his music project.

Not only in the consultation of the top Irish music academic but attempting to include a representative of the music profession in a music project using the army, Mulcahy was adding further weight to his endeavour. In fact, he later recounted that on first consultation, Larchet had suggested that a 'committee of musicians' be established to deal with the matter of music in the army but Mulcahy himself had felt that he 'would not have time to handle a committee of musicians' and suggested that if Larchet was 'satisfied to be a committee of one', then he could 'get on with the work'. Larchet duly responded, as a 'committee of one', not only with advice but also with a detailed submission outlining the form that he felt the proposed music project should take and centred on what he termed 'an army school of music'.<sup>25</sup>

## **2.2 1923: the 'first official recognition of music'**

Whilst Larchet detailed the practical musical requirements necessary for the realisation of Mulcahy's objectives, this scheme also presented for him another avenue by which he might indirectly utilise state resources to practically affect improvements in the quality of music education and culture generally in the state. Larchet, therefore, supported Mulcahy's view that the music project had considerable national significance and that the army had a serious role to play in musical development, writing: 'By producing first class military bands, the army can give tremendous assistance in raising the Irish nation to an exalted position amongst the great musical nations'.<sup>26</sup> His design, 'in order that bandsmen may be trained to be capable musicians', specified a structured three year course of musical study, to include weekly individual and band practice along with classes in aural training, sight-singing, rudiments and musical appreciation with the aid of a gramophone.

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<sup>24</sup> See ch. 1; see also Appendix A and Appendix J for the full texts of these documents.

<sup>25</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 2010 (23 July 1924).

<sup>26</sup> *F.J.*, (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

All of this was intended to encourage in students the development of 'a sense of true criticism and intelligent listening'. Students who attained the required marks in the final examinations would qualify as bandsmen and be awarded with a certificate of proficiency to enable them to play in a professional orchestra whilst those who scored higher than eight-five percent had the option to pursue a further diploma course to study such subjects as 'counterpoint, harmony, history, scoring for military band, a general knowledge of instrumentation, and an elementary knowledge of composition', which would eventually qualify them as officer bandmasters.<sup>27</sup> However, there was not one permanent professional orchestra in the state at the time, for as Larchet himself had pointed out, numerous attempts to establish orchestras had fallen by the wayside as a result of a lack of public support.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the playing of wind instruments in Ireland apparently was and 'always' had been 'notoriously bad', particularly in comparison with the established tradition of string playing. Larchet claimed that there were 'not enough good Irish wind players' and no tradition of wind-playing and in consequence no established method or style, as there was in string and piano playing in Dublin at the time. He argued that this particular deficiency had prevailed for some time, pointing out that 'even in the days of the Dublin Musical Society', in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the founder Joseph Robinson and his successor Joseph Smith had been 'forced to send to Liverpool or Manchester' for wind players.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the municipal school of music in Dublin, which had been established for the purposes of educating 'artisans' who were more likely to be players of wind instruments, had, as Joseph Ryan states, also 'long since abandoned its original concentration on wind teaching'.<sup>30</sup> Therefore an army school of music would create a fund of wind instrumentalists furnished with a recognised musical qualification who could play their part, as teachers, in raising the local amateur level of musical literacy and who might also contribute to the founding of a national symphony orchestra.

Another aspect of Larchet's scheme was the study of 'Irish music' with 'special attention' to be given to 'the performance of Irish music'. Whilst apparently

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<sup>27</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 2010 (23 July 1924).

<sup>28</sup> Larchet, 'A plea for music' (N.A.I., FIN/1/2794) - see Appendix A. See also Joseph O'Neill, 'Music in Dublin' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 251-62; Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork', in idem (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 268-71.

<sup>29</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

keeping with Mulcahy's vision of his project as a source for the collection and preservation of music in Ireland, his scheme did not define exactly what 'Irish music' was nor did it actually set out how this was to be accomplished. This, presumably, was to be attended to by the bandmaster, for after all, Larchet was convinced that 'the bandmaster and the future of Irish music' were 'definitely connected'.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most important of the bandmaster's duties was the arranging for military bands of 'a priceless collection of Irish music' which Larchet felt was 'still unknown' to the majority of Irish people. To his mind, the work of 'classifying and editing this collection' was long overdue. He pointed out that 'original research work' had also to be undertaken to unearth new or less familiar tunes, because 'any further arrangement of Moore's "Melodies" and the "Londonderry Air"' was superfluous'. Importantly, Larchet also stipulated that any musical arrangements or settings produced by the bandmaster would be required to 'display a musicianship sufficient to pass the severest test' as all such music was to be 'published under the auspices of the government' so as to render it as 'official' Irish music. This, in addition to the performance of the music by the bands of the army school of music throughout the country, was deemed as a 'necessary' manoeuvre to counteract 'the false impression regarding Irish music, so prevalent at home and abroad, and chiefly due to the vulgar and un-Irish arrangements so frequently heard'.<sup>32</sup>

Remarkably, this also created a possible facility for the fashioning of a distinctively 'Irish' music tradition or at very least for the definition or designation of what might be officially sanctioned by the government of the new Irish state, on the advice of the leading Irish music academic, as the 'national' music of the new state. The bandmaster to be charged with these tasks would ideally be 'a cultured musician, inspired with national sentiments and artistic ideals, a disciplinarian, an efficient instructor and a good conductor' but Larchet believed that such a person, in whom the 'ultimate success' of his proposed scheme would be centred, was not to be found in Ireland at the time. He said that the 'first ideal Irish bandmaster' was 'yet to be made' and that it was necessary to 'break away entirely from the old system, and to train our bandmasters according to our own national desires'. The reality was, though, that in order for this to happen 'with the minimum of waiting' the original

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<sup>30</sup> Ryan, 'Nationalism & music', p. 377.

<sup>31</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

bandmaster had to come from outside the state so that future bandmasters could be developed from within. That such external instruction was necessary was deemed 'unfortunate', but according to Larchet, 'in view of our historical difficulties, inevitable'.<sup>33</sup>

This echoed claims made by Michael Collins in 1922, for example, that the architects of the Irish state themselves had to 'begin the upbuilding of the nation with foreign tools' but before such inherited tools as the civil service and the financial system could be discarded there had to be forged 'fresh Gaelic ones in their place'.<sup>34</sup> Of course, looking outside of the country to appoint experts in certain musical fields was not something new in musical circles either, as R.I.A.M., for instance, had appointed a mixture of Irish, English and 'foreign' teachers from its inception in 1848, with one of these, the Neapolitan Michele Esposito, being one of the most influential figures in Irish musical history.<sup>35</sup>

In light of the twin facts, then, that wind-instrument playing and teaching were inadequate and that 'the ideal Irish bandmaster' was not yet to be found in Ireland, Larchet advised Mulcahy that 'it would be necessary and indeed a great national act' to introduce a first-rate player and instructor for a preliminary period.<sup>36</sup> And so they looked to the military music academies of the European mainland to find a competent band director to develop an Irish army school of music, who would not only provide standardised musical training to bandsmen in the army but who would also be instrumental in a national musical revival, along the lines indicated by Larchet. The appointment of an experienced British bandmaster was not contemplated, which is understandable considering the political climate of the early 1920s, and the French Garde Républicaine, the acknowledged leaders in wind instrumentalism at the time, could not provide any suitable person, so Mulcahy looked to Germany.

It appears that at this time there were a large number of experienced and highly skilled but displaced bandmasters in post-war Germany to whom a position as director of the proposed school of music of the national army in Ireland would be a very attractive proposition and so, Mulcahy's brother-in-law, Denis McCullough,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Notes by Collins, Aug. 1922, in *The path to freedom* (Cork, 1968), cited in Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*, p. 121.

<sup>35</sup> O'Neill, 'Music in Dublin', pp 252-3; Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, pp 448-51.

<sup>36</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

was asked to make contact with the relevant military music authorities in Germany on behalf of the Irish state.<sup>37</sup> As already mentioned, McCullough was a governor at the R.I.A.M. and a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Donegal who owned his own music business in Dublin and because he frequently travelled to the European mainland to import second-hand pianos for reconditioning and sale in his shop, he was entrusted by Mulcahy to secure a musical director and musical instruments for the Irish army school of music project. The Irish Free State government representative in Germany, John Charteres, facilitated an approach to Professor Theodor Gawert, the director of musical activity in the German army, who recommended Wilhelm Fritz Anton Brase to the position of director of the proposed Irish army school of music.<sup>38</sup>

Fritz Brase, a distinguished graduate of the Leipzig Conservatoire and of the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin, accepted the position, with the rank of colonel, in February 1923. He was a gifted musician and a prolific composer born near Hanover in 1875, who having enrolled in a military band at the age of eighteen as a flügelhorn player had received the title of 'Royal musical director' by 1909. In 1911 he was awarded the most prestigious military musical position in Germany, bandmaster of Kaiser Wilhelm II's Prussian Guards First Regiment in Berlin. Following Germany's defeat in the First World War, this imperial band was dissolved and Brase had been conducting and composing music in various theatres immediately prior to the invitation by the Irish government to Ireland in 1923.<sup>39</sup> He was, according to Larchet, a conductor and composer 'on the highest pinnacle, even in the most musical nation of the world' and his 'unique' experience as a top military band instructor, which was 'of most concern' to the Irish army school of music project, was 'one of the deciding factors in bringing about his appointment'.<sup>40</sup>

The army commissions granted in 1923 to Brase and to his compatriot Frederich Sauerzweig, the former bandmaster of the Second Foot Artillery Band in Greifswald who was offered the position of instructional officer for military music in the Irish army with rank of captain, were significant in themselves for they were two of only three permanent commissions granted to non-Irish citizens in the years

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<sup>37</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 65; Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 75-84.

<sup>38</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 76-7.

<sup>39</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923; 'Obituary: Col. Fritz Brase', *I.I.*, 2 Dec. 1940; Richard Pine, *Music and broadcasting in Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp 33-34 (hereafter cited as Pine, *Music & broadcasting*); Joseph Ryan, 'Music in independent Ireland since 1921' in *N.H.I.*, vii, p.633.

between 1922 and 1951. Commissions in the defence forces were only granted to non-nationals in exceptional circumstances, 'where special technical or professional qualifications and experience are essential' or where commission candidates possessed 'the necessary qualifications and experience and their appointment is in the best interests of the service'.<sup>41</sup> It is quite remarkable that Mulcahy, as both minister of defence and commander-in-chief of the army, was not only granting army commissions to non-nationals at the height of a civil war in Ireland but was granting them on the basis of their 'technical and professional qualifications' in music, not on their military experience or achievement.

Brase arrived in Dublin in March 1923, along with Sauerzweig, and quickly set about establishing the new school of music. With the £300 sanctioned by the provisional government in September 1922, Brase purchased two complete sets of musical instruments and musical accessories from his former band in Berlin and once these arrived, all units of the new state army were invited to send instrumentalists from among their ranks for musical examinations and transfer to the army school of music if found suitable.<sup>42</sup>

Most instrumentalists were, at this stage, recruited from within the Special Infantry Corps, many of whose members had served in British military bands during the First World War and Brase implemented for them a rehearsal repertoire of repeated playing of hymns, chorales and marches, which he believed developed breathing, phrasing and awareness of intonation in wind-players.<sup>43</sup> The instruments he procured from Germany also brought with them to Ireland a major innovation in musical development. Whereas all wind instruments used in Ireland prior to 1923 were of the English high pitch or concert pitch used by the British regimental and police bands, the German instruments were tuned to the lower standard or 'new philharmonic' pitch then being employed on the European continent.

This was a progressive step, according to General Mulcahy, but it was 'a native decision...fully concurred in by the professor of music at the National University [Larchet]...not a decision imported into Ireland by any foreigner'.<sup>44</sup> Larchet himself wrote: 'It would have been exceedingly foolish on the part of the

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<sup>40</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>41</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, civ, 206 (23 Jan. 1947).

<sup>42</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 66.

<sup>43</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 131.

<sup>44</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 1744 (12 June 1923).

Irish government, in what is really their first official recognition of music, to cut themselves adrift from the great musical nations of the world by following the English system'.<sup>45</sup>

This demonstrated perhaps Larchet's influence in attempting to ensure that music in Ireland, at least as it was to be developed in the Irish army, would also be developed along contemporary European lines. It was, moreover, a subtle method of asserting what R. F. Foster termed 'self-definition against Britain'; something which he claims was the preoccupation, in both cultural and political terms, of the Irish government in the 1920s.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.3 'Freistát über alles'?

This also indicated a calculated effort to set the new Irish military school of music apart, not only from the civilian band competition, but also from the British military bands in terms of instrumentation, style and pitch, which the civilian bands followed. These bands were deemed to be of little musical or educational bearing by Larchet, who commented that the military bands heard in Dublin and the garrison towns prior to 1922 had been 'possibly the poorest in the British army' and that 'the music they offered was neither of Irish nor educational interest'.<sup>47</sup>

While Brase laid the practical musical foundations of the school by rehearsing with the available instrumentalists and arranging music along the lines of Larchet's submission to Mulcahy in October 1922, Larchet and Mulcahy themselves drafted an advertisement for new students to the school. The advertisement was published in a special 'Irish Free State supplement' with the *Freeman's Journal* on 13 August 1923 as an extensive article, penned by Larchet as 'musical adviser to the army', outlining the history of the army music school project to date and its aims for the future.

This article was essentially the mission statement for the new army school of music which combined Larchet's academic design with Mulcahy's original intentions for a national music project using the army under four main objectives: firstly, the school was to produce 'first-class military bands'; secondly, it would train 'first-class bandsmen'; thirdly, it would train 'Irish bandmasters' and fourthly, it

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<sup>45</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>46</sup> Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p. 516.

<sup>47</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

would be responsible for 'the development of Irish music'. Whether or not this last objective was for the development of particularly 'Irish' music, that being the 'native store of folk music' which Mulcahy had referred to, or for music generally in Ireland was not clear.

However, both Larchet and Mulcahy were sure that all the objectives would be met soon enough for the influence of the new school 'to be felt in a few years throughout Ireland'. Army bandsmen would remedy the lack of properly-trained wind-players, and their work, both as part of army bands and on their 'return to civil life', would contribute to 'the gradual education of our audiences to an appreciation of good music, and to a desire for more'.<sup>48</sup> In return for their part in influencing developments in musical activity and music itself in Ireland. Larchet wrote that bandsmen would be provided with unique educational opportunities and, in a notable addition to his original design, potential bandmasters would now receive further musical training at the National University of Ireland as well as at the army school of music.

Larchet also wrote that employment opportunities would also create themselves, for as bandsmen worked to create appreciative audiences they would in turn create a demand for more music of a high standard and thereby it was promised that the musical training given at the army school of music would equip those who trained there with 'a lucrative means of livelihood'. No difficulty in obtaining 'musical youths' for the school was thus envisaged, although 'a strict test of ability' had to be undertaken - for the army could not 'be expected to incur any expenditure of time or money' that would not be 'repaid afterwards' in the promulgation of a better standard of musical activity.<sup>49</sup>

Significantly, Larchet's *Freeman's Journal* article echoed many of the sentiments expressed in his 'Plea for music' and concluded by highlighting, once again, his own preoccupation with elevating the musical culture and musical education of the Irish nation to a level comparable to that of other European countries:

The best education in musical appreciation consists of listening to good music, and the more the taste is fed the higher it grows. Up to the present our people have been starved in this respect, but conditions should now improve, and we shall yet be able to compete with even such highly cultured nations

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

such as Germany and France. Their military bands play an important part in the musical education of their peoples, and ours should be able to achieve the same results<sup>50</sup>

The composer Harold White ('Dermot McMorrough'), a teacher at the Leinster School of Music, Dublin and, later, a music critic of the *Irish Independent*, concurred with Larchet's views. White held that in the absence of direct government sponsorship for the development of music, 'the military bands' were 'the missionaries of music to the people'. He wrote that the government was 'too busy to give any attention to music; and it ever will be. There always exists [sic] so many things of more vital importance than music to be considered. As long as music is considered a luxury and an accomplishment instead of an essential refining and elevating influence to the nation, it is bound to be relegated to a remote position in the minds of the rulers of the state.' At the same time, White praised Mulcahy, whom he viewed as 'a man of much culture and refinement', for 'knowing the importance of music' and tackling the 'problem' of music in Ireland by using the army.<sup>51</sup>

Although Mulcahy was using the army for the purpose of national musical development, it appears that, in addition to his civilian cabinet colleagues, he also failed to consult other army personnel, including the army finance office, or the finance ministry, about the future development of the school. In fact, because details of pay and service for personnel had not even been finalised when the school of music was advertised, Larchet was required to point out that the scheme published in the *Freeman's Journal* in August 1923 was 'not made definitely nor authoritatively' and indicated only the lines along which service in the school were intended to run.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, because the details of the scheme were put into print in such a public manner by the minister of defence and the musical adviser to the army, the army finance committee were obliged to sanction them. This points to the fact that the way that the school of music was presented was a strategic move on Mulcahy's part to force the army to support it. Over one hundred musicians who were recruited on account of the *Freeman's Journal* article, from some of the extant civilian bands, the bands of the Garda Síochána and British police bands, as well as unaffiliated

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. See also Appendix A for comparative purposes.

<sup>51</sup> *F.J.*, 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

youths 'with a keen musical ear', were quietly assimilated into the bands of the army school of music.<sup>53</sup>

More significantly though, Fritz Brase does not appear to have been consulted about the content of the article or the objectives of an army school of music, despite the fact that ultimate responsibility for realising the music project was vested in him as the first bandmaster. This meant that he was free to concentrate on his work with the bands under the auspices of the school of music project, which, in spite of the precarious political and military circumstances of the period, progressed quietly, if rather speedily. It also meant, though, that the survival of the school was reliant on the presence of Mulcahy as the defence minister and Larchet as his musical adviser.

Ironically, the exclusion of Brase from creating any guiding principles for the future of the army school of music also meant that the four main objectives of school were imperilled from the outset. An inherent distinction was thus being created between the practical work that Brase was doing in creating 'first-class' bands, bandsmen and bandmasters and the academic intention to use the school of music as a vehicle for the development of musical education and culture in Ireland. Not only then would the future of the army school of music be uncertain if either Mulcahy or Larchet were removed from their positions of influence, but the failure to fully incorporate Brase, who was ensuring that at least three of the stated objectives of the school were being carried out on a practical level, would mean that his work, in turn, would not be incorporated into the wider national design.

Mulcahy seems to have been aware of this, to some degree, and appears to have been safeguarding the entire music project by attempting, in August 1923, to have the army school of music transferred from its barracks in the Curragh in county Kildare to Beggar's Bush in Dublin city so that there would be closer contact between the school and its academic creator and adviser. In this way, Larchet could have more practical input in ensuring that the work being undertaken at the school was in keeping with the national objectives of the project. Whilst Mulcahy succeeded in having the school of music transferred to Dublin by December 1923, he did this, however, with Larchet and not Brase, in mind.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>54</sup> Refer to Ryan's treatment of this issue in 'Army school of music', i, 133-7.

Although there may have been little public awareness of and no public debate about Brase's work, or even about the nature of the army music project itself at this stage, the commissioning of Brase himself as a colonel in the Irish army did not go unnoticed. Indeed, it was not without disapproval, particularly with regard to the fact that the government of a newly independent state found it necessary to look outside of the state to engage a suitable director for a band in its national army, to say nothing of directing wider developments in Irish music. The chief opponent to the appointment of Brase on the grounds of his nationality was Larchet's colleague, Robert O'Dwyer, the Dublin Corporation professor for Irish music at University College Dublin.

In a rather irate letter to the *Freeman's Journal* printed on 22 September 1923, O'Dwyer acknowledged the inevitable role of the military band 'in the restoration of a nation's music'. However, he disapproved of what he termed 'the absurd plea' that Ireland was 'incapable of training bandsmen for our necessities'. He pointed to the 'renowned Irish schools of the Christian Brothers at Artane, Carriglea, Glynn, Limerick, Galway and Tralee' that already had 'able and devoted Irish musicians' training bandsmen who had served in 'the armies of Europe and America'.<sup>55</sup> Incidentally, the Christian Brothers' Training College at Marino in Dublin was unique amongst primary school teacher-training colleges for encouraging its trainee teachers to engage practically with music by learning musical instruments and playing in the college orchestra rather than merely learning to teach music using only the blackboard and modulator.<sup>56</sup>

O'Dwyer's dissatisfaction at any suggestion that Irish musicians were incapable of providing for their own nation's musical needs also seemed to bear some relation to the fact that it was Larchet, as 'professor of music at the National University', and not him, or any other professor of 'Irish' music or 'any musician with Irish qualifications or of Irish name', that had been consulted rather than any particular personal or xenophobic grievance with Brase. Moreover, considering O'Dwyer's own involvement with the successful Ireland's Own Band, a civilian band formed in Dublin in 1904, which he referred to in his letter to the *Freeman's*

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<sup>55</sup> *F.J.*, 22 Sept. 1923.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Grocock, *A general survey of music in the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin, 1961), p. 22; See also Marie McCarthy, *Passing it on: the transmission of music in Irish culture* (Cork, 1999), pp 66-68.

*Journal*, his criticism may also have been a simple attempt to undermine the military band competition.<sup>57</sup>

Brase's appointment also caused some controversy in Dáil Éireann. During the course of a debate on army expenditure in June 1923, for example, Professor William Magennis, an independent T.D. representing the National University of Ireland, warned Mulcahy that, whilst it was 'not unnatural that a German should be selected' as the director of an Irish army school of music, there was a danger that the Irish military bands he directed would be more German than Irish, playing 'Freistát über Alles' on German brass instruments and rejecting woodwind or French manufactured instruments, those being 'instruments taboo with your truly patriotic German musician'.<sup>58</sup>

Mulcahy countered that it was essential to begin in the best way with the best possible personnel available, whether or not they were Irish, so that there would be 'no false start in the development of military bands in the country, and therefore no loss to general musical development'. He assured the Dáil that Brase's musical work would 'develop along Irish lines' and be 'controlled by Irish lines of thought in music', for Brase was 'simply here to help' in the development of 'distinctive Irish music.' Mulcahy praised Brase, saying that the Irish army had been very fortunate to secure as the director of the army school of music 'a German, a very cultured musician and a cultured composer, with very great experience in the training of bands and bandmasters' and who had been 'not very long in Ireland when he had an enthusiastic appreciation of the difference between what was Irish music and what was not'.<sup>59</sup>

#### **2.4 'A new era for music in Ireland'**

Indeed, that a foreign bandmaster, with a limited knowledge of the English language, let alone of the Irish language, was not only expected to appreciate 'what was Irish music and what was not' but was also expected to research, classify, edit and score such music for military band, may have seemed implausible - but Brase proved otherwise. A private inaugural performance given at the Curragh in county Kildare on 9 September 1923 by the first band produced by the army school of music, which

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<sup>57</sup> *F.J.*, 22 Sept. 1923.

<sup>58</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 1743-4 (12 June 1923).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

was designated by Brase as the Army School of Music, No.1 Band, was hailed in the national newspapers as 'the beginning of a new era for music in Ireland'.<sup>60</sup>

By 14 October 1923, this band was sufficiently prepared to give its first public performance at the Theatre Royal in Dublin, an event that was well-publicised, with numerous photographs of Brase and of the band in full uniform appearing in the national daily newspapers for a number of weeks prior. The reports given in the national newspapers after this performance were very positive, with the *Freeman's Journal* notably claiming that it would 'go down in the annals of Irish music, and in the history, one ventures to think, of the Irish people'.<sup>61</sup> The *Irish Statesman* reported that the concert 'was among the best in Dublin for several years, and to many of the audience was a revelation of what music can really be'.<sup>62</sup> The *Irish Times* commented that it was 'a demonstration of the power of good music' and remarked that the army band was 'the first flat-pitched military band in Great Britain or Ireland', something which was generally accepted as a positive development.<sup>63</sup>

There was also much commentary on the new musical instruments never seen or heard before in Ireland, especially in a military band, for, 'in accordance with continental practice', the band included four French horns, two tenor horns, three German trumpets, three cornets, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in E flat, eight clarinets in B flat, three trombones, two bassoons and a euphonium.<sup>64</sup> Even at this early stage, though, the general impression was that the sound produced by this band was more orchestral than military brass and reed band with the *Irish Times*, for example, reporting that most of the instruments were 'the very latest production of the brains of German craftsmen. There is a Boehm flute, four French horns, cornets without pistons [flügelhorns], and several types of German horn. The last-named and the wide-billed trombone largely contributed to the mellowness which characterises all the work of the band.'<sup>65</sup>

The repertoire itself consisted of 'General Mulcahy march', 'Irish march, no.1' and 'Irish fantasia, no.1' written by Brase himself, Wagner's 'Rienzi' and 'Tannhäuser' overtures, an arrangement of Larchet's 'Lament for Youth', Liszt's 'Hungarian rhapsodie, no.2', Rossini's 'William Tell' overture and two sets of songs,

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<sup>60</sup> *I.L.*, 10 Sept. 1923; see also *I.T.* and *F.J.*, 10 Sept. 1923.

<sup>61</sup> *F.J.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>62</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 20 Oct. 1923.

<sup>63</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>64</sup> *F.J.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

including Harty's setting of 'The ould lad' and Larchet's setting of 'The bard of Armagh', sung by the baritone J.C. Doyle, uncle of the first Irish director of the army school of music, James Doyle. This type of programme was described as being 'slightly different' to what audiences were accustomed but it demonstrated the musical standard attained by the instrumentalists of the first main band to emerge from the army school of music, which itself was claimed to have 'left behind an ineffaceable impression of crispness and vitality'.<sup>66</sup>

These sentiments were echoed in newspaper reports following the second public performance by the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band given on 13 January 1924, which included such items as Mozart's 'The magic flute' overture, two Hungarian dances by Brahms, Tchaikovsky's 'Caprice Italien, no.44', Ponchielli's 'La gioconda' ballet music and Brase's own 'Irish march, no.3' and his 'Minuet and serenade'. The solo vocalist on this occasion was Joseph O'Neill, secretary of the Leinster School of Music and, later, music critic for the *Irish Independent*, who sang a selection of songs including 'O moon of my delight' and an arrangement of 'The lark in the clear air' by Michele Esposito.<sup>67</sup> *The Leader* asserted that 'such high class fare', particularly that 'from the master minds of Germany, Hungary, Austria, Russia and Italy, the countries from which the great bulk of the world's classics emanates', had not been provided in Ireland for 'over thirty years'.<sup>68</sup>

Not only was Fritz Brase said to have stirred the dormant musical talent of the nation and begun developing the playing of woodwind, brass and reed instruments whilst contributing to the elevation of the general musical culture of the nation, the German bandmaster was also deemed to have engaged quite convincingly with what he believed to be the music of the nation itself. This was despite the fact that although Larchet pointed out that any reworking of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* should be avoided, and Mulcahy claimed to be concerned for 'the native store of folk music', at no point did either man publicly specify what actually *did* constitute 'distinctive Irish music' or point to specific sources for composition.

James Doyle held that from the outset, an important function of the army school had been, as Mulcahy had intended, 'the scoring, arranging and preservation

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<sup>65</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>66</sup> *F.J.*, 29 Sept. 1923.

<sup>67</sup> *I.T.*, 14 Jan. 1924.

<sup>68</sup> *Leader*, 26 Jan. 1924.

in manuscript of what is best in our heritage of martial airs and folk tunes'.<sup>69</sup> Brase himself, upon arrival in Ireland, had immediately begun this task, for the primary function of an Irish military band was to provide musical accompaniment for Irish troops on parade, regardless of the greater design. His compositions were, as Joseph Ryan has noted, mainly arrangements of the assortment of folksongs, patriotic songs and popular ballads rendered by Irish soldiers around the military barracks, orchestrated and produced to a 'high degree of craftsmanship' in the late Romantic style of his own musical education.<sup>70</sup>

It would appear that contrary to Larchet's intentions, Brase's compositions contained quite 'a liberal representation of Moore's melodies'.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, his 'Irish Fantasia no.1', in particular, employed such celebrated 'Moore' songs as 'Erin! the tear and the smile in thine eyes', 'Silent, O Moyle', and 'Let Erin remember'. However, it must be borne in mind that Moore's melodies were not of course technically 'melodies', those being the principal parts in harmonic compositions or simply a succession of notes varying in pitch and having a recognizable musical shape,<sup>72</sup> but were romantic poems in the English language set to 'traditional' melodies drawn from various printed collections such as that published by the music collector Edmund Bunting in 1792.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, although Brase's fantasia may have contained songs that were recognised as Moore's settings, these were, in the absence of lyrics, also familiar 'traditional' airs such as 'Eileen aroon', 'My dear Evaleen' and 'The red fox', those being simple tunes for voice or instrument.<sup>74</sup>

The *Irish Statesman* commented that it was

impossible not to admire the sympathy with which he [Brase] has approached the field, presumably a new field to him, of Irish music. He has picked out some of the finest of the national idioms; they are all beautiful, they are all characteristic, and they fill the canvas with a most ingenious diversity of design. He has shown also a welcome originality in leaving the already intensively cultivated ground of Moore's Melodies.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 69.

<sup>70</sup> Ryan, 'Nationalism & music', p.378.

<sup>71</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 131-2. See vol. ii of this thesis for a critical assessment of Brase's marches, arrangements and original compositions for military bands between 1922 and his death in 1940.

<sup>72</sup> Arthur Jacobs (ed.), *Penguin Dictionary of Music* (revised 6<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1998), p.275.

<sup>73</sup> Valley (ed.), *Irish trad. music* (Cork, 1999), pp 247-8.

<sup>74</sup> Jacobs (ed.), *Dictionary of Music*, p. 5; See Thomas Moore, *Irish melodies* (1808), vol. i.

<sup>75</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 20 Oct. 1923.

Hence, regardless of the actual origins of the music, it was in the scoring of this type of material for military band performance that Brase's 'genius' was considered to be 'beyond dispute', and, more importantly, was immediately acceptable to the nation's music critics.<sup>76</sup> His first march dedicated to Mulcahy was described as a work 'of inspiring vitality',<sup>77</sup> and his first fantasia as 'a true fantasia and not a string of melodies connected by cheap cadenzas and awkward modulations'.<sup>78</sup>

The *Irish Times* claimed that this fantasia was 'a revelation to those who have been used to the thin sameness of what have so far passed muster as arrangements of Irish airs'. It continued: 'Introduced are "The foggy dew", "Sean O'Dwyer", "Follow me down to Carlow", to mention only a few, before an astonishing climax is reached with "Let Erin remember". The whole piece has all the atmosphere of the old Irish airs.'<sup>79</sup> Incidentally, this particular citation, which equally identified as 'old Irish airs' 'traditional' melodies with titles such as 'Seán Ó Dhuibhir an ghleanna' and more recent titles such as 'Let Erin remember' created by Thomas Moore using such melodies, is telling about the extent to which Moore's settings were popularly perceived as constituting the 'traditional' repertoire in the 1920s. Brase was thereby judged to have achieved Larchet's objective that the bandmaster be capable of collecting and preserving previously unused 'Irish' tunes suitable both for orchestration and for developing a wider national awareness of the various airs and songs available in Ireland by composing accessible band compositions based on well-known or familiar, rather than strictly 'traditional' airs, despite the fact that this familiarity may have been fostered by Moore's use of the airs.

In a very short time, the army bands had done much to redress some of the musical shortcomings outlined by Larchet in 1922 and introduced to people, in Dublin and around the country, operatic works in their correct musical setting and the impetus to found Irish operatic societies in Ireland. They also introduced 'modern orchestral music' and 'important works' other than Wagner's 'Ring of the Nibelungen', such as those of Strauss, Brahms and Liszt, to name but a few.<sup>80</sup> It was in this context that Brase was honoured on a number of occasions by his own country for his services to music in Ireland and particularly for 'the successful manner in

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<sup>76</sup> *F.J.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *I.I.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>79</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix A.

which he introduced German music into Ireland'. As early as 1929, Brase was presented with an autographed photograph from President von Hindenburg of the German Reich, 'in gratitude' for this feat.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst the international significance of his work in introducing European and German music to Ireland was rewarded by his compatriots, the Irish national relevance of the performances of these works by the first band to emerge from the army school of music was signified by the regular attendance, not only of Mulcahy and other top military personnel, but also of some of the foremost Irish statesmen, including Tim Healy the governor-general, W. T. Cosgrave, the president of the executive council of the state, Michael Hayes, the ceann comhairle of Dáil Éireann, Hugh Kennedy, the attorney-general, Ernest Blythe, the finance minister and Eoin O'Duffy, the chief commissioner of the Garda Síochána. Few national newspapers remarked upon this identification by such persons with the endeavour, though, or even recognised the performance of the Army School of Music, No.1 Band as part of a greater scheme being enacted by the army school music, and thereby the government as a patron of musical development, with two notable exceptions.

The *Irish Times*, explained that the band was 'the first of the bands turned out from the new Irish school of military music' and accounted for the purpose and objective of these bands as Mulcahy conceived them:

The idea, which originated with and was carried through by General Mulcahy, is to train in the school a number of bands, to be stationed in different towns. From these centres they will go out to the smaller towns and villages to bring to the people their first knowledge of what good music really is. In the course of a few years the citizens of the most remote parts of the Saorstát will have the opportunity of hearing Mozart and Beethoven and Wagner, and the other immortal masters, as well as the native airs.<sup>82</sup>

The *Irish Statesman* also referred to the 'wider national significance' of the musical work of the army for such work had 'appeared in a most unexpected quarter' and was thereby expected to 'help to break the inertia which is steadily settling on the country'. Furthermore, the writer Cecil Moore pointed out that the revenue generated by just six concerts given by the army band would pay the expenses of the school of music for a whole year. He added: 'It proves, at least, that something can be done, and done well; and the enterprise is fortunate in that it can be pursued without any

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<sup>81</sup> *I.L.*, 10 June 1929.

<sup>82</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

doubts on the question of economy. Even the most miserly minister of finance has no excuse for interfering.’<sup>83</sup>

However, all of the national newspapers referred to the band by a variety of titles from the outset, each implying a different nature and purpose, from ‘No.1, Army Band’,<sup>84</sup> to ‘Irish school of military music’,<sup>85</sup> and ‘Free State Band’,<sup>86</sup> to ‘Col. Brase’s Band’.<sup>87</sup> This variant nomenclature and the immediate success attributed to the Army School of Music, No.1 Band as a band, and not a school of music, highlighted the tensions between the two aims of Mulcahy’s music project. The public knowledge and attention was centred on the idea of the military band, albeit an Irish band playing music of a superior nature to military bands previously heard in Ireland, rather than on the development of an army school of music to serve the musical needs of the nation.

## 2.5 ‘Remodelling’ state policy towards the army school of music

Although Mulcahy had attempted to counter this divergence within the objectives of the project itself by having the school moved to Dublin to be further under Larchet’s direct influence, he did not legislate for the future of the army school of music upon the diminishing of his own personal influence. This occurred as early as March 1924, when, following the manifestation of a mutual antipathy between himself and his cabinet colleague Kevin O’Higgins following an army ‘mutiny’ regarding the demobilisation process and the subordination of the military to the civil power, Mulcahy lost both his military position as commander-in-chief of the Irish army and his cabinet position as defence minister.<sup>88</sup>

Neither the new supreme commander of the Irish army, General Eoin O’Duffy, nor the acting defence minister, W.T. Cosgrave himself, appear to have shared Mulcahy’s views of the army as a ‘pollinising [sic] power in relation to general cultural and educational developments’, let alone his personal enthusiasm and plans to use the army for general musical development in Ireland.<sup>89</sup> O’Duffy,

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<sup>83</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 2 Oct. 1923.

<sup>84</sup> *F.J.*, 13 Oct. 1923.

<sup>85</sup> *I.T.*, 10 Sep. 1923

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>87</sup> *F.J.*, 14 Jan. 1924.

<sup>88</sup> For details of the army ‘mutiny’ see Maryann Valiulis, *Almost a rebellion: the Irish army mutiny of 1924* (Cork, 1985). Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, pp 480-90; Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 96-105; Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*, p. 129.

<sup>89</sup> Memo (n.d. [1922]), Mulcahy papers P7/D/108 (U.C.D., A.D).

who had successfully established the unarmed civil police force, the Garda Síochána, was given a combined commission incorporating that of general officer commanding the forces and inspector general of the forces in March 1924 and charged with the reorganisation of the national army.<sup>90</sup>

O'Duffy appeared to appreciate the presence of bands in the army, but it was clear that he viewed the army school of music as a source for the social development of the army itself and a band providing trained bandsmen to the military bands, not as an agent of national musical development. He wrote: 'There is no doubt that the school of music will occupy a very important position in the professional and social life of the army. Governments consider that money spent on military bands is well spent.' He disapproved of the fact that, as he saw it, there was now 'only one band in the whole army' where there had once been many. Although he praised this 'one band' as 'a first-class combination of musicians', he held that it could not be regarded 'as a real army band; in fact, it is only a big indoor orchestra. The average soldier or the ordinary civilian never hears it.'<sup>91</sup>

While O'Duffy admitted that the previous variety of bands in the army were 'certainly anything but high-class musical combinations' he maintained that they had improved discipline, pride and 'that most essential quality in any army – esprit de corps'.<sup>92</sup> A lack of esprit de corps was something which O'Duffy was much concerned with and to counter this, and any deficiency of patriotism in the national army, he proposed that each battalion select a 'notable patriot' whose portrait would be hung in the mess, and whose life the soldiers would study. The result was intended to provide 'something more than a third rate imitation of the British Army dressed in green uniforms' and 'a higher ideal to fight for than the pay envelope'. O'Duffy held that 'some day we might be very thankful that we did cultivate such a spirit'.<sup>93</sup>

In this spirit, O'Duffy proposed to 'thoroughly remodel the policy of the school of music, and see that it devotes its attention to turning out real bands – bands that will march with the soldiers, and will play for them in their barracks and give performances at their sports and games, as well as at civilian functions'. 'In a word',

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<sup>90</sup> Fearghal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy: a self-made hero* (Oxford, 2005), p.134.

<sup>91</sup> Eoin O'Duffy, 'Scheme for reorganisation of the army', 2 May 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3442B).

<sup>92</sup> 'Scheme for reorganisation', 2 May 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3442B).

<sup>93</sup> O'Duffy to executive council, 30 Sept. 1924 (U.C.D., A.D., P24/222) cited in McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, p.138.

he added, 'bands that the whole army and the country in general will get to know and take a pride in.'<sup>94</sup> Similar views were held by Cosgrave, the executive council president and the acting successor to Mulcahy's former ministry, who pointed out, in *Dáil Éireann*, that there once were more many bands in the army and that even though they were not 'of the same excellence as the No. 1 band', they were of 'a certain satisfaction to the men'. He agreed with O'Duffy that it would be most 'advisable to have one band in each of the commands'.<sup>95</sup>

These statements by O'Duffy and Cosgrave were inaccurate on a number of counts. Firstly, there were, even at this early stage in the development of the school of music, more than one brass and reed band in the army, as well as a number of pipe and drum ensembles. There was also ongoing recruitment of musicians from within and to the army to ensure at least one band of the training and calibre of the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band attached to each command. The exposure generated by the first band produced by the army school of music meant that three further brass and reed bands, designated by Brase as 'Army School of Music, No.2', 'No.3' and 'No.4' bands were established between 1924 and 1928.<sup>96</sup> The army school of music also trained drummers and buglers and a number of pipe bands which usually consisted of 8 Irish war pipes [bag-pipes], 1 side drums, 1 tenor drums and 1 bass drum. These musicians, not being classed as 'technicians', did not receive any additional pay for musical work and were required to do ordinary regimental duties.<sup>97</sup>

Secondly, the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band was far more accessible than O'Duffy and Cosgrave led people to believe. They were, at the time of Cosgrave's statement, preparing to perform at the army's athletic association sports events held in Limerick in July 1924. This was not only an outdoor event but one which both the ordinary civilian and the average soldier would be privy to.<sup>98</sup> Granted that the admission fees to some of the band's indoor performances may have prevented certain sections of the population from hearing it, but the band had also appeared at various 'civilian functions' around the country. An intensive tour around some of the bigger towns was also planned for the summer of 1924.

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<sup>94</sup> 'Scheme for reorganisation', 2 May 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3442B).

<sup>95</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 2009 (23 July 1924).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, xv, 1346 (7 May 1926).

<sup>97</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 70.

<sup>98</sup> See advertisements in *I.I., I.T., F.J.* 17 and 23 July 1924.

Whilst confusion and misunderstanding about the nature and objectives of the army school of music as it had been established under Mulcahy and Larchet over the previous year, and the intentions for the army bands as agents of the school, might easily be attributed to the secrecy of its conception and the apparent public perception of the school since the emergence of the first band, the mandate for its future had been spelt out in the *Freeman's Journal* article of August 1923. It had also been effectively authorised by the army and the executive council.

Whether or not O'Duffy and Cosgrave intentionally misconstrued the mandate, or perhaps its aims were contemporaneously ambiguous, is not entirely clear but their statements are significant for examining the subsequent development of music under the auspices of the state department of defence and the army. Considering O'Duffy's efforts to 'gaelicise' the Garda Síochána, through structured Irish-language courses based on gramophone records in particular, it is somewhat surprising that he failed to appreciate the potential of the resource he had in the army school of music.<sup>99</sup> It appears that, for O'Duffy, music in itself was not a 'gaelicising' force, although the playing of music was encouraged in the army as it was in the Garda Síochána, with the appointment of a civilian director of music, Daniel Delaney, to organise and train a number of bands within the force.<sup>100</sup>

By publicly asserting that there was only one band in the army and calling for the establishment of more, the army school of music project was now being identified, by the department which had created it, with the most public of its bands and the intention for such bands to be just one product of that didactic project was completely lost. The creation of bands in the army was now valued, not for the purposes of musical development, but for the fact that the popularity of the school's 'No.1 band' had, according to O'Duffy, meant that 'the civilian population began to take an interest in the army'.<sup>101</sup>

The national newspapers were complicit in this acceptance. The *Freeman's Journal*, for example, commenting on a 'revelation' of a performance by the band in Clonmel, in county Tipperary, in March 1924, praised 'the government' for

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<sup>99</sup> For details of these somewhat hypocritical 'gaelicising' efforts see McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, pp 143-6; see also Gregory Allen, *The Garda Síochána - policing independent Ireland 1922-82* (Dublin, 1999), p.95.

<sup>100</sup> Liam McNiffe, *A history of the Garda Síochána* (Dublin, 1997), pp 120-21.

<sup>101</sup> 'Scheme for reorganisation', 2 May 1924 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S3442B).

purposely 'sending' the band on tour and thereby 'doing a real service to the much-needed musical education of the country':

There is undoubtedly no lack of musical ability in the country, which only needs educating and bringing out. A band like this is a great asset, not only to the army, but to the country as a whole. It sets the standard of taste, and tends to counteract all the ragtime abominations and inferior music from the other side of the Channel, and also from across the Atlantic.<sup>102</sup>

Whilst the bands of the national army may have contributed to an increased level of support for it, as the official army of the newly independent Irish state, the army itself had become a more disciplined force from July 1924, without the level of autonomy it had previously held. Conversely, the army school of music became increasingly more independent and isolated, not only for Mulcahy's absence, but now also for that of Larchet. In 1924, Mulcahy brought it to the attention of the Dáil that since he himself had left the department of defence, Larchet, who had 'very willingly consented' to act as Mulcahy's music adviser and had been 'to a large extent instrumental in seeing the school developed along the particular lines it has developed', had been 'very discourteously pushed aside and told in an indirect way that he was not wanted any further'.<sup>103</sup>

It appears that the finance ministry, in particular, had been opposed to using Larchet's services and advice from the outset. In May 1923, for example, the then acting minister of finance, who happened also to be the executive council president, Cosgrave, refused to approve a request by Mulcahy for a grant of £200 to be made to Larchet for increased and 'unexpected' work which he had had to undertake at the Curragh. Larchet's services had apparently been given voluntarily, despite the fact that, as Mulcahy pointed out, he was 'rather badly off financially' as a result of 'sickness in his house'. Mulcahy assured Cosgrave that the grant would be quickly recouped by the fees which would be paid to the school for various engagements involving its bands over the summer months.<sup>104</sup>

Cosgrave, however, reminded Mulcahy that 'considerable expense' was already entailed on public funds 'in connection with army bands and, in particular, through the employment of Col. Brase and his assistant'. He eventually agreed, though, to pay what he considered to be a 'fair' sum of £100 to Larchet 'in respect of

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<sup>102</sup> *F.J.*, 7 Mar. 1924.

<sup>103</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 2008 (23 July 1924).

<sup>104</sup> Mulcahy to ministry for finance, 19 May 1923, (N.A.I., FIN/1/2937).

such services as he may already have rendered' by July 1923 on the condition that 'Dr Larchet should not be asked to give any further services in this connection at the cost of public funds'.<sup>105</sup> Notes made on the government file reveal that the finance ministry were disquieted with the fact that Larchet continued 'to exercise certain functions of a more or less administrative character in connection with army music' in October and November 1923. Although Larchet continued to give his services 'gratis and on an honorary basis', the new finance minister, Ernest Blythe, was personally concerned that he should not be allowed to continue or 'to entertain any hope of ultimate remuneration'.<sup>106</sup>

Mulcahy informed that the Dáil that he had personally asked Larchet to continue as musical advisor to the army, contrary to the wishes of the finance ministry, for to leave it completely in the hands of a foreign director negated one of the initial aims of the school. According to Mulcahy, Brase had been appointed, not to start a 'foreign school of music in our midst' but with the purpose of training properly military band instrumentalists within 'the very great field of music and the particular musical feeling we have in this country'. Now, however, with a redirection of policy and the removal of the 'Irish' check, in the person of Larchet, on the school, Mulcahy warned:

I consider it is introducing a danger with regard to the school. It is leaving it to a very big extent in the hands of – however distinguished and however cultured – a foreigner, who no doubt fully appreciates our Irish music and has said with regard to it that his only regret in connection with the field of native music he has struck here is that he will not live long enough to enjoy or develop it properly. I do consider that you do want some type of musical control.<sup>107</sup>

Thus, in 1924, Mulcahy vehemently opposed O'Duffy's new policy pointing out that his policy as minister for defence had ensured that there would be in the army 'bands that would be a credit to the country'. As well that, in the army school of music there would be 'the machinery from the working of which we would get big and experienced and distinguished musicians' in the country, who would, in turn, contribute to the elevation of musical culture and education.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Secretary, ministry of finance to Army Finance Officer, 11 July 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2937).

<sup>106</sup> Handwritten note, 28 Sept. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2937).

<sup>107</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 2008-9 (23 July 1924).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2007.

## 2.6 Serving the 'national' agenda

However, W. T. Cosgrave, the president and acting defence minister, responded to Mulcahy's concerns by remarking wryly that 'the army ought to be able to look after itself with regard to a matter of music or anything else'. He did not refer specifically to the sidelining of Larchet as musical adviser to the army but stated that he personally objected 'to getting in a particular person' from one section of the music profession to advise on music on the army on the grounds that 'there might be a chorus of disapproval from the remainder of the profession that the correct person had not been consulted in the matter'. Mulcahy, however, reminded the president of the need to place an 'Irish' hallmark on the Army School of Music, stating that it was 'absurd to suggest that because certain Irish musicians would criticise certain other Irish musicians you must leave the development of your Army School of Music untouched by any Irish influences of any kind except haphazard influences.'<sup>109</sup>

The very fact that a variety of viewpoints and concerns existed meant that whilst differences of opinion most certainly did, as Cosgrave said, exist amongst musicians in Ireland, as they did elsewhere, enquiry and debate with those musicians, in the public sphere and in the music profession, regarding the nature and function of music were the measures required for progress. The exchange between Mulcahy and Cosgrave in July 1924 also reveals much about the prevalent uncertainty regarding the function of the army school of music in relation to the army bands, as well as the varied opinions, at parliamentary level and even amongst party colleagues, about music and musicians in Ireland in the early twentieth century.

Rather than engaging in debate though, or adopting their own particular policy of either promoting one particular genre of music in Ireland or sanctioning accommodation between various musical traditions and musical innovations, Cumann na nGaedheal leadership, after Mulcahy's departure, preferred to adhere to a strategy of evasion. The school to progress by itself, under the sole directorate of Brase, without any official government policy relating to the role of the army school of music itself or the music produced by its bands.

The fact that Brase was, by the end of 1924, not being guided in his compositions to whatever extent he appears to have been before, did not go unnoticed by certain sections of the music profession itself. For example, Seamus

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., col. 2009-11.

Clandillon, a sean-nós singer, organiser of various feiseanna and musical events and later the first director of the national broadcasting service, noted that Brase's earlier works, such as the 'Irish fantasia, no.1' were 'more distinctively Gaelic' than his recent ones. This, Clandillon attributed to the fact that at the time of composing the earlier works Brase had, in Larchet, the advantage of an 'Irish' musical adviser, with whom he could consult as to what tunes were suitable for inclusion in his selections. Clandillon added:

This was a wise policy, as Col. Brase, great musician though he is, could not be expected to distinguish Gaelic music from Anglo-Irish and foreign music in imitation of the Gaelic. In fact, many musicians born in Ireland are unable to do so. It is, therefore, very regrettable that for economic or other reasons it was thought necessary to dispense with the services of a musical adviser, and it is to be hoped that the policy of having such an adviser to consult with Col. Brase may be reverted to. It is not fair to the latter to leave him absolutely alone to face the problems of Gaelic and Anglo-Irish music without competent assistance.<sup>110</sup>

Joseph Ryan notes that this may have been largely a subtle criticism of Brase's harmonic style and his arrangement of traditional airs in a 'foreign' manner by a member of the more defensive 'national' school of thought regarding music.<sup>111</sup>

It is significant to note that Clandillon did not elucidate as to how exactly Brase's first fantasia was 'more distinctively Gaelic' than the others nor did he distinguish what constituted 'Gaelic' as opposed to 'Anglo-Irish' or 'foreign' music. Also noteworthy here is his claim that 'many musicians born in Ireland' were 'unable to do so', something which may have been directed at those music critics who, as we have seen, incorrectly identified the titles of songs employed in Brase's arrangements as 'old Irish airs' although they were actually of Thomas Moore's more recent songs created by using such melodies.<sup>112</sup>

It is also significant to note at this juncture, that after Brase's death in 1940, it was the Gaelic League who led the impetus for a memorial to be made for him at the Phoenix Park in recognition of his 'musical legacy to the country'. His arrangement of 'countless traditional airs' and for his fantasias, of which there were seven in the end and which the *Irish Independent* claimed 'could not have been bettered by the most enthusiastic Gael'. In these arrangements, Brase had, according to the Gaelic League, succeeded, as Larchet had intended that he would, in connecting Irish people

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<sup>110</sup> *Leader*, 26 Jan. 1924.

<sup>111</sup> Ryan, 'Nationalism & music', p. 378.

to airs that had been ‘forgotten’ except ‘in the heart of country people’ or ‘played from the B.B.C. and continental senders’.<sup>113</sup> It was achievement enough that in less than a year after his arrival in Ireland, Brase had already actively engaged with what he understood to be the music of the ‘traditional’ or ‘native’ Irish genre. He had collected the melodies required for a number of original compositions, had orchestrated them for military band and had rehearsed the band for public performances which had appeared to satisfy the majority of contemporary music critics. In this context, the government would be challenged again by deputies in Dáil Éireann to explain its revised policy with regard to the army school of music and the national army bands in the context of its original objectives.

In May 1925, Patrick Baxter, a Farmers’ Party T.D. from Cavan, questioned the new minister of defence, Peter Hughes, if there was any intention ‘that army bands will be brought into, and form part of the national life, or are they merely to be units within the army, going out with brigades and battalions on parade?’ He asked:

Are they not to be made use of or utilised in any other way, to further that branch of Irish culture that I think can do so much to bring about a better and healthier spirit amongst all sections than by any other means that can be employed. I think everybody will agree that if there is one thing more than another in this country that can produce satisfactory effects it is music, and the more we can introduce this into the life of our people the more I think we are going to raise their standards, certainly their standards of national culture.<sup>114</sup>

Baxter also suggested that if the national army were to be a truly ‘national army’ and if there was to be a connection between ‘the national life and the national army’, the army bands should be available to be ‘utilised by the national elements in the country when necessary’. He went on to say that bands ought not to be reserved for performances for particular audiences in Dublin who could afford to pay to hear them play but that they should serve their ‘national’ purpose by playing at various feiseanna around the country to encourage people to listen to ‘Irish music played by a band with such a high reputation and under a conductor who can interpret it so well’ and to ‘display to the people of the nation what there is in Irish music’.<sup>115</sup> Here again was a subtle criticism of the perceived city-centric nature of the army band of the supposedly ‘national’ army which also appeared to be serving only the musical

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<sup>112</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>113</sup> *I.I.*, 1 Sept. 1941.

<sup>114</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xi, 1619-20 (14 May 1925).

needs of a particular class of people who could afford the admission fees to the concerts, criticism which was not entirely justifiable on two counts.

Firstly, in addition to the regular performances at the Theatre Royal, which had admissions fees ranging from 1s. for seats in the gallery to 5s.9d. in the dress circle, the Army School of Music, No.1 Band had already given two free public outdoor performances in July 1924 and in May 1925 at the Phoenix Park in Dublin which had attracted reported audiences of 20,000 people.<sup>116</sup> Secondly, this band and that dubbed Army School of Music, No. 2 band, along with army pipers and drummers, had also undertaken a number of highly successful tours of many smaller towns across the country in the summer months of 1924 and in January 1925. In addition to playing at various different public engagements, these army musicians would also embark on another tour in September of 1925.

Despite O'Duffy's contention that the main army band was but 'a big indoor orchestra', Brase did not alter the quality of music performed by any of the army bands and the same type of repertoire was performed at the free outdoor concerts recitals as at the indoor concerts at the Theatre Royal in Dublin and the various town halls and cinemas where the bands played around the country. The same positive response from the different types of audiences hearing the same type of music also justified Brase's choices in musical items for the bands' concerts and for his own compositions and arrangements. Ironically then, although the intended purpose was now quite different, the musical work of the army bands was actually in accordance with Mulcahy's original intentions for the school to bring music of a higher standard to the country as a whole.

Patrick Baxter also attested to this, pointing out to the members of the Dáil that there was a good general public sentiment towards the army bands whenever and wherever they were heard, even where there was known to be little support for or sympathy with the government or the national army itself. Baxter advised that 'careful and important consideration' be thus afforded to the government's policy in this 'matter of great importance'.<sup>117</sup> Richard Corish, a Labour T.D. for Wexford, took up this point, emphasising that there were people in some places in the state who did

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> *I.L.*, 14 July 1924; *Leader*, 9 Aug. 1924.

<sup>117</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xi, 1620-21 (14 May 1925).

not even know that the army bands existed and that the government could use these bands for subtle 'propaganda' purposes.

They look on the army, apparently, as a fighting machine, especially in places that have been hostile to the government. To send the bands to such places would, I think, be the finest piece of propaganda the government could have. I do not mean propaganda in the ordinary sense, but it would show the people that the army pays attention to things other than fighting.<sup>118</sup>

This important point was lost on most of the deputies who joked about inviting the Army School of Music, No.1 Band, to attend various local events in their constituencies and to play on the front lawn of Leinster House for their benefit. Baxter expressed his disapproval at the flippant manner in which the matter was being discussed by the representatives of the people in Dáil Éireann. The president, Cosgrave, tried to reassure him (in terms that appear rather hypocritical considering the fact that he had appeared impatient with Mulcahy's policy in that regard when he advocated the establishment of 'more' bands like the Army School of Music, No.1 Band on a nationwide basis in July 1924). He stated:

I think that Deputy Baxter ought to have a little patience with the minister in this regard. It takes some time for a government to move. Most deputies have, I think, found that out...A great many things have to be thought of and a great many considerations have to be balanced against one another...I think it will be admitted that Colonel Brase and his band have given the people good value, but all of the people have not had the advantage of hearing it. It will take some time before arrangements can be made by which the benefits of that band will be derived by all the people.<sup>119</sup>

Tellingly, the contribution made by Peter Hughes, the new defence minister, was to remark: 'If I had known this debate was going to last so long I would have brought the band here this evening'. He offered no defence of the department's policy or no information regarding the fact that the Army School of Music, No.1 Band and members of other army bands had already toured the country and had played free public concerts in Dublin. This was something which the Labour leader Thomas Johnson had, in fact, to remind him about.

## **2.7 A musical agenda?**

What Hughes did state was that whilst he agreed with Baxter that the army bands should be part of 'the national life of the country', the army wanted to avoid putting

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., col. 1624.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., col. 1625.

their bands 'into competition with civilian bands in Dublin and throughout the country':

We do not want it to be said that the army is in competition with these civilians. We want to give them fair play. There are good bands in Dublin, Cork, and other places, and we do not want to cut them out. We do not want our bands to perform for nothing where civilian bands would be paid. That is one of the reasons why our bands do not go everywhere they are asked. We believe these civilian bands have a right to live. That is my view and that of those on the army council.<sup>120</sup>

Johnson countered that the example of a highly efficient and well-trained band was usually appreciated by another band and could only imagine that the civilian bands would be glad to be able to hear the army bands for the purpose of their own training and development.

Indeed, Hughes's point was also inconsistent with the fact that military and civilian bands had co-existed since the nineteenth century, with civilian bands modelling themselves on the military band. Besides the obvious difference in pitch, the main difference generally observed though between the civilian bands and those trained at the army school of music was that members of civilian bands were 'more inclined to play by ear' rather than by reading music. Therefore the intended mood of the music being played was not always portrayed.<sup>121</sup>

However, the two main army bands also went into competition with each other and with the main band of the Garda Síochána, particularly at the Tailteann Games, held in 1924, 1928 and 1932.<sup>122</sup> Harold White, writing in the *Irish Independent*, claimed that this 'military and police bands' competition, which was distinct from the civilian bands competition and sponsored by the Irish tenor John McCormack, was the 'most important musical competition in the Tailteann Games' and would 'induce a spirit of healthy rivalry' between the various bands which was 'all to the good' in the development of music in the country.<sup>123</sup>

At a political level though, discussions in Dáil Éireann about the army school of music, in the late 1920s, related more to the financial cost of the school as an army service to the public, than to the benefit of that service to the musical edification of the Irish people. In May 1926, Thomas Johnson of the Labour party again raised the

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1622.

<sup>121</sup> *I.T.*, 4 July 1932.

<sup>122</sup> See ch. 1 and Appendix B.

<sup>123</sup> *II.*, 24 Aug. 1928.

question as to 'the exact policy of the government' concerning the army school of music, querying if it was 'justifiable that we should spend £28,000 or thereabouts' for the school and its bands *per annum*. This figure was based on the expenditure of about £8,000 charged to the public finances specifically for the 'army school of music', that actually being the cost of musical instruments, of training bandsmen and of additional pay for travel and performance, which Johnson said had to be added to the regular costs of the bandsmen as soldiers in the army such as lodgement, equipment, provisions and clothing which amounted to about £20,000.<sup>124</sup>

The clothing required by the army school of music bandsmen would have cost more than that of regular army personnel for owing to the public nature of their duties, they were the only soldiers in the Irish army to possess a special full-dress ceremonial uniform.<sup>125</sup> Johnson pointed out that the claim that the school of music merely cost an average of £8,000 per year was misleading - particularly for the fact that the amount of military service that bandsmen could give as a result of their musical training and musical duties was 'trifling'. Indeed he claimed that the army 'as a military force would not be weakened if it did not contain these 190 or 200 men'.<sup>126</sup> Johnson was adamant that whilst he was not, in any way, minimising the value of the army bandsmen themselves, or of military or instrumental music they played, or the importance of 'raising the standard of musical education', he was questioning the wisdom and expense of doing that work through the army bands.

This was the first, and the last, occasion that the fundamental role of the army school of music and the ability of the army to serve the musical needs of the people was questioned and that the issue of how the current government policy actually tied in with the original objectives of the army school of music, as designated by Mulcahy, was raised in the Dáil. Johnson stated:

I think that the Dáil is entitled to some information as to the policy of the minister in respect of the army bands, whether they are intended as a means of educating the soldiers, of raising their taste, and through them the musical education of the people as a whole. What is the object and purpose? If it is the public as a whole that is in mind rather than the army, I say that this sum ought not to come under the army vote, and that the whole organisation should be dealt with in a different fashion. If it is intended to be merely the normal accompaniment of a military force I think the cost is too great.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 1336 (7 May 1926).

<sup>125</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 69.

<sup>126</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 1336 (7 May 1926).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1338.

The total cost of the army school of music and its personnel had been reduced from £10.6 million for 1923/4 to £1.6 million for 1926/7, a figure which amounted to about 2 per cent of the total army expenditure.<sup>128</sup> It is still somewhat surprising, though, that in light of this successful attempt to drastically reduce the expenditure by the department of finance on the army that funding was continued at all to the army school of music from the 1920s right throughout the period in question.

The secretary of the ministry of finance, Joseph Brennan, had informed the ministry of defence in August 1923 that the position of the public finances in Ireland was such that it was rendered 'imperative that drastic economies be effected [sic] in all services which are not immediately essential in the public interest'.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, it was his personal opinion that the 'heavy cost of army bands' was a matter of 'special consideration', for 'in a time of crisis it does not seem too much to expect that all expenditure on such a service should be treated as non-essential, but at the very least a drastic curtailment is called for'.<sup>130</sup>

However, the army bands were viewed as an essential service by the minister of defence, Peter Hughes, who concluded that it was proper that the army school of music was considered as army expenditure for 'in the army, no matter what size or shape it will take in the future, a band must be provided'. Thus it was that because bands were provided in every army, 'the school of music' was considered to be 'serving a useful purpose' and 'well worth the money spent on it'.<sup>131</sup> Curiously, although Hughes seemed to place more worth on the visibility and accessibility of the bands, he did contend that the army was 'the proper source from which to develop our native music'. He stated:

I think that this service has helped to bring this country back to normality...the army bands have done more than any other service we have to show the people what could be done. The Army band going through the country has done a service the real extent of which we do not know at present...I am of the opinion that the army is the proper source from which to develop our native music. It has developed it and I believe in times to come it will develop it still further.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> See the official reports of debates held in Dáil Éireann on 1 June 1923 and 7 May 1926 for details.

<sup>129</sup> Joseph Brennan to department of defence, 21 Aug. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2975).

<sup>130</sup> Brennan to executive council, 5 Oct. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/3455).

<sup>131</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 1346 (7 May 1926).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1345-6.

However, Hughes did not explicate how this was actually being done by Brase. Thomas Johnson was not satisfied with the vagueness of Hughes's knowledge of the work of the army school of music and whilst he conceded that the army band had been useful in 'soothing the savage breast', he pressed the government to explicitly state the 'object and purpose' of the army with regard to the development of music. He felt that if it was part of the government's policy to develop 'native' music, this should be 'a distinctive operation, not an army operation at all'.<sup>133</sup>

Johnson also went so far as to suggest that better work for music and the development of musical culture in the state would be done if the government were to subsidise the musical education of the people 'through other processes apart from the army altogether'. He proposed that the government directly fund five different types of civilian bands around the country, for example, rather than paying £28,000 per annum solely for bands in the army. This, he said, would be money better spent for it was not 'necessary for the morale and spirit of the army or of a battalion that it should have a particularly highly trained band'. He concluded that the continued use of the army for this purpose without any clear justification or government direction was 'a source of very bad military and educational policy'.<sup>134</sup>

Whilst William Hewat, a Businessmen's Party deputy for Dublin North, also conceded that there was no dispute in Dáil Éireann about the 'fostering of the musical taste of the people' being a 'very excellent thing', he agreed with Johnson's request for 'some enlightenment' as to the exact policy of the government in this regard. Moreover, he urged the house to consider whether or not the school of music in the army should in fact be under the auspices of the department of education.<sup>135</sup> Hewat approved of Johnson's suggestion to spend the money that appeared to be available for the development of music in other locations, concluding that the army was not really the 'right centre or the natural centre' for musical education. He ventured:

That for the purpose of encouraging a taste for music and fostering musical education, if the country has £28,000 to spare, it could be much more effectively spent in fostering music over a larger portion of the community. The minister says that there is a great demand for these bands to play at functions. Now, is it essential that the bands that play at these functions

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., col. 1349.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., col. 1342.

should be military bands? Is it the best course to attach this charge to the army organisation?<sup>136</sup>

Although the concerns expressed by Hewat and Johnson were reasonable, especially considering the prevailing attitude of the government towards music as a luxury pursuit, the minister for defence, Hughes, did not offer any defence for the role that the army had to play in the preservation and dissemination of 'native' music and in musical innovation, as originally conceived by Mulcahy and Larchet and enacted by Brase, nor was there any input from the minister of education, before the adjournment of the debate.

What was demonstrated here though, was that despite the finance ministry's quest for economy, whose import duties made the musical instruments required for the bands to perform over thirty per cent more expensive than their cost price, the funding afforded to the army bands was obviously a matter which the department of finance could not successfully oppose when the consolidation of the state and national pride were at stake. Even if that pride could exactly not be explained by the defence minister, the army school of music was financed henceforth, by successive government ministers, as a necessary component of a modern army. The army bands were thereby judged to be an essential public service and a national cohesive presenting the military agents of the new state to the general public in a congenial cultural manifestation.

Perhaps the fact that the band's tours and performances were also rather profitable, while the public did support them, was the incentive for continued finance. Major Bryan Ricco Cooper, an independent T.D. for Dublin County pointed out that the amount generated from band performances for the year 1924/5, for example, was about £1,200. This figure would have defrayed considerably the specific charge to the army of the school of music.<sup>137</sup>

Moreover, and quite apart from the clandestine manner in which the music project using the army had been initiated, it is rather remarkable that the question of whether or not the department of education might be better equipped and positioned to deal with the development of music in Ireland had not been posed before this. Bryan Cooper, who would consistently spoken out against taxation on musical instruments, gramophone records and the wireless as a hindrance to the development

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1350.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1343.

of music and culture, commented quite disdainfully that he did not think that the department of education had done 'very much' with regard to music in Ireland. In fact, he claimed that 'a better day's work was never done for music in Ireland than when Deputy General Mulcahy succeeded in getting Colonel Brase to come over here'.<sup>138</sup>

Cooper also criticised the apparently city-centric nature of the army bands and called for the minister to implement 'a policy of decentralisation' in this regard, something which was heeded and implemented soon after. In 1928, the second and third army bands were transferred to the Curragh and Cork respectively to serve as command bands whilst the fourth band would be attached to the Western command and stationed in Athlone in the 1930s.<sup>139</sup>

Although the purpose of these various army bands was not necessarily as Mulcahy and Larchet had envisioned, the mere existence of more than one band in the army was fulfilment, to some extent at least, of another of the initial objectives of the army school of music. Moreover, unlike army bandsmen in the British army, for example, military duties solely comprised musical tuition, practice, drilling and travelling around the country playing music.<sup>140</sup>

## **2.8 Assisting the development of music and musical activity, 1923-51**

The extent to which the army bands, and the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band, did actually foster musical activity then, despite an official policy which had diverged from the original intention to serve the 'national' as opposed to a musical agenda, is rather extraordinary and reveals much about the character, influence and ability of Fritz Brase and of his assistant Frederich Sauerzweig.

Furthermore, Brase's repertoire, while perhaps pandering somewhat to public demand with the inclusion of the popular song set and the 'guest' singer, did also provide appropriate accompaniment and restored the operatic overture, sung as it was in Ireland, to what Larchet had called 'its own essential environment', with 'its indispensable orchestra and dramatic setting'.<sup>141</sup> From the late 1920s, Brase also introduced wholly operatic programmes which, although 'popular', were regularly

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., col. 1344.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., col. 1346.

<sup>140</sup> See Gordon Turner and Alwyn W. Turner, *The trumpets will sound: the story of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall* (Kent, 1996).

<sup>141</sup> See Appendix A.

praised by the newspaper critics as demonstrating 'virility and intelligence of interpretation'.<sup>142</sup> The success of these programmes displayed that there was potential in Ireland to compete with the professional visiting, usually English, opera companies, such as the Carl Rosa Company, which had been the providers of opera, usually in English translation, to almost every part of Ireland in the nineteenth-century.<sup>143</sup>

Thus, it was only after the successful performance of operatic programmes by the army school of music that there was a 'serious' attempt, as A.E. Timlin, secretary of the Dublin Grand Operatic Society (D.G.O.S.), termed it, to form the first resident Irish opera company. This was the Dublin Operatic Society (D.O.S.), founded in Dublin by Adelio Viani, an Italian singer and teacher at the R.I.A.M. Notable musicians from the army school, such as Frederick Sauerzweig, James Doyle and Michael Bowles, acted as conductors for some of the performance seasons over the period in question.<sup>144</sup>

Although the visiting companies continued to provide much competition, there was, as will be discussed later, something of an increased interest in live variety-type musical activity in independent Ireland with a resultant increase in the employment of Irish musicians from the late 1930s, and a number of amateur musical and 'light opera' societies were formed around the country. The D.G.O.S. was founded in 1941, under the presidency of Larchet, with the express aim of 'fostering native talent and of laying the foundations of a national school of opera, evocative of the Irish spirit'.<sup>145</sup> In pursuing this aim, Lieutenant Colonel James Doyle of the army school of music was engaged as the 'permanent musical conductor'. The society also had the cooperation of the department of defence in making available 'sixty players of the highest standard' from the radio symphony orchestra, many of whom were army wind musicians who had occupied remunerative positions in Radio Éireann after completing their term of service.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> See *II*, 21 Dec. 1925 for an example of an operatic programme performed by the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band, along with some of the foremost singers in the Irish Free State, including Renee Flynn (soprano), Joan Burke (contralto), Joseph O'Neill (tenor) and Irvine Lynch (baritone).

<sup>143</sup> Grocock, *General survey of music*, p. 51; See also Ryan, 'Nationalism and music', pp 374-5 and John Allen, 'Italian opera in Dublin' in Richard Pine (ed.), *Music in Ireland, 1848-1998* (Dublin, 1998), pp 56-64.

<sup>144</sup> A.E. Timlin, 'Opera in Dublin' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 244-50.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 69.

While the society did succumb to engaging guest conductors and soloists to sustain public interest, the society were successful in bringing the opera performed by Irish musicians to the Irish people by means of the national broadcasting service.<sup>147</sup> Even James Doyle, as the director of the army school of music from 1947, claimed that the army school of music exercised a considerable influence on music generally in Ireland by the late 1940s because of its pupils who, after completing their training in the school of music, gained employment 'in theatres and similar institutions, maintaining in civil life the high standards of proficiency achieved in the army school of music'.<sup>148</sup>

Because of the redirection of the government's policy regarding the role of the army band in the development of music in Ireland, even Fritz Brase himself was attempting to personally affect musical developments in Ireland by involving himself directly in musical enterprises outside of the army. In 1927, for example, he advocated the amalgamation of his newly formed Dublin Symphony Orchestra with the extant Dublin Philharmonic Choral Society, directed by Turner Huggard, who conducted a number of choral, musical and oratorio societies in Dublin, to form the Dublin Philharmonic Society (D.P.S.) for a Beethoven centenary concert. This was a mixed body of over three hundred professional and amateur musicians and choral singers which would continue to present an annual series of concerts in Dublin until the late 1930s.

Members of the Army School of Music, No.1 Band exclusively provided the seventeen musicians required for the woodwind, brass and percussion sections of the orchestra whilst the fifty-one string players were all civilians.<sup>149</sup> All soloists who initially performed with this society were born or based in Ireland and included prominent pianists such as Rhoda Coghill, Dina Copeman, Dorothy Stokes, Rhona Marshall, Edith Boxwell, Claude Biggs and Victor Lowe, string players such as Ida Starkie-O'Reilly, Nancie Lord, Bay Jellett and Petite O'Hara and singers such as Joseph O'Neill, Adelio Viani, John McCormack and even president W.T. Cosgrave's half-sister, Joan Burke.<sup>150</sup>

Although the society advocated the promotion of Irish artists, it does not appear to have had a particularly insular repertoire, for in addition to playing

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<sup>147</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>148</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 69.

<sup>149</sup> See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 37-38, tables A and B.

classical favourites it offered an arena for talented Irish performers and sponsored the recent works of Irish composers, as well as a repertoire of many 'art' works by European composers never before played in Ireland which the society claimed were 'worthy of the support of all truly patriotic sons and daughters of Erin'.<sup>151</sup>

Significantly too, almost all of the soloists engaged by the society were also involved with the R.I.A.M. at some point as students, teachers or both. Of course wind instrumentalists from the 'No.1 band' had also occasionally augmented the academy orchestra, particularly at the prize-giving ceremonies which were presided over by the governor-general of the state, as president of the academy, until the abolition, in 1937, of that office under the Fianna Fáil administration.<sup>152</sup> Here, Brase was also contributing to musical development in a very significant way, not only in effectively following through on his work with the army school of music by providing a musical outlet for the fund of instrumentalists created by the school but in ensuring cooperation amongst the various musical resources available in Dublin city.

The D.P.S. was then, as Joseph Ryan has observed, the first large-scale musical enterprise in the state which 'demonstrated the fecund possibilities inherent in the combination of native industry and foreign guidance'.<sup>153</sup> Contemporary newspaper reports also praised the new society for the presence of Brase in this context. One writer to the *Irish Times*, claimed:

Not only is the Dublin public now prepared to flock to support a symphony orchestra, but we have already a first-rate symphony orchestra waiting, as it were, to be supported...Colonel Brase's personality and musicianship mark him out as the leader we need at the present time to steer Dublin clear of the Scylla of small-minded clannishness and the Charybdis of indifference towards which we appear to be heading in musical matters.<sup>154</sup>

Whilst the society enjoyed great initial success, the interest and support of the public began to wane as Brase's health declined, preventing him from conducting after 1936. Indeed, it is quite ironic that despite Larchet's complaint in 1922 that orchestral performances were only attended 'by a small circle of patrons of good

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<sup>150</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 229-32.

<sup>151</sup> *Report of the council on the season 1927/8*, p.2, cited in Ryan, 'Nationalism & music', p. 386.

<sup>152</sup> See ch. 1; see also Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, p. 397.

<sup>153</sup> Ryan, 'Music in independent Ireland', p. 633.

<sup>154</sup> *I.T.*, 29 March 1927. Scylla and Charybdis were two sea monsters of Greek mythology situated on opposite sides of a narrow channel of water, so close that sailors avoiding Charybdis would pass too close to Scylla and vice versa.

music' and by those 'personally interested in the particular artist who has promoted the recital',<sup>155</sup> something which he hoped the likes of Brase would help to remedy, it would appear that it was the personality of Brase himself which attracted audiences to support the D.P.S. Notably his name and that of the 'No.1 Army Band', printed for emphasis in larger lettering, was used to advertise events all of the society's performances in the newspapers.<sup>156</sup>

Despite eventually resorting to the expensive endeavour of engaging other foreign 'celebrity' soloists, such as the violinist Aranyi, to attract audiences in the 1930s, the D.P.S also went the way that Larchet said that all orchestral societies seemed to go in Ireland, ceasing musical activity in the late 1930s and adding its name to that 'long record of failure'.<sup>157</sup> Even the popular army bands underwent that same experience with the nationwide summer tours generally being wound down by the 1930s as audiences diminished. Whilst the initial success of the tours may have been a symptom of the 'Irish predilection for associating bands and causes', it may also have been simply a show of public gratitude for the perceived efforts by the government to instil confidence in Irish cultural life in the 1920s which quickly waned as the novelty of an army band playing in the local hall or the picture theatre wore off and the sound pictures themselves gained popularity.

The singer Joseph O'Neill, secretary of the Leinster School of Music in Dublin and a music critic for the *Irish Independent*, who had performed on numerous occasions with the army school of music and with the D.P.S., claimed that the main reason for this was that 'the love of music' was 'not very deep-rooted in Irish people'. By this, he explained that he meant that Irish people had 'a superficial love of music and an emotional reaction to it', provided that the music was 'both simple and familiar'. He wrote:

The general public has never been able to cope with anything more *recherché* than an opera performance, and even this would need to be one of the stock specimens of the repertoire to ensure a following. Ireland's prolonged political struggle undoubtedly prevented the general public from taking a serious interest in music or other art forms. It is probably the primary cause of the escapist attitude of the people to the light entertainment of the cinema. With the disappearance of political concentration, however, the more

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<sup>155</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>156</sup> See *II*, 1 Dec. 1928 for an example of an advertisement for a D.P.S. concert at the Theatre Royal where Brase's name was in considerably larger type than the rest of the advertisement and the orchestra was said to be 'assisted by members of No.1 Army Band'.

<sup>157</sup> Ryan 'Music in independent Ireland', p. 633; O'Neill, 'Music in Dublin', pp 254-55; see Appendix A.

intellectually minded people are seeking an absorbing interest, and if they are carefully guided there is no reason why music should not supply this need.<sup>158</sup>

The broadcasting service under the auspices of the department of posts and telegraphs benefited not only, as will be discussed, from the abilities of the few individual musicians trained as conductors under the auspices of army school of music, but also from the abilities of those woodwind, brass and reed players who would augment, as they did some of the amateur civilian ensembles in Dublin, the various radio ensembles.

The improvements reported in the playing of these types of instruments in Dublin was largely attributed to the technical expertise of Frederick Sauerzweig, a musician of 'extraordinary resource' and 'amazing versatility' who could play at least fifteen different string, brass and wind instruments to the highest musical standard.<sup>159</sup> The technical abilities of the army band musicians were attributed solely to the teaching of these men who, according to the *Irish Statesman*, had produced players who, it was claimed, 'would have been welcomed in any of the English Symphony Orchestras'.<sup>160</sup> It is worth noting that not only was Sauerzweig regularly engaged by the national broadcasting service to play some of these instruments but he also taught brass and reed instrument-playing at the municipal school of music in Dublin because he had 'to supplement his income'.<sup>161</sup>

It would appear that Larchet's plans to remedy the dearth of wind-instrument playing in 1922 had succeeded in creating a fund of professional wind-instrumentalists, who were already augmenting the likes of the R.I.A.M. orchestra and that of the D.P.S. and would be called upon in the creation, by the national broadcasting service in 1947, of a national symphony orchestra. However, what it did not create was a more general fund of wind instrumentalists to supply the amateur orchestras and musical societies in the smaller towns around the country as envisaged by Mulcahy and Larchet. This was also something, which Brian Boydell, a composer, teacher at the R.I.A.M. and conductor of various musical ensembles in Dublin, complained about with regard to Dublin city itself. Boydell complained that there were far more amateur orchestras than the one group of professional army

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<sup>158</sup> O'Neill, 'Music in Dublin', p. 260.

<sup>159</sup> *I.I.*, 7 Feb. 1926.

<sup>160</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 20 Oct. 1923.

<sup>161</sup> Cooke, *College of music*, p. 105.

musicians could supply and than any amateur orchestra could afford to engage for rehearsals and performances.<sup>162</sup>

In any case, because the timbre and volume of a military band was very much suited to the medium of radio, the broadcasting service also regularly featured the entire Army School of Music, No. 1 and No.2 bands, offering similar programmes to those performed at their public concerts. They were still set apart from the Garda Síochána and the civilian bands, as Larchet had intended. Granted that this may have been a case of using the only suitable musical resources available in Ireland at that time but it was to this end that the army school of music was probably most consistent with Mulcahy's original intentions for the school.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, the *Irish Radio Journal* commented that 'the nation' paid for the upkeep and training of the military band through taxation and thereby had 'a right to its music'. Whilst it was appreciated that 'the first object and duty of a military band' was, 'of course, to entertain the troops', the journal encouraged the collaboration of the bands of the army school of music with the broadcasting service:

Could they be better employed than in helping our national broadcasting station over its inevitable initial difficulties, aiding towards the upbuild of its success, assisting, if you wish to put it at its lowest level, to keep down expense? This would be really using it for state purposes...we respectfully urge that, without casting any very undue strain upon it, it could be frequently used for this great national purpose.<sup>164</sup>

This collaboration, which did occur right throughout the period in question here, signified a sharing of state resources and the willing cooperation of the department of defence with the department of posts and telegraphs under whose respective auspices the army bands and the broadcasting services functioned.<sup>165</sup> However, the evidence suggests that in the absence of any other professional ensemble capable of producing a competent symphonic sound for broadcasting within and without the state, the musicians of the army school of music were the only competent choice available and they performed the same augmentative function in the broadcasting studio that they did with other amateur ensembles in Dublin.

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<sup>162</sup> Brian Boydell, 'Orchestral and chamber music in Dublin', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 226-7.

<sup>163</sup> See ch. 4 for details on the establishment of the Irish broadcasting service and its influence on the development of musical culture in Ireland.

<sup>164</sup> *Irish Radio Journal*, 23 Jan 1926.

<sup>165</sup> Departmental records pertaining to that relationship prior to about 1936 no longer exist.

It is also presumable that Fritz Brase himself, as one of the foremost members of the music profession in Ireland in the late 1920s, and with his dynamic and evidently restless personality, would have desired to have been associated with this new national endeavour, the output from which would be music. Brase would, thereby, also be responsible for initiating two schemes for bringing practical musical awareness and appreciation to school children, in collaboration with the department of posts and telegraphs and the apparently more reluctant department of education.<sup>166</sup>

## 2.9 The training of Irish bandmasters and conductors

As early as October 1923, Fritz Brase was deemed by the *Freeman's Journal* to have created a 'national military band of which any country might feel justly proud'.<sup>167</sup> This was very significant praise considering the raw talent with which he had to work in the short time at his disposal. It was very much the ability and 'electric personality' of Brase himself though, as he dispensed with the conductor's baton and interpreted each entire programme from memory, that commanded the most newspaper coverage following the first concert and it was he who remained, until his death in 1940, the focus of most newspaper headlines, articles and advertisements regarding the army school of music or the army bands.

The *Freeman's Journal* also remarked that the controversy concerning Brase's nationality which had surrounded his appointment had, in hindsight, been rather 'protracted and quite unnecessary', particularly considering the recent performances which were so well-received.<sup>168</sup> The critic Harold White, writing in the *Irish Statesman*, was of a similar opinion, writing that:

An Irish conductor would not have confidence in the ability of his men to do the best class of work...the men would not have confidence in one of their own countrymen as conductor... and a course of regular study would not be followed. It has, therefore, taken an expert and talented German musician to prove that we have a great deal more musical talent amongst us than we had hitherto believed.<sup>169</sup>

The editor of the *Leader* concurred, commenting: 'We want Ireland for the Irish, but we also want a tip-top and efficient Ireland, and any stranger who is capable of

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<sup>166</sup> See ch. 4 and 5 for details.

<sup>167</sup> *F.J.*, 15 Oct. 1923.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 19 Jan. 1924.

leading us on to efficiency will receive a welcome from use'.<sup>170</sup> This, however, would not necessarily prove to be the case by the 1940s when the department of posts and telegraphs were heavily criticised for recruiting foreign musicians and conductors to constitute a symphony orchestra in the continued absence of suitably qualified Irish musicians.<sup>171</sup>

Whilst the army school of music could be said to have produced a number of military bands and at least one 'first-class' band for which it did train 'first-class bandsmen', the existence of these bands in turn highlighted another objective, which was not satisfactorily met by the army school of music over the period in question here. This was the issue of training 'Irish' bandmasters. Denis McCullough, the Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Donegal and governor of the R.I.A.M., who had been charged by Mulcahy to secure the services a suitable director for the proposed army school of music in 1922, drew attention to this in Dáil Éireann in 1926:

I understand when the school of music was first conceived, the intention was to have it more than a school of instructors for instrumentalists; that it was hoped to have trained young men, perhaps of superior education, who would propose to make music a profession, and to have them trained as conductors of bands. The army were fortunate in obtaining the services of an outstanding man as director...I feel that the best use is not being made of that outstanding personality if we are merely turning out instrumentalists.<sup>172</sup>

Even as McCullough admitted that there was no doubt but that the school was doing excellent work in creating 'a fund of instrumentalists of outstanding qualities' and that bandsmen who were considered 'masters' of their particular instruments and were earning 'a very sound livelihood' using their training, he pointed out that the school would be at a loss if anything were to happen to Brase.

It would be, McCullough maintained, an 'unplumbed advantage for the future of music' in the state if provisions were made for three to five cadetships, for competent musicians to train under Brase, 'undoubtedly a master of his profession with a profound and wide knowledge of music', whom he considered to have 'made very great strides in the adaptation of Irish music for the wider instrumentation of military bands'. The response, of the then incumbent defence minister, Peter Hughes, was merely that there was already in place a provision for soldiers to train as

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<sup>170</sup> *Leader*, 9 Feb. 1924.

<sup>171</sup> See ch. 3 and 4.

<sup>172</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 1586 (7 May 1926).

instructors within the school, and at 'certain musical colleges', and that there was, he thought, at least one 'cadet' who was 'now able to go out and conduct a band'.<sup>173</sup>

The cadet to which he referred was Arthur Duff, the first Irish bandmaster to conduct bands in the Irish army, until his resignation in 1931, but he was not a bandmaster-cadet or a commissioned officer. In fact, although there were at least three full brass and reed bands in the army by 1928, each requiring a bandmaster, there was only one bandmaster-cadet in the army up until 1930. This was James Doyle, nephew of the baritone J.C. Doyle who had performed with the band at their first public performance in October 1923. The intimacy of the musical network is illustrated here by the fact Doyle had also been a member of John Larchet's choir at St Francis Xavier's Church on Gardiner Street in Dublin and it was through this association that he obtained a scholarship to the R.I.A.M. where he studied further with both Michele Esposito and Larchet. He joined the army in 1924 as a bandmaster-student, was appointed as a bandmaster-cadet in 1926 and was eventually commissioned as an officer after he proved his conducting abilities at the Tailteann Games band competitions in 1928.<sup>174</sup>

Mulcahy's original intention had been to recruit bandmasters from within the ranks of the best bandsmen in the bands, but some bandsmen who were chosen as band leaders were simply not suited to careers as officers in the army. The above-mentioned Arthur Duff, who was regarded as an excellent musician and composer, and Dermot O'Hara, who had been personally enlisted in the army school of music by Brase, was commissioned as a lieutenant in 1937 but 'resigned' in 1943, were just two cases in point, for both would go on to play very significant roles as accompanists and conductors of various music ensembles on the national broadcasting service once they left the army.<sup>175</sup> Whilst unsuitability as military officers, rather than as musicians, would account for some shortage of cadet candidates, James Doyle himself claimed that it was due simply to 'the marked scarcity of youths with the necessary musical qualifications, talent and stamina to stay the course of intensive study involved in becoming a conductor'.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., col. 1589 (13 May 1926).

<sup>174</sup> See Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 202-205 for details; see also Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 74-5. Brase was precluded, as a non-national, from conducting the army bands in the Aonach Tailteann music competitions. See ch. 1.

<sup>175</sup> See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 146-7 and 152-4.

<sup>176</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 69.

Although musical training in the army school of music meant joining the army, the training offered to musicians and paid for by the state was significant. Potential bandmaster-cadet candidates, in particular, were required to have a Leaving Certificate standard education, to be proficient on the piano, to qualify in various sight-reading, aural and general musical aptitude tests, to qualify in an Irish language examination and to pass a medical test. The training course was also intensive, lasting three or four years at least. It consisted, as Larchet had designed in 1923, of piano and aural training, sight-reading, technique and construction of all wind instruments, harmony and counterpoint, form and composition, scoring for orchestra and military band, history and general knowledge of music, conducting and reading from full score.<sup>177</sup>

Brase had insisted that the cost of all such training which was to be given, not in the army school of music, but in civilian institutions, 'should be borne by the state', for such provision, he claimed, was made 'by most –if not all – armies'. He pointed to the situation in Britain where army musicians at Knellar Hall military school attended the R.A.M. in London each week to 'undergo lessons in advanced theory and harmony'. They were also instructed by 'professors of instrumentation from the London Symphony Orchestra' and the 'expenses in both cases' were borne by 'the authorities'. Brase asked the Irish defence department to appreciate 'the necessity for sending our bandmaster students to the Royal Irish Academy [of Music] for such instruction' and follow suit. He assured the department that the financial commitment borne on the state would be 'really very small' and added that if the army possessed even five bands conducted by five officers possessing such training, 'it would certainly be found that music in the army would be self-supporting, apart altogether from the elevating effects such bands would have on the musical standards of the country'.<sup>178</sup>

Whilst this reflected the manner in which Brase viewed and attended to all musical work both within and outside of the army as a cooperative effort, it also echoed proposals made to the state by Larchet in 1922 that there be such cooperation between all musical endeavours in the state and that all music education be regulated

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>178</sup> Brase to the adjutant-general, 7 July 1925 (Dept of defence, A/14661) cited in Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 204-5.

by a 'national academy of music'.<sup>179</sup> Although it could be held to indicate a choice based on Larchet's connection with the academy or to suggest a case of getting by in the absence of any other major educative resource with a national scope, it is significant that Brase identified the R.I.A.M. in Dublin as a national musical institution, equivalent to the R.A.M in London, to be utilised for the training of bandmasters and the future development of music in the army, implying how strongly he regarded the educative standard of the academy.<sup>180</sup>

Nonetheless, no bandsmen were being recruited from within the army bands and Brase's bandmaster-officer training scheme had to be publicly advertised in 1930 under the ministry of Peter Hughes's successor, Desmond Fitzgerald. The scheme was now offered as a university degree, which was actually undertaken by bandmaster-cadets as the Bachelor of Music degree at U.C.D., for the army school of music did not actually have the resources to provide a bandmaster training course. As Joseph Ryan has observed, the title 'school of music' now reflected more the 'aspiration rather than reality' at this stage for the responsibility of training army bandmasters was now with the universities, rather than the army itself. Thus the influence that the school exerted on developments in musical activity outside of the army was, arguably 'its single greatest achievement'.<sup>181</sup>

Whilst this may have been, as Ryan suggests, largely a personal reaction by Brase to the curbing by the Cumann na nGaedheal government of the original objectives,<sup>182</sup> it was also a natural consequence of that policy. Individual members of the army bands, well-educated at the army school of music, and through the university programme it was affiliated with, were more likely to have a greater impact in other musical organisations than through the routine work of the bands. Therefore, the army school of music actually did play an important, if rather incidental, role in the education and development of Irish musical life as intended by its creators.

Nevertheless, a state innovation which had been initiated in the direction of musical development became a state resource for the development of the nation and the intended didactic focus of the army school of music was lost under the successive government administrations. Indeed, after 1926 and for the rest of the period in

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<sup>179</sup> See Appendix J.

<sup>180</sup> See ch. 1 and 6.

<sup>181</sup> Ryan, 'Army school of music', i, 228 and 206-7.

question, the army school of music and its bands were not even mentioned again in Dáil Éireann. The failure of particular government ministers, such as Cosgrave, in choosing not to assume a particular definition of a 'distinctive Irish music', not to seek the advice of those in the music profession qualified to advise, not to engage in debate regarding the role of the army in the nature and future of musical innovations and developments in Ireland, and not to put its own 'stamp' on the army school of music from the outset, justified, to some extent, concerns for the development of music.

The Cumann na nGaedheal government overlooked, in its very own creation, the first viable opportunity to realise an Irish state-directed system of musical preservation, interpretation, education, fusion and dissemination which had the support of the foremost music academics and critics. The army school of music continued to be supported financially, not as a 'school of music' per se but as a necessary facet of a national army. This would continue under the Fianna Fáil and inter-party administrations of the period, as a perfunctory official policy regarding the basic function of a modern army to provide its own marching music and to provide a military band and music at prestigious ceremonial occasions. That policy focused on making the army more amenable and accessible to the general public, rather than any government direction over the role of the school in preserving and disseminating 'traditional' Irish tunes or further developing music in Ireland.

#### **2.10 Radio Éireann and the search for an orchestral conductor, 1936-51**

The role of army musicians in civilian musical enterprises has already been mentioned and the Irish broadcasting service was just another area in which the army school of music exercised a considerable influence on music generally in Ireland, mainly because of the numbers of pupils who, after completing their term of service in the army, occupied remunerative positions in the broadcasting station orchestra.

Some of these were the few cadets who joined the army school of music under the new bandmaster training programme advertised in 1930, and some, like Michael Bowles, would, again, effect greater developments in musical activity upon secondment or resignation from the army, than through the army school of music itself, particularly in connection with the national broadcasting service. As Séamas Ó

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p.199.

Braonáin, the director of the service between 1941 and 1948, stated: 'The question of a regular conductor for the orchestra was always a difficulty'. In the absence of any other 'local source on which to draw for trained and experienced orchestral conductors', Radio Éireann, as the broadcasting service was known by then, 'had to rely on the services, on loan, of conductors of army bands trained in the army school of music'.<sup>183</sup>

The two primary band-master cadets, or officers, associated with the broadcasting service as conductors were James Doyle and Michael Bowles. Doyle was transferred on secondment to the department of posts and telegraphs in 1936, as part of a programme of improvements drawn up by the recently appointed service director, Dr T.J. Kiernan, himself on secondment from the department of external affairs. Kiernan believed that regular criticisms that the standard of music played by the broadcasting station was too repetitive and of insufficient quality were directly attributable to the fact that the roles of musical director and musical conductor were filled by one person, Vincent O'Brien, and he was technically only a part-time employee.<sup>184</sup>

Because of the constraints on O'Brien's time, rehearsals were often conducted by the orchestra leader, Terry O'Connor, who would naturally have interpreted the music differently to O'Brien and thereby inconsistencies would occur in the live musical broadcasts. Kiernan felt that the primary solution to the musical problems at the station would be to see to it that the roles of musical director and musical conductor were filled by two people and suggested cooperation with the department of defence to acquire from the army school of music 'the services of a conductor who would not remain long enough in the station to become stale' and who could be relieved from time to time by foreign 'guest conductors' with orchestral experience. Kiernan added: 'It seems wise to centralise in the army bands the proviso of the few first-class conductors for whom there is any employment in Ireland'.<sup>185</sup> This move was sanctioned by the department of finance in 1936. Curiously though, the post of musical director remained a part-time one although the new post of musical conductor was full-time.

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<sup>183</sup> Séamas Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p.198.

<sup>184</sup> See ch.4.

<sup>185</sup> See Kiernan to P.S. O'Hegarty, 9 Sept. 1935 (Radio Teilifis Éireann, Printed .Archive [henceforth R.T.É., P.A.], P&T file 119/55/5) cited in Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 73.

Doyle served as the station conductor for 1936/7 when he was replaced by another army bandmaster, Dermot O'Hara, who was, in turn, replaced by Doyle who conducted again for 1938/9 and 1939/40. The numbers of players in the orchestra was also increased from nineteen to twenty-eight over these years in order to create both a more competent sound on the radio and a more competent orchestral nucleus for the performance of more varied works at public concerts sponsored by the broadcasting service. Guest 'celebrity' conductors, such as Sir Adrian Boult, the musical director of the B.B.C. and founder-conductor of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, had featured at several of these concerts but they were not as successful as the departments of posts and telegraphs and finance had hoped.<sup>186</sup> This situation was to change radically though with the introduction of another new conductor from the army, Michael Bowles.

Bowles was a musical organiser as much as he was a conductor and upon the retirement of the musical director, Vincent O'Brien, in 1941 he assumed the role of musical director as well as that of conductor, undoing Kiernan's changes in that regard. Kiernan, by this time, had been recalled by the department of external affairs and was replaced by Séamas Ó Braonáin, who although an 'Irish-Irelander', was keen to bring 'good' music to as many people as possible and supported Bowles' initiative to engage the station orchestra in public concerts. Despite initial opposition to the proposal, which also had the support of the then minister for posts and telegraphs, P.J. Little, by the department of finance, for 'in view of previous experience a failure was quite possible' again, as Braonáin put it, 'Bowles's persuasive powers prevailed'.<sup>187</sup>

A remarkably enterprising series of symphonic concerts was begun by Bowles in 1941 and owing to their success they featured each year until 1948. These concerts provided Irish soloists with an unprecedented opportunity to play with a relatively competent orchestral ensemble and to perform under guest conductors of international repute, usually at the annual end-of-season concert. The increasing success of the concerts also led to further increases in the station orchestra and the creation of a station choral group, Cór Radio Éireann, for the purpose.<sup>188</sup> Bowles

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<sup>186</sup> See Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 107-8; Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 76-9; Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service', p.199.

<sup>187</sup> Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service', pp 199-200.

<sup>188</sup> See ch. 4.

himself retired from the army to concentrate on his musical work with the broadcasting service.

The success of the concerts, which were held in war-time, was attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, they were well-advertised and charged relatively cheap admission fees. Secondly, they were initially held, rather ingeniously, in a very small venue, the Mansion House, so that reports that many people could not gain admission created more of a demand and so a larger venue such as the Capitol Theatre could be filled to capacity.<sup>189</sup> Thirdly, there was also more of a knowledge and appreciation amongst younger people about orchestral music because their exposure to it on the radio and through its use on film soundtracks in the cinema.<sup>190</sup> The personality and enthusiasm of Bowles, like his mentor Brase, was undoubtedly also a contributing factor.

The period between 1941 and 1947 was regarded as 'a golden age' for musical activity both in Dublin city, and, by means of the radio, in the state.<sup>191</sup> However, this would no longer be the case after 1947, because of the Fianna Fáil government's attempts to improve the musical status quo. As will be discussed later, the importance of the radio as a means of inculcating national identity and propagating national propaganda, musical and otherwise, would only come to be realised during the Second World War. Once the war had ended, Ireland, like many other countries would set about improving their system of communications, particularly with the U.S.A., and would set about the establishment of an overseas service that would not be dependent on the worldwide network of telegraph cables owned by the British government.

As part of this service, forty-four new jobs were to be created for musicians with the extension of the station orchestra to symphonic strength and the creation of a light orchestral ensemble. This would raise the question of Ireland's ability to train Irish musicians competent enough to serve Irish musical needs and debates about the necessity of importing foreign musicians for the purpose.<sup>192</sup> It also raised questions about the ability of army-trained musicians to conduct a full symphony orchestra, having had no opportunities for such a previous experience in Ireland.

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<sup>189</sup> The issue of a purpose-built national concert hall would also come to the fore more than ever before around this time – see ch. 6.

<sup>190</sup> See Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 126-7; Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service', pp 199-200.

<sup>191</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p.126.

<sup>192</sup> See ch. 3.

It was envisaged that the posts of musical director and musical conductor would be separated again and Bowles would work abroad under a number of noted conductors with some form of a conductor-exchange programme being instituted. It was envisaged, as Mulcahy had when Brase was invited to Ireland, that foreign conductors would only lead the way in conducting Irish orchestras for it was more desirable that Irish conductors, while they had international experience, knew Irish music and had 'an Irish outlook generally'.<sup>193</sup>

Thus, Bowles was sent, in June 1947, to various orchestras on the European continent to study conducting methodology for a two year-period and was replaced by Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, a choral conductor who had worked with the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League and with Cór Radio Éireann, as musical director and by a renowned French man, Jean Martinon, as conductor on a six-month contract. Martinon, who had featured previously as a guest conductor with the radio orchestra, was a very popular personality who was reported to have 'charmed' the Irish audiences.<sup>194</sup>

In a series of confusing events which followed Bowles appears to have returned early to Dublin, in November 1947, with a number of players he had recruited from orchestras in some of the main European cities and apparently expected to resume his post as conductor which was, of course, already occupied by Martinon. Even when Martinon's contract expired, though, he was replaced, not by Bowles, but by the Swiss conductor Edmond Appia until January 1948 when Martinon was brought back again.

The new station director, Robert Brennan, appears to have told Bowles to resume his work abroad with European conductors or relinquish his appointment altogether. Brennan was, perhaps, pandering to the public by providing the more expensive novelty of a celebrity conductor rather than considering Irish musical and broadcasting needs. Bowles chose to resign, although he did apply for re-instatement to James Everett, the minister of posts and telegraphs of the new inter-party government, who offered him a six-month contract. Further difficulties arose though, particularly with the cancellation of the public concert series by the new government for reasons of economy, and in 1950 Bowles left Ireland to take up the post of

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<sup>193</sup> Leon Ó Bróin, secretary to dept of posts & telegraphs, to P.J. Little, 21 Oct. 1946 (R.T.É., P.A., P&T file 229/56/1) cited in Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, p. 108.

<sup>194</sup> *I.P.*, 6 Sept. 1946.

conductor of the New Zealand National Symphony Orchestra.<sup>195</sup> The Irish broadcasting service had lost one of its most industrious musicians and one of the important Irish musical leaders in Ireland following Brase's death.

Bowles had been responsible, like Brase before him, for bringing to the nation orchestral music of a better standard and more varied repertoire than ever before heard in Ireland, not only by means of broadcasting but also to the concert hall. He had also altered the Irish conceptions of a station orchestra, from one that functioned solely for producing music for broadcasting to that which had other more visible public functions as the only viable national symphony orchestra in the country. The national broadcasting service became then, what Joseph Ryan termed, 'a principal source of patronage, employment, and performance, and was subsequently party to practically every significant musical enterprise in the country'. The practice of introducing guest conductors for short-term contracts would, however, be continued.<sup>196</sup>

The foremost members of the music profession who constituted themselves as the Music Association of Ireland (M.A.I.) in 1948 agreed that whilst it was necessary, 'under the present circumstances', to engage a conductor 'with sufficient qualities and experience from abroad', 'the ideal thing for the training and perfection of an orchestra is to work constantly under one man'.<sup>197</sup> This, Séamas Ó Braonáin agreed, was necessary for not only, he claimed, did it take more than a year for a conductor to get 'the feel of the orchestra, getting to know its weaknesses and its strengths' but it was also 'upsetting' for the orchestral musicians, having to get used to 'constant changes' of conductor and their methods.<sup>198</sup>

Moreover, whilst Jean Martinon had proved to the M.A.I. 'in a number of respects, quite outstanding', and they felt 'justified in recommending him for a long-term engagement', 'the ideal' aimed for was 'a first-class *Irish* orchestra, conducted

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<sup>195</sup> See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 108-114 and Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 169-70 for details.

<sup>196</sup> Ryan, 'Nationalism & music', p.396.

<sup>197</sup> Music Association of Ireland, 'Music and the nation: a memorandum', 14 June 1949 (National Library of Ireland, MS 40,610), pp 46-7 [hereafter cited as M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610)]. See Appendix M for the full text of Part IV (conclusion) [pp 67-78] of this document. The objectives of the M.A.I., of which there were about 150 members by 1951, were to 'further musical education, to improve conditions for composers and musicians generally, to work for the establishment of a national concert hall, to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned, to encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country and to organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation'. See Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 101.

<sup>198</sup> Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service', p.203.

by an Irishman of sufficient ability'. Therefore, the association felt it was more important 'that opportunities be assured to young Irish conductors of doing a certain amount of regular conducting': 'Only in this way will any one of them who may have special talents gain sufficient experience and practice to be enabled eventually to take over the orchestra'.<sup>199</sup>

The aim of producing Irish conductors for an Irish orchestra was not achieved until well after the period in question here and thus ultimately little had changed, despite the various initiatives in the army and the national broadcasting service, in terms of musical leadership. Irish army musicians would continue to conduct their own bands but few would make the impact, in terms of musical leadership and coordination of activity that was made by the likes of Brase and Bowles between the 1920s and the 1940s.

### **2.11 The bands of the Garda Síochána, 1938**

Despite the various musical roles that individual army musicians played outside of the army school of music, the bands produced by that school had very much settled into a routine existence, serving the national agenda by playing at various civic and state functions. As Eunan O'Halpin has remarked, army officers had by the mid-1930s 'consciously turned away from politics, espousing the conventional doctrine of military subservience to elected government and immersing themselves in the assumptions, forms and trappings of military professionalism'.<sup>200</sup>

Although the appearances of the army bands continued to be noted by the newspapers at various events, the intended role of the army's school of music and its bands as agents of musical change and development went uncommented upon for the rest of the period in question here. Little was made of the fact, for example, that in 1935, the German chancellor, Adolf Hitler, honoured Fritz Brase with the title of 'professor of music' in recognition of his 'life-work as a German'. This, he had successfully carried out in what the German ambassador to the Irish state, Herr von Kuhlmann, called, 'the beautiful and hospitable land' of the Irish Free State.<sup>201</sup> Nothing was made, either, of the fact that, from 1932, the director of the Irish army school of music was a key member of the Nazi Party in Ireland, although he was

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<sup>199</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 47.

<sup>200</sup> Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (Oxford, 1999), p. 96.

apparently given the option by the Irish army council of leaving the army or leaving the party.<sup>202</sup> Happily for subsequent developments in Irish musical activity outside of the army, Brase chose the latter option.

By 1938, Richard Mulcahy, the instigator of the army school of music, had to concede:

There was a time when an attempt was made to have the army school of music effect [sic] musical development in the country, but the army school of music is no longer a school of music. It is a band. There are a certain number of bands in the country but any idea of their making any definite contribution to increased appreciation of music in the country has gone by the board.<sup>203</sup>

With the reconstitution of the head of government under the title of 'taoiseach' and of the head of state as 'president' in 1937, another important outlet for state engagements with music was also created. From this time, the services of the Army School of Music, No.1 band would now be requested for state receptions and presidential functions such as the official garden parties, receptions and dinners hosted by the successive presidents, Douglas Hyde and Seán T. O'Kelly, at Áras an Uachtaráin, formerly the Vice-regal Lodge, in the Phoenix Park.

More significantly, however, it was the music provided by the Garda Síochána, the civic guard or unarmed police force established in 1923, and not the army bands that was very often found to be more suitable and more representative of the office of the Irish head of state for certain types of events, by the office of the secretary to president. Whilst this was, more often than not, a pragmatic choice based on suitable acoustics rather than technical proficiency, the bands of the Garda Síochána also proved more flexible in terms of the musical repertoire presented for the suitability of an occasion.

As already noted, the first commissioner of the Garda Síochána, General Eoin O'Duffy, who was responsible for remodelling the army school of music to serve the national rather than the musical agenda, had recognised the importance of organising bands in the force, again not for the musical edification of the force or the people who heard them but as a necessary means of inculcating 'esprit de corps' within the force. A civilian director of music, Daniel J. Delaney, had been appointed to train a

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<sup>201</sup> *I.I.*, 6 May 1935.

<sup>202</sup> John P. Duggan, *Neutral Ireland and the Third Reich* (Dublin, 1989), p.63.

<sup>203</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxii, 829 (14 July 1938).

number of different types of ensembles, from pipe and drum to céilí, within the band, which gave twelve free public recitals in the Phoenix Park in its first year.<sup>204</sup>

The Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) already had a band of its own, which had been established in 1873, and although the D.M.P. was subsumed within the Garda Síochána in 1926 the D.M.P. band remained a distinct ensemble within the national force.<sup>205</sup> In fact, it gained pre-eminence amongst the Garda bands when it played as the Dublin (Metropolitan) Garda Céili Band, particularly for its provision of traditional Irish dance music on the national broadcasting station in the 1930s. Other Garda ensembles (or bands, as they were more commonly referred to) had also broadcast on the service from the outset. A broadcasting studio which facilitated relayed band recitals was set up at the Garda headquarters at the Phoenix Park, as the army had also done at their barracks at Beggar's Bush.

The various Garda 'bands' also travelled around the country attending engagements and effectively functioned as the army bands did although they were less standardised in structure and instrumental content. They were also generally deemed to be less prestigious and of inferior musical quality. Bryan Cooper, the independent T.D. for Dublin County, remarked, in Dáil Éireann in 1926, on the only occasion that the Garda 'bands' were ever mentioned in Dáil Éireann, that they were 'steadily undoing the work of the army band'.<sup>206</sup> The repertory presented by Garda bands was less sophisticated than the army bands and resembled that of any of the better civilian bands. A sample programme would have included various items from Drigo's 'Les millions d'Harlequins' and Grossman's opera 'Der geist des Weiwoden', from Thomas's 'Mignon' and Lehar's 'Blue mazurka' as well as Haydn's 'Surprise' symphony. The 'Irish' interest was usually served by a selection of 'traditional Irish airs' arranged by Delaney.<sup>207</sup>

Furthermore, the Garda bands were different from the army bands insofar as a great deal of recreation time had to be devoted to musical duties by the Gardaí, who, unlike the army musicians, had other police duties to perform. Moreover, they were not funded by the state as musical ensembles, although the public accounts committee of the Oireachtas reported, in 1923, that the band of the Garda Síochána was 'an unofficial organisation benevolently regarded by the authorities'. The cost of

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<sup>204</sup> McNiffe, *Garda Síochána*, pp 120-21.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 1343 (7 May 1926).

musical instruments for this band which had such a variety of musicians that it could adopt any form, from traditional military band to dance orchestra, had originally been borne on public funds. Because they were, consequently, public property, the committee advised that 'a check should be maintained on the ultimate disposal of the instruments'.<sup>208</sup>

The benevolent manner in which the Garda Síochána bands would be treated by the office of the president from the late 1930s, however, would be highly significant, particularly for the prestige which was vested in them despite the apparently inferior repertory and quality of music played by them. Moreover, the type of musical activity apparently deemed acceptable or necessary for the Irish presidency to be associated with is most instructive for what it seems to reveal about the relationship between nation, state and music and the subtle attempts by the office of the presidency to consolidate the state and project a certain image of the nation by means of music and the state's security forces.

Music in the form of trumpet salutes, military fanfare and the rendering of 'The soldier's song' had been provided by the Army School of Music, No.1 Band, at the inauguration ceremony of the first president of Ireland, Douglas Hyde, which was held in Dublin Castle in 1938.<sup>209</sup> However, it appears that it was a Garda band that was first requested to provide music for a presidential reception for Hyde's Gaelic League colleagues on 24 September 1938. Michael McDunphy, the secretary to the office of the president, was granted the permission of the Garda commissioner to have the Garda's main céilí band ensemble, known as the Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilidhe Band (D.M.G.C.B.), play at the president's reception. A dress rehearsal for the function was held on 19 August 1938 at the Áras and McDunphy reported that the band had played 'a few of their selections of Irish dance music', including marches, hornpipes, reels, jigs and set dances such as 'The humours of Bandon' and 'The blackbird', which featured regularly on the national broadcasting service but were not, as will be discussed later, universally popular.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> *I.L.*, 5 Dec. 1927.

<sup>208</sup> 'Interim report of the public accounts committee, 1922/3', cited in J.B. O'Connell, *The financial administration of Saorstát Éireann: with an epitome of the reports from the committee of public accounts 1922-1932* (Dublin & London, 1934) p.145.

<sup>209</sup> Janet Dunleavy and Gareth Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: a maker of modern Ireland* (California, 1991), pp 386-7.

<sup>210</sup> See ch. 4.

Interestingly though, McDunphy disapproved of the fact that the band's repertoire was 'completely confined to Irish dance music'. He suggested to the bandmaster Superintendent C. O'Donnell-Sweeney, who had replaced Delaney, that 'such Irish airs other than dance airs' as might be suggested to him by the office of the president's secretary be added to the intended programme.<sup>211</sup> Whilst the office of the secretary to the president noted that it appreciated that there might be difficulties in acquiring the necessary scores for new material at such short notice, O'Donnell-Sweeney was still told to 'do your best' in playing 'some, at least' of a list of sixteen 'slow airs' provided.<sup>212</sup>

Over half of the airs on this suggested list - 'Cait Ni Dhuibhir', 'Rosc. catha na Mumhan', 'Road to the isles', 'Slan le Maigh', 'The Coulin', 'Snowy-breasted pearl', 'Drum-fhoinn fonn dílis', Sean O Duibhir a'ghleanna' and 'Eamonn a'chnuic' - were actually used by the band and played as 'violin solos' at the reception in September. The others were played at various subsequent performances.<sup>213</sup> To enhance the performance, O'Donnell-Sweeney also hired a 'mini' piano from the Pigott company on Grafton Street in Dublin to provide accompaniment.<sup>214</sup>

This blend of dance music and slow airs set the blueprint then for the type of performance given by Garda Bands at almost all future performances at the presidential residence. The opposition to a whole programme of dance music was, presumably, dictated by the nature of the event and the type of music that McDunphy felt should be played appears to have been chosen both for its practicality and its 'Irish' identity. Any number of other 'slow' types of music besides Irish 'slow airs' might have been chosen to supplement the programme but were not. McDunphy appears to have been enacting, through music, what Douglas Hyde, as his biographers note, 'thought was the important work of the presidency: they were creating a public image of the nation'.<sup>215</sup>

Regardless of its 'Irish' identification, the first performance of the D.M.G.C.B. was regarded as 'satisfactory' and the band itself noted, by a member of the office of the secretary to the president, as being 'highly skilled' and 'very

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<sup>211</sup> Memo., 19 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P666).

<sup>212</sup> Office of secretary to the president to Supt. O'Donnell-Sweeney, 24 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P666).

<sup>213</sup> Mc Dunphy to O'Donnell-Sweeney, 24 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P666). The other slow airs suggested were: 'Coulin deas cruidhte na mbo', 'Coulin na gruaige donna (Terence's farewell to Kathleen)', 'Shan van vocht', 'Foggy dew', 'Blackbird', 'Óró sé do bheatha abhaile' and 'Eochail'.

<sup>214</sup> Note on file, 25 Aug. 1938 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P666).

pleasing to hear' and so was engaged again for the first presidential dinner, to be held in April 1939.<sup>216</sup> Concerns, however, were soon expressed by McDunphy that it had somehow been interpreted by the Garda Síochána that the presidency was 'in some way committed to engaging the D.M.G.C.Band'. McDunphy was adamant, however, that this was not the case and implied that the main reason for not yet engaging an army band was not its musical repertoire but that 'a full band would, in all probability, be overpowering'. He did, however, note that a policy for musical engagements would have to be drawn up quickly so as to eliminate any expectations of engagements on the part of the D.M.G.C.B. he was also keen to eliminate any expectations of engagements on the part of, what he termed, 'non-state' bands which had made representations to the president.<sup>217</sup>

## 2.12 'Two state bands'

This presidential policy on music, drawn up in August 1939, stated that while music should be played at all state dinners, receptions and garden parties held by the president it was not to be played at 'lunches' which were 'as a rule, less formal than dinners'. It was considered 'desirable', apparently by the president himself, that only the services of 'two state bands available for this purpose, namely The Army Military Band and The Gárda Síochána Céilidhe Band [sic]' would be called upon to provide any such music on alternate occasions.

In order to avoid any jealousy or competition ranging round the presidential establishment, it has been decided, for the present at least, not to use non-state bands for presidential functions. In any case, the material available within the state, in the form of the Army and Gárda bands appears to be adequate. Their utilisation, moreover, has the very distinct advantage of their being always available and under disciplinary control, and that no dispute is ever likely to arise as to conditions of engagement etc.<sup>218</sup>

This is significant, firstly, for its identification here of 'two' state bands available for the provision of music at state occasions, despite the fact that there was more than one army band and the céilidhe band was just one of the ensembles that could be created by the Garda Síochána.<sup>219</sup> Secondly, the identification of the other bands with the words 'non-state', implying 'civilian', and 'state', implying specific state

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<sup>215</sup> Dunleavy and Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde*, p. 402.

<sup>216</sup> Memo., 14 Mar. 1939 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1288).

<sup>217</sup> Memo., 24 Apr. 1939 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1288).

<sup>218</sup> Memo., 16 Aug. 1939, (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1301).

<sup>219</sup> 'Gárda Síochána Bands' in Fleischmann (ed.) *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 71.

patronage which in reality only applied to the army, is noteworthy. Arguably, this policy then, points more to a general, and technically incorrect, association of any band or music provided by either the state's defence force or the state police force, which were both 'state' funded, as 'the' band of that force and thereby a 'state' band.

The question of funding the 'state bands' for their musical services was also addressed at this time. McDunphy noted:

The army band is supported from state funds, and in that regard differs from the *Gárda Siotchána* [sic] Band, which is supported by subscriptions from members of the *Gárda Siotchána* itself. No charge has yet been made for the use of its services for presidential functions. The *Garda Siotchána* band has taken the same line, but this band being in a slightly different position, it has begun to make a reasonable charge. In addition, the president has agreed to make a grant of £20 towards the band fund.<sup>220</sup>

The question arose, however, about whether or not it would be appropriate, in the spirit of equality, for the president to make a similar contribution to the funds of the army band, particularly 'in view of the fact that it is supported by state funds', and whilst this was a less pressing question which was deemed suitable for 'later' examination, there appears to be no evidence to suggest that this was actually inquired into.<sup>221</sup> The presidential policy for musical engagements noted, though, that alternation of, what it termed, the 'two state bands' had not yet proved feasible for 'the army band with its brass and reed instruments' had proved 'far too loud for indoor use' and the *Garda céilí* band consisting of 5 first violins, 2 second violins, 1 violoncello, 1 double bass, 1 flute, 1 oboe, 2 clarinets, one horn, one piano, one drum had been used instead.<sup>222</sup>

However, it was also noted: 'An effort is being made, however, by the army, to produce a string unit which will be suitable for this purpose.'<sup>223</sup> Indeed, the possibility of engaging an army ensemble had been discussed when plans for a second official presidential dinner, to be held in May 1939, were being made. McDunphy had come to realise that although the *Garda Band* had been used up until then, 'their range of music was very limited owing to the fact that most of the players

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<sup>220</sup> Memo., 14 Aug. 1939, (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Doyle, 'Music in the army', p. 71. The full complement [45] of the *Garda Siotchána* military band comprised 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 E flat clarinets, 9 B flat clarinets, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, 2 bassoons, 6 cornets, 3 trumpets, 4 French horns, 2 euphoniums, 3 trombones, 2 E flat basses, 1 B flat bass, 1 string double bass and 3 percussion instruments.

<sup>223</sup> Memo., 14 Aug. 1939, (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

are traditional players and are not used to reading music'.<sup>224</sup> Of course, the fact that they were 'traditional' players allowed them to be more flexible with their repertoire and this, whilst of less sophistication, had been able to serve the 'traditional Irish' image being portrayed by the new presidency.

At a meeting that he arranged with Lieutenant Dermot O'Hara of the army school of music, for Colonel Fritz Brase was ill, McDunphy discussed the possibility that the school of music might be able to provide some 'suitable combination of stringed instruments' or failing that a small combination of brass and reed instruments that would not be too loud for indoor dinner entertainment. O'Hara pointed out that the school 'had not any string band nor had they any competent players of stringed instruments' but agreed to experiment with different combinations of brass and reed instrumentalists. These 'experiments' were carried out at the presidential residence on 4 May 1939, with twelve brass and reed musicians from the No.1 Band playing an arrangement of 'Barcarolle' from 'Tales of Hoffman' but the volume of sound was still found to be too 'overpowering' by President Hyde himself.

McDunphy recorded that in a discussion afterwards he himself 'pointed out to Lieutenant O'Hara the need for a state-controlled orchestra'. O'Hara undertook to make representations 'to the proper quarter' in that regard whilst McDunphy undertook to 'pursue this matter further with higher officers'.<sup>225</sup> Whilst no further information was recorded on this matter, and there was no indication as to what end a 'state-controlled orchestra' would be intended to serve, the fact that attention was being drawn to the need for such an orchestra by the secretary to the office of the president, because of the need to have such an ensemble to play suitable music at a suitable volume on official state occasions, was quite remarkable.

It is also worth noting that the bands of the army school of music, despite their musical training and level of musical sophistication, simply could not provide light background music for official functions despite both the plans Mulcahy had had for the development of music in Ireland. This was also despite the claims made by O'Duffy that the Army School of Music, No.1 Band, in particular, was more a 'big indoor orchestra' than a military band which had resulted in the remodelling of the

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<sup>224</sup> Memo., 22 May 1939 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

<sup>225</sup> Memo., 6 May 1939 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1301).

army school of music for this purpose.<sup>226</sup> McDunphy's suggestion prompted O'Hara, though, to put together a string ensemble for the purpose and by August 1939 McDunphy was able to note that 'considerable progress' had been made 'with the development of a string band, the services of which will be available for indoor use at presidential functions'.<sup>227</sup> In the interim, music for official presidential functions continued to be provided by the D.M.G.C.B.

The repertoire of the Garda band also continued to run along the essentialist lines suggested by the secretary to the presidency and thereby continued to be a balanced programme of traditional dance tune medleys played by the band as a whole with solo instruments playing slow airs with piano accompaniment. A sample programme might comprise of a march medley including such tunes as 'O'Donnell abú', 'Boys of Wexford', 'The Fenian men' and 'A nation once again', a jig medley including 'The blackthorn stick' and 'The frost is all over', a hornpipe medley including 'The fisherman's frolic', 'The tree with white blossoms' and 'The bird in the bush' and airs such as 'The dear Irish boy' and 'The lark in the clear air'. All of these were arranged by O'Donnell-Sweeney and played by the band, or 'dance orchestra' as it was sometimes designated. Other items played by the complete band ensemble included arrangements of 'Little brother of my heart' by John Larchet and 'Eochail' by Carl Hardebeck whilst airs such as 'Caitlin Ni Uallachain' and 'Believe me if all those endearing young charms' arranged by O'Donnell-Sweeney himself were played by a clarinet & piano combination.<sup>228</sup> The Garda ensembles, within their limitations, were flexible with their repertoire and the band's secretary regularly reminded the secretary to the presidency: 'If there are any special lines on which you would like the programme to run, your wishes will be met'.<sup>229</sup>

Inquiries made by the office of the secretary to the president, about the availability of an army ensemble made in January 1940 revealed that although the school of music had 'successful in getting together a string band' from its band members, owing to the outbreak of the Second World War, there had been 'a rather retarding effect' on its progress. It was now only 'going ahead in a small way'. The

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<sup>226</sup> The full Army School of Music, No.1 Band, consisted of 2 flutes (doubling piccolos), 2 oboes (doubling cor anglais) 2 E flat clarinets, 9 B flat clarinets, 2 bassoons, 1 soprano sax, 1 alto saxophone, 1 tenor saxophone, 1 baritone saxophone, 2 cornets, 3 trumpets, 4 French horns, 2 tenor horns, 1 euphonium, 3 trombones, 1 E flat bass, 2 B flat basses, 2 percussion.

<sup>227</sup> Note on file, 16 Aug. 1939 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

<sup>228</sup> Official presidential dinner music programme, 15 April 1940 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1301).

secretary of the office to the president enquired whether or not the band had made sufficient progress so as 'to enable it to function efficiently' at the next presidential dinner to be held at Áras an Uachtaráin in February 1940. Frederich Sauerzweig, as acting musical director of the army school of music, assured McDunphy that if the president invited him to supply a string band for his next official dinner he would guarantee 'a good and pleasing performance'.<sup>230</sup>

Consequently the short-lived 'Army String Band', formed specifically for the purposes of providing suitable background music for an indoor state function, was tried out for the first time at the next presidential dinner held on 5 February 1940. Although there is no record of the musical programme performed by the new string band on that occasion, the repertoire was deemed to have been generally satisfactory by the secretary to the president's office and the volume of sound 'admirable'. It was felt, though, that the music itself 'should have been brighter' and 'the intervals between pieces shorter'.<sup>231</sup> The string band was engaged again at the next official dinner on 1 April 1940 but that performance was deemed to have been 'not quite so satisfactory' as on the previous occasion. Criticisms made were that the music was 'too loud' at times, that it was 'not always in perfect time' and that some of the musical items seemed 'dead at times'.<sup>232</sup> As a result, the D.M.G.C.B. was engaged at the next occasion on 15 April and a pattern eventually emerged whereby Garda bands were engaged at indoor events and army bands at outdoor events. This continued until long after the war ended in 1945 and well into the presidency of Seán T. O'Kelly.

The repertoire of the army band remained very much that which had been established under Fritz Brase and continued under his successor Frederich Sauerzweig. It is worth noting, too, that the No.1 Band did regularly perform with an army pipe and drum ensemble which provided additional musical volume at certain presidential occasions and at such outdoor functions. The 'solo' pieces played by the pipe band works were usually more basic and more 'traditional' than would have usually been arranged and scored for the No.1 band itself. Dance tunes like 'Miss McLeod's reel', slow airs such as Moore's 'Believe me if all those endearing young

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<sup>229</sup> See, for example, letter 12 May 1939 from secretary, Garda Band, to the secretary to the president (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1288).

<sup>230</sup> Memo., 29 Jan. 1940 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

<sup>231</sup> Memo., 7 Feb. 1940 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

<sup>232</sup> Memo., 1 April 1940 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P1287).

charms' and marches such as 'Captain Norman', 'My home far away' and 'Blue Bonnets' often featured.<sup>233</sup> Generally, though, and unlike the Garda band, no compromise in musical standard and little or none in musical repertoire appears to have ever been made to suit the 'national' agenda and the repertoire continued to be quite different to that provided by the Garda bands.

A musical programme for a presidential reception held for the Rotunda Hospital Bicentenary Congress in 1947, for example, included Strauss's 'Die Fladermaus' overture and 'Roses from the South' waltz, Waldteufel's 'Espana' waltz, a selection from Verdi's 'La Traviata', a selection from Wagner's 'Tannhauser', two of Brahms' 'Hungarian dances' and Nicolai's overture from 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'. The 'Irish' flavour was provided by Carter's 'The wearing of the Green' and Sauerzweig's own 'Ireland in song and dance' selection and 'Tattoo March'.<sup>234</sup>

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While the first government administration of the Irish state appears to have been consumed by the task of constructing the institutions of the newly independent nation with the greatest economy possible, the sanctioning of a school of music in the army was a genuine recognition by a far-sighted minister of defence, if not by the state, for the need to develop musical culture. Even if the army did not ultimately prove to be the most suitable avenue for this task, the army school of music itself was certainly an admirable cultural innovation, the potential of which was recognized by John Larchet, the foremost academic in the state, who seized upon Mulcahy's initiative and outlined the possibilities for musical development in Ireland within a structured arrangement of native engineering and external leadership.

Colonel Brase himself showed the practical potential for striking a balance between tradition and innovation in music and quickly managed to fulfil at least two of the four main aims of the wider music project. Because, however, the 'nation-building' potential of the endeavour became more apparent, and eventually more imperative, the policy of the Cumann na nGaedheal government was promptly revised to use the playing of music by the army bands sponsored by the state to gain

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<sup>233</sup> President's garden party music programme, 13 May 1948 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P4129).

<sup>234</sup> President's garden party music programme, 8 July 1947 (N.A.I., PRES/1/P3174).

support for its administration. Because Mulcahy himself had such personal control over and involvement with the school he had failed to include many people, including Brase, in the safeguarding the future of the 'school' aspect of the army school of music.

Developments in music and musical activity, along the lines of the original objectives, were affected even if the short-lived objectives for a government-controlled revival and development of 'Irish' music employing the army, advocated by Mulcahy and initially sponsored by the Cumann na nGaedheal government had been abandoned and the army school of music essentially left to its own devices in terms of creating a policy for its role in that revival and development. At the very least, the frequent appearances of the bands at ceremonial state occasions and receptions for foreign dignitaries, at military tattoos, horse shows, festivals, pageants and public recitals at parks and sea-side resorts, the school of music cannot but be said to have exercised a considerable ancillary musical influence on people generally in Ireland. Indeed, through the use of French and German woodwind and brass instrumentation to interpret 'Irish' tunes, and the playing of these simpler airs in an orchestrated harmonic or 'classical' style, the general public were introduced to instruments and sounds that, possibly, they would never have encountered otherwise. In fact, as Larchet had intended, these Irish tunes were, by their exposure around the country through the work of army bands, being re-incorporated into a virtual 'national' repertoire.

As early 1924, the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band, had recorded, as well as a selection of instrumental works by Mozart, Sibelius, Berlioz and Tchaikovsky, Brase's 'General Mulcahy march', 'Irish march, no.1' and 'Irish fantasia, no.1' for the Edison-Bell Gramophone Company whilst Denis McCullough had published copies of these works scored for piano which were available for purchase from McCullough's music shop in Dublin.<sup>235</sup> By 1931, three of Brase's 'Irish' fantasias were available on H.M.V. records although it is significant to note that these were advertised according to the most familiar air or song used in the arrangement of the fantasia and subtitled with the name given to the work by Brase. Therefore, 'Irish fantasia, no.1' was merely the subtitle for 'Let Erin remember' whilst 'Come back to Erin' actually signified 'Irish fantasia, no.2'.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> *F.J.*, 28 May 1924 and 24 Nov. 1924.

<sup>236</sup> *I.I.*, 27 Feb. 1931

These works had become so much a part of the contemporary Irish repertoire by the 1930s, that they were being included as test pieces for various competitions and feiseanna like the Fr Mathew Feis founded by the Capuchin Fathers in Cork in 1925.<sup>237</sup> So far had the army school of music diverged from its original musical objectives, though, that a 'history of the army' published in 1999 simply referred to it in terms of its 'national' function as 'a great morale-booster'.<sup>238</sup> So quickly had the musical objectives been subjugated to serve the national agenda that John Duggan's *A history of the Irish army* did not refer to them at all. Duggan merely described the army bands as being 'beneficial for the army's image with the public' in the mid-1920s.<sup>239</sup> This in itself was important for the consolidation of the newly independent state and both the army and police bands, as the security agents of that state, did provide an essential public service. They acted, through their musical performances and appearances all over the country, as an important national cohesive.

Individual army musicians assisted in providing support for other musical and educational endeavours, including the national broadcasting service, the only other major state-sponsored initiative for music in the period in question here, and would provide leadership roles where there were few Irish musicians able to conduct music. Yet, the school as a whole was less flexible, in terms of repertoire and thereby its standard, than the Garda Síochána for example, which could take whatever form the occasion required.

The army school of music was, then, rooted in its original design and although this ensured musical sophistication and excellence of standard in brass and reed playing, which ultimately affected those other developments outside of the army, it limited their ability to serve the national agenda as evidenced by the relationship with the office of the secretary to the president after 1938. Still, the army and Garda bands, by way of their musical activity, would continue to serve the national, as opposed to the musical, agenda, as they had been consigned to do after 1924.

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<sup>237</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork' in idem (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 272.

<sup>238</sup> John P. Duggan, *A history of the Irish army* (Dublin, 1991), p. 110.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146 and 151.

## Chapter 3

### STATE, NATION AND THE REGULATION OF MUSICAL ACTIVITY

By this point, the significance of the role that the department of finance played in encouraging or constraining musical endeavours which served the purpose of expressing and projecting nationality and consolidating and legitimising the apparatus of the state will have been noted.

The department of finance was the primary government ministry of the newly independent state which had been responsible, under the aegis of the 'illegal' First Dáil, for ensuring that sufficient finance was raised for the execution of the war of independence from 1919. After 1922 it was charged with raising the revenue for the continued operation of all of the other state departments, from education to home affairs, and lands to national defence. Michael Collins, as chairman of the provisional government created after the signing of the treaty between Great Britain and Ireland in 1921, had ensured that the ministry would be given integral primacy by personally selecting the finance ministry portfolio of the concurrent Dáil Éireann cabinet and concerning himself with administrative order and efficiency, the maintenance of meticulous accounts and the compilation of detailed reports, in keeping with the system of financial procedure and civil service practice inherited from the British administration. The multifarious persona of Collins, whose outstanding achievement in his role as minister of finance was the raising of a national loan of one million pounds subscribed to by Irish people within the state and without, itself contributed to the elevated position of the department of finance for, as Ronan Fanning notes, the early ministry was for all practical purposes synonymous with Collins himself.<sup>1</sup>

Any investigation of the complex tripartite relationship between the state, nation and music in Ireland in the period between 1922 and 1951 then must also consider the direct role of the ubiquitous department of finance, not only in the projection of nationality and consolidation of the state through music but in the development, and the regulation, of music and musical activity itself. Some other examples of state regulation of musical activity will also be discussed in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, pp 14-29; see also Foster, *Modern Ire.*, pp 521-2; Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, p. 480.

### 3.1 'Luxury' items: taxation on musical instruments, 1922-4

Significantly, one of the first items of correspondence received by the Irish government in 1922 concerned the relationship between the new state and music, more particularly the government's policy regarding the importation of musical instruments. A Mr J. O'Leary from Tralee, Co Kerry queried if 'with the new constitution in this country...the 30 percent or so duty on foreign musical instruments will still apply to importations into this country'.<sup>2</sup> Collins's ministry of finance, which had received the letter from the executive council, responded that the ad valorem duty, that being duty added 'according to the value' of the item, of 33 ⅓ per cent on all foreign musical instruments imported into this country' would 'continue to be payable for the present' with any change in this duty to be notified to the public in due course.<sup>3</sup>

Owing to its provisional nature, the legislative power of the first Irish government extended to matters of administration only until 6 December 1922, when the Free State came into existence, and so the British finance acts continued to be legislatively applicable in Ireland for the financial year 1922/3. Thereby the Irish ministry of finance could not legislate, could not impose taxation nor was there an Irish finance act until 1923 and the issue of taxation on imported musical instruments was not addressed at state level until 1924. However, economic innovations were not part of Cumann na nGaedheal policy - the establishment of the state and the party's success in achieving this at such a precarious time lay in the administrative and legislative structures inherited from the British civil service.

Former British state departments and their functions were allocated, along with their civil servants, to the various ministries of the new Irish Free State government and were preserved, in terms defined by British procedures, in the interests of legitimising the state, maintaining political stability and ensuring public order.<sup>4</sup> The president of the government and acting finance minister, William Cosgrave, also ensured that his administration of the newly independent state would actually, as K.T. Hoppen has observed, 'be distinguished by continuity rather than experimentation', with most of the taxes already in place simply being maintained as

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<sup>2</sup> J. O'Leary to the Irish provisional government, 20 June 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/1/423).

<sup>3</sup> Finance ministry to the provisional government, 23 June 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/1/423).

<sup>4</sup> See Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p.523; Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 105-106.

they had been under the British administration by the finance act of 1923.<sup>5</sup> This was regarded as a 'wise step' by the *Irish Times*, for example, which claimed that the British financial system was 'the product of years of experience and deep study' and an 'acme of fairness', upon which it would be 'an extremely difficult matter to improve'.<sup>6</sup>

The continued taxation on various items did not go unnoticed though in the other national newspapers with the *Freeman's Journal*, in particular, carrying an editorial entitled 'Musical instruments' on 24 May 1923, following the announcement of the state budget for 1923/4. Here it was reported that there was very little in the line of musical instrument-making in the state in 1923, with only 'bagpipes, drums and occasionally flutes', being made in Dublin. The making of pianos by the Piggott company had, according to the newspaper, apparently been stopped due to the introduction during the First World War of import duties, known as the McKenna duties, on items such as parts of pianos which could not be manufactured in Ireland.

This meant that the eventual cost of a musical instrument assembled here was 'industrially uneconomic' and the *Freeman's Journal* reported that an appeal had been lodged with the Irish government to have revoked those duties 'which had hit the musical instrument industry very severely'. The report surmised that those involved in the musical instrument trade would not object to some taxation if it was 'applied with a view to safeguarding the trade'. However, it was felt that the level of ad valorem taxation, at 33 ⅓ per cent, would lead to severe downturns in business. This would 'considerably defer return to normal conditions' because 'the public' would not 'understand the rise in retail prices necessarily brought about by the duty'.<sup>7</sup>

In 1924, the new minister for finance, Ernest Blythe introduced his budget for the forthcoming tax year to a Dáil finance committee. This budget renewed the import duties of 33 ⅓ per cent on such items as 'cinematograph film, clocks, watches, motor-cars, motor-cycles and musical instruments' which had been imposed by the British administration in 1915.<sup>8</sup> Bryan Cooper, the independent T.D. for

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<sup>5</sup> K. T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, New York, 1999), pp 190-91; see also *F.J.*, 30 Apr. 1924.

<sup>6</sup> *I.T.*, 24 Mar. 1923.

<sup>7</sup> *F.J.*, 24 May 1923.

<sup>8</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 54 (25 Apr. 1924).

Dublin County, protested against the duties on the basis that they would hinder the potential establishment of relevant industries and general trading of these goods in Ireland. He expressed particular concern about a clause which governed the importation of 'the parts of musical instruments, parts for the repairs of musical instruments, gramophones and things of that kind' which he said were 'hampered and checked' by the imposition of this import tax. Cooper claimed that this was, in fact, a particularly 'unreasonable duty' for which the 'average man, the man who takes pleasure in the evening with a gramophone' suffered the greatest hardship. Moreover, he pointed out:

If music is of advantage to the state, and if it is an essential part of culture, as I believe it to be, we should encourage the popularising of music and the cheapening of music, and therefore the continuance of these duties, in opposition to the reports of the government's own committee without apparently any justification, or any argument on behalf of the minister that they should be continued, should not be assented to by the Dáil.<sup>9</sup>

The 'government's own committee' referred to here by Cooper was the Fiscal Inquiry Committee of five independent 'economic experts' appointed by the executive council in June 1923. This committee, which made its final report in December 1923, was requested to examine the fiscal system inherited by the new state and to report on the possible effects of any intended fiscal amendments to the development of industry and agriculture within the state as well as economic relations with other countries. It argued against economic protectionism in general and recommended that such items as clocks, watches, motor-cars, motor-cycles and musical instruments be permitted to be imported into the state free from taxation in order to revive or initiate those industries and to promote the trading of these goods in Ireland.

Whilst the committee was possibly more concerned with opening up the motor-car manufacturing and assembling industry, as a result of the success of the Ford industry in Cork, the fact that musical instruments happened to fall under the same financial resolution as motor-cars meant that considerations were afforded to the effects on music and musical development in Ireland. Despite the fact that the fiscal committee was, what Ronan Fanning has termed, 'the most important forum for the discussion of the free trade versus protection debate in the early years of the new state', the committee did not have any legislatively-binding power and was 'not

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., col. 55.

expected to advocate policy'.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the minister for finance, Ernest Blythe, chose to ignore the recommendations of the committee regarding the imposition of taxes on such items as musical instruments.

Blythe claimed that the government held 'no doctrinaire attitude on the question of free trade and protection' but regarded the matter 'as one of expediency which may be variously decided in different circumstances'.<sup>11</sup> This is rather significant for the fact that despite the protectionist rhetoric espoused by Arthur Griffith and the Sinn Féin party as the future economic policy of an independent Irish state, the Irish Free State government, as J.J. Lee has noted, actually contained few advocates of protectionism.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, as Fanning notes, 'no attempt was made to introduce any comprehensive system of protection' under the Cumann na nGaedheal administration.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2 'Petty duties ...injurious to the state'

The retention of particular protective tariffs by Blythe on such items as musical instruments was not only contrary, then, to the advice of those 'economic experts' of the Fiscal Inquiry Committee, well-versed in the British financial principles adopted by the architects of the state, but also to general party policy in 1924. Richard Wilson, a Farmers' T.D. for Wicklow, pressed the minister to explain this stance and the reasons why Blythe had refused 'to accept his own commission's report'.

Blythe explained that he could not agree with the recommendation of the fiscal committee in this particular regard for he felt that it would lead to a number of administrative difficulties and would ultimately result in the loss, to the state, of a considerable amount of revenue. In response to a further query from the Labour leader, Thomas Johnson, Blythe informed Dáil Éireann that the total duty derivable in 1923/4 from these taxes was £324,000, with £256,000 of that coming from motor cars and parts. This meant that only £68,000 was derivable from such items on cinematograph film, clocks, watches, motor-cycles and musical instruments.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, pp 202-3. See also James Meenan, *The Irish economy since 1922* (Liverpool, 1970) p. 138; Lee, *Ir. 1912-1985*, pp 118-9; Townshend, *Ir. twentieth century*, p.120.

<sup>11</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 40 (25 Apr. 1924).

<sup>12</sup> Lee, *Ir. 1912-1985*, p. 119-20; See also Terence Brown, *Ireland: a social and cultural history 1922-2002* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 2004), pp 5-7 (hereafter cited as Brown, *Ir. social & cultural history*).

<sup>13</sup> Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 57-8 (25 Apr. 1924).

Blythe also said, in response to Bryan Cooper's arguments, that the ad valorem import duty on musical instruments, in particular, was, as far as he was concerned, 'something in the nature of a luxury tax' which did and would not have any major implication for the poorest in society. Blythe maintained:

A great proportion of the musical instruments are certainly not articles of absolute necessity, and any relief that would be given in that matter would prevent us giving a proportionate amount of relief to other articles to which it would be more desirable to give it. We really felt, when considering this matter, that articles like tea and sugar ought to be the articles to which relief would be given, and not those of the other type.<sup>15</sup>

Cooper countered that he was not surprised that Blythe should contend that musical instruments were merely luxuries, for he had come to the conclusion that a luxury was defined as 'whatever the minister for finance wants to tax'. He pointed out that the tax did effect the poorer sections of society, because for many, the possession of a gramophone or of musical instruments were in fact 'signs of saving' which indicated laudable attempts by Irish people to nurture culture and musical appreciation in the home. The educational value of the gramophone, invented by Edison in 1887, was already well-established as an important resource for the teaching of musical education and appreciation in the U.S.A. and was beginning to be recognised as such in Britain in the early 1920s.<sup>16</sup> The import duties imposed by the state upon such items could only then be construed as 'a backward step' in the development of musical culture in Ireland.

The purchase of a gramophone and musical instruments indicated, for Cooper: 'An attempt to make the home a little better, a little more cultured, and a little more artistic, and they are signs of a desire of parents to see that their children will have the accomplishments that they themselves did not possess.' He said that whilst he would not oppose import duties on what he termed 'a sliding scale', whereby musical instruments of different values would be taxed at different rates, he did not believe that gramophone records and certain small instruments such as mouth-organs and tin-whistles should be taxed at all, particularly in view of the trifling amount of revenue derivable in comparison with other items such as motor cars. Because such things as gramophone records were usually imported in very

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Rainbow, *Music in educational thought*, pp 275-8.

small quantities, Cooper also pointed out that such taxes would simply be too 'troublesome to collect'.<sup>17</sup>

As a point of order, Cooper also noted that it might be better that custom duties placed on musical instruments, motor cars and the like (second clause) were not craftily introduced under the same financial resolution as the duties on dried fruits and the like (first clause) when the next annual budget was introduced, so that 'a casual observer would think the resolution dealt only with dried fruits, and not with this taxation on imported motor-cars and musical instruments'. Cooper quipped: 'will the minister undertake next year, if he is in office, to separate them so that we shall not have grand pianos mixed up with sultanas and bananas!' Blythe denied any craftiness on his part in presenting these various duties under the one financial resolution stating that this was merely done because that was how they were first introduced under the British administration in 1915. However, he accepted that there was 'no reason why they should be lumped together in the future'.<sup>18</sup>

Whilst the Dáil finance committee eventually agreed to retain the import duties as they were originally presented, the newspapers commented on the retention of these specific McKenna duties in the context of the budget which had been introduced in Britain by the Labour Party government in the same week. The *Freeman's Journal*, for example, pointed out that the duties, which had been levied during the war 'to provide additional revenue and incidentally to protect certain British industries' were being dropped in Britain from August 1924 and that this would have repercussions in the Irish state. The newspaper suggested that Ernest Blythe might 'reasonably consider' whether the duties on musical instruments and the like were even 'worth maintaining'.<sup>19</sup>

The *Irish Times* drew attention to the fact that, as things stood, people in Northern Ireland would have to pay less for their clocks, motor cars and musical instruments than people in the Free State. Of course, as the newspaper pointed out, the British government could afford to reduce taxation across the board owing to a surplus in revenue for 1923/4 whereas the Irish Free State had a 'comparatively heavy deficit' as a result of the civil war.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 59-60 (25 Apr. 1924).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 60.

<sup>19</sup> *F.J.*, 30 Apr. 1924

<sup>20</sup> *I.T.*, 1 May 1924.

When the budget was introduced to Dáil Éireann to be voted upon by the members of the Dáil itself in May 1924, Bryan Cooper moved that a clause be inserted in the relevant resolution for a tax exemption to be made on 'all such musical instruments as do not exceed the value of ten shillings each, and on the accessories and component parts of musical instruments'. He justified the proposed amendment by echoing what he had stated to the Dáil finance committee a few weeks earlier regarding the inconvenience of collecting taxes on parts and accessories for musical instruments as well as small musical instruments valued at ten shillings or less, which produced a 'comparatively insignificant amount of revenue' of about £8,000. He believed that there should not be taxes on articles that were not or could not be manufactured in the country itself and that there was no harm to any Irish industry in allowing the free importation of such items.

Cooper again highlighted that the ad valorem taxes on imported gramophone records in particular often bore hardest upon the individual music-lover who had to 'write to London' to purchase 'records of a more classic kind' which were not obtainable in Dublin, for it was not 'worth the while of retailers to bring in records for which there may not be a great demand'. He pointed out that due both to the non-existence of a record manufacturing industry in Ireland and to the import tax, he personally had to pay far in excess of the value of records and musical instruments purchased from outside of the state, mentioning in particular a 'jazz drum' purchased as a Christmas present for his son. He warned the government:

All these little petty duties are rather injurious to the state, because they create constant exasperation and enemies against the government. What we want most of all is a contented population, and as we cannot make these things ourselves I fail to see justification for these duties. We have not the factories for making gramophone records or even the variety of artists that would be necessary for making them.<sup>21</sup>

Blythe responded by outlining that the case was 'not so simple' as Cooper saw it in two respects.

First, he personally saw no good reason why musical instruments under the value of ten shillings should be exempted from import duty, derisively remarking that perhaps in fact 'it would be a good thing to forbid their importation, especially in the case of the jazz drum referred to'. Second, he believed that the difficulties in ascertaining the value of and collecting taxes on the components of musical

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<sup>21</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 683-4 (14 May 1924).

instruments would be increased, and not reduced as Cooper had stated. Blythe envisaged that a situation would arise whereby musical instruments would be dissembled for importation as 'parts', if the taxation on 'parts' was removed. Whilst he admitted that he was 'not familiar enough with any particular instrument to know what could be taken out' he did predict great difficulties in valuing and collecting taxes on musical instruments from which some parts had been removed simply 'for the purpose of avoiding payment of the duty'. Furthermore, he did not believe that any relevant industry would be created in Ireland as a result of removing the import duty and he stated that he would 'oppose entirely' the suggestion that parts be exempted.

Bryan Cooper and Thomas Johnson both appealed to Blythe that this tax should not be applied to gramophone records and gramophone needles for these were not 'parts' of a musical instrument but were accessories 'in the same way as wind is an accessory to a cornet'. Johnson mocked the basis of Blythe's argument saying that he remembered 'many years ago it was a fairly common practice to play music from an instrument made up of a comb and a piece of thin paper' and asked if the minister would consider these to be a musical instrument when combined, and therefore 'put a tax on the paper or on the comb?' He maintained that there was indeed a 'very good case to be made for the exemption of gramophone records'. He also agreed with Cooper's point that the duty could not be justified as a protective measure due to the non-existence of an industry in Ireland and agreed that as records were now becoming 'a valuable acquisition to the amenities of country life,' it was the ordinary individuals who imported them that would suffer as a result of this import duty. Cooper eventually offered a compromise to Blythe suggesting that he would withdraw his proposal for a tax exemption on musical instruments less than ten shillings in value if Blythe undertook to find a way of exempting gramophone records and needles as vital musical 'accessories' before the final passage of the finance bill through the Dáil.<sup>22</sup>

And so, when this particular resolution came again before the Dáil as part of the finance bill to be voted upon in June 1924, Blythe had inserted a clause providing that gramophone records 'and other means of reproducing music' would be exempt from taxation from 1 August 1924. That musical instruments were themselves a

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., col. 686-7.

means of reproducing music was lost on all concerned and the *ad valorem* import duty of 33 ⅓ percent was renewed on musical instruments for the following tax year 1924/5.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.3 'An experiment in the matter of protection', 1924

However, a further amendment to the financial resolution on musical instruments was now moved by deputy Darrell Figgis, another independent T.D. for Dublin County. Figgis proposed that the duty on musical instruments, including 'gramophones, pianolas or other similar instruments' be decreased from 33 ⅓ percent to 15 per cent of the value of the article. He justified this proposal by explaining to the Dáil that the standing duty of 33 ⅓ percent had originated in the 'McKenna duties' of 1915, duties which he said had been introduced at a time of unstable relations between England and Germany and were intended 'to protect the British piano against what was then considered to be the unfair competition of the German piano'. This competition, Figgis said, had resulted in the introduction to England of 'a high class piano' on terms that were 'actually cheaper than the lower class piano the British manufacturer made' so a tax had been introduced to protect 'the poor man's piano'. Figgis argued that there was no longer any purpose for such duties as the Irish Free State was, having established political independence, now a separate fiscal entity. He pointed out that because a duty of 33 ⅓ percent on the value of all imported musical instruments remained, the price of a cheaper British 'poor man's piano' had risen to a rate 'within a few pounds of the more expensive German piano'. This had resulted in a considerable decrease in the sale of pianos in Ireland which, he had been reliably informed, now threatened the entire piano trade in Ireland 'with extinction'. Figgis believed that some of the larger music shops in Dublin were already 'contemplating the closing of their premises or the dispensing of a large portion of their staff onto the unemployment market because of the incidence of this taxation'.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, Figgis argued that if the *ad valorem* import duty was reduced by at least half to 15 percent, there would be twice as many sales, which would benefit not only the Irish trade in musical instruments but also the Irish finance department itself. He pointed out that Ireland had 'no industries of this kind to protect' and

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., col. 2456-7 (17 June 1924).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., col. 2458.

thereby the import duty was 'an irrelevant tax in this country' which was 'doing more harm than benefit'. He requested that his amendment be considered on the basis of reducing a duty that had not only been introduced by the state for its own purposes, but was, by its retention, having 'injurious' effects in Ireland, and not on the basis of a specific figure such as 15 percent which, he said, was neither 'a critical or fundamental figure'.<sup>25</sup>

Significantly, W.T. Cosgrave, the president of the Irish Free State government and the acting defence minister at this juncture, interjected at this point to contradict Figgis's account of the origins of the McKenna duties. Cosgrave claimed that there had been no trade in German pianos with England in 1915, sarcastically reminding Figgis that 'there was a little disturbance between England and Germany at that time, and pianos were not a commodity exported out of Germany or imported into England from Germany'. Cosgrave went on to say that the Irish Free State government were not bound to imitate the fiscal arrangements of the British exchequer and that the continuation of import taxation in this regard was actually 'an experiment in the matter of protection'. It was Cosgrave's opinion that if there were 'piano people here in Ireland sufficiently interested in their business to start the manufacture', they had 'certainly got a very good backing in the matter of having a 33 ⅓ per cent import duty'. He also disagreed with the case put by Figgis that better business would be done by Irish piano dealers if the ad valorem import duty was decreased to 15 percent with a view to it being removed completely. He claimed that the difference between duty at 33 ⅓ per cent and at 15 per cent on an £80 piano, for example, would amount to about fifteen pounds, a sum which he did not think any person would 'balk at'.<sup>26</sup>

Darrell Figgis disagreed, though, saying that the average English 'artisan household' had, in the 1920s, a piano but that most Irish households did not. He maintained that if the import duty on musical instruments was remitted, to some degree, many Irish households 'might, even by a small matter of £15 or £20, be induced to purchase a piano' and thus improve the overall cultural and musical ethos of the country.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, a mere glimpse at advertisements published in the national newspapers in the 1920s reveals that the majority of musical instruments,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., col. 2459-60.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., col. 2460-61.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., col. 2466.

and particularly pianos, advertised for sale in Dublin city were described as 'German' and being sold either for cash or on a hire-purchase basis.<sup>28</sup>

Bryan Cooper concurred with Cosgrave's explanation of the origins of the McKenna duties, stating that they had actually been introduced by the British government during the First World War, 'not against German pianos, which had few facilities for coming into Great Britain at the time', but against American pianos. Cooper maintained that the duties were part of a wider effort by the British government to curtail the importation across the Atlantic Ocean of certain large articles including motor cars and pianos which consumed shipping space 'that was extremely valuable at the time'. But for this need to ration shipping space during the war, Cooper was himself 'quite sure that we should not be taxing pianos right now'.<sup>29</sup>

Cooper disagreed with Cosgrave, however, regarding his statement that the duty on imported musical instruments was a protective measure to encourage the manufacture of pianos in Ireland, pointing out that it had proved 'an utter failure for eight years', as the potential Irish piano manufacturer had not realised the fiscal protection offered by the imposition of the duties. He questioned what the advantage of a protective duty was, then, especially in relation to an industry which, as Cooper put it, 'does not exist in the country, which we have no evidence is likely to exist, and which more than almost any industry in the world requires extraordinarily-skilled labour'. He went to say that whilst Blythe's tax exemption on gramophone records was appreciated there was much more to be done to counter the general perception that music and engaging in musical activity were luxuries only for those who could afford them. Cooper compared the case of imported musical instruments with the case of imported tennis rackets, which he said could be regarded as luxuries and for which there was no manufacturing industry in Ireland. Yet these tennis rackets had no import duty placed upon them because sport and exercise were regarded as being 'good'. He added:

Music is more than a luxury. Music is an art. Music is culture. So also is music good and there is no justification for a tax on musical instruments which does not exist in respect of instruments of sport, produced outside this country. Those who are fond of music and who are deprived of it know that it is as great a deprivation as being deprived of food or drink.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See *I. T.*, 14 Jan. 1924 for an example of such an advertisement.

<sup>29</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 2462-3 (17 June 1924).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Referring to Northern Ireland, Cooper suggested that if the Dáil supported Figgis' amendment to substantially reduce the McKenna duties with a view to their removal, it would, in a very simple way, lend itself to 'diminish the disparity that now exists'.<sup>31</sup> This statement echoed a similar point made in the *Irish Times*, on the very day that Cooper spoke in Dáil Éireann. This paper reported that the ad valorem duty of 33 ⅓ per cent on imported musical instruments were being completely remitted in Northern Ireland from August 1924 and warned the government about the dangers of making marked contrasts between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland in this regard.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that this point was made by Cooper, who despite being a Protestant landowner, a former British army officer and a former Unionist MP at Westminster had a very prominent role in the legislative business of Dáil Éireann, something which Terence Brown suspects was probably more to with his individual 'adaptability' and his 'genial and attractive personality' than an indication of a general assimilation of Unionists into the new state.<sup>33</sup> Cooper's solution to the problems of defining 'Irish' nationalism, 'Irish-ness' or distinctiveness in Irish music was not to embrace any essentialist or exclusivist definition of 'Irish-Ireland' identity but to invoke some form of generally inclusive, if not 'European', consciousness. He placed the Cumann na nGaedheal task of nation-building into a general 'European' context by asserting Ireland's position, not merely as a solitary 'little island in the middle of the Atlantic between America and Europe', but as an integral part of Europe, a Europe that was once 'influenced by Ireland'. He warned that this would never again happen if the government insisted on 'pursuing a policy of isolation and by shutting out the education that comes from European civilisation'.<sup>34</sup>

Cooper's inclusive cultural viewpoint has been attributed to an inherent minority Unionist fear of exclusivist definitions of Irish cultural identity under the government of a new Catholic-Irish state from 1922.<sup>35</sup> Whilst this is plausible, Cooper's parliamentary speeches in the 1920s on a number of issues relating to musical activity, music education and the various political locations for musical

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<sup>31</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 2464 (17 June 1924).

<sup>32</sup> *I.T.*, 17 June 1924.

<sup>33</sup> Brown, *Ire. social & cultural history*, p. 107.

<sup>34</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1120 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>35</sup> Martin McLoone, 'Inventions and re-imaginings: some thoughts on identity and broadcasting in Ireland' in idem (ed.), *Culture, identity and broadcasting in Ireland* (Belfast, 1991), pp 3-4.

development in Ireland appear to have been more reflective of his personal character, which was, according to his biographer, 'always in the direction of compromise, in the direction of the easy friendly middle course'.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, his views regarding taxation on musical instruments and gramophone records as well as those regarding music education and the broadcasting of music appear to have been more indicative of the concerns of a man of his particular social class and educational background regarding Irish access and possible contribution to the musical achievements of the European 'art' music tradition.

Significantly, the Labour leader Thomas Johnson, whilst taking the side of Cooper and Figgis for the reduction of import duties, argued against Cooper's claim that music was 'more than a luxury', stating that the reality was that musical instruments *were* luxuries for most Irish people. Johnson also doubted that the number of pianos sold in Ireland would increase substantially as a result of any proposed decrease in the ad valorem taxation but he suggested that if a reduction of the duty on such items as pianos, in view of the obvious absence of a protective effect, would actually make them less of a luxury, then he would favour such a reduction. He expressed concern, however, that the removal of protective duties on all imported instruments might somehow stunt the development of potentially viable Irish industries in the manufacturing of musical instruments other than pianos. He warned that such a measure could be perceived as being something 'for the sake of cheaper pianos for a small number of people'.<sup>37</sup>

### **3.4 Music, society and the trade in musical instruments, 1925-6**

In response, the minister for finance revealed to the Dáil that he had recently received deputations from various Irish musical instrument dealers in this regard but that he had not been impressed by what he felt was 'a selfish plea' by a small number of people in the trade. Blythe admitted that he had, in fact, taken their concerns 'with the proverbial grain of salt' because he was just not convinced that any decrease in the ad valorem import duty would yield an increase in general revenue on musical instruments. Besides, as Ireland had only been a separate fiscal entity for about a year Blythe believed that there had not been enough time to set up any manufacturing industries and therefore the protective potential of such a tax was not

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<sup>36</sup> Lennox Robinson, *Bryan Cooper* (London, 1931), p. 161.

<sup>37</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 2464-5 (17 June 1924).

yet known. He agreed with Johnson that musical instrument-making industries other than piano-making in the state, such as the making of drums which occurred in some northern countries, might be discouraged if the duty was reduced. It was in this regard that he insisted that the ad valorem tax on all imported musical instruments should remain unchanged.<sup>38</sup>

Although Figgis's proposal to reduce the ad valorem taxation of 33 ⅓ per cent on all imported musical instruments, by at least half, was defeated in the Dáil, the centrality of music in the debate between protectionists and advocates of free trade continued into 1925. By this time, the government had enacted the Ministries and Secretaries Act which formally reorganised the variety of former British state departments, boards and commissioners and their functions, inherited by the Cumann na nGaedheal administration, under several 'departments of state' each headed by a minister. This act, however, also enforced the primacy of the department of finance and its minister by decreeing that the department would

comprise the administration and business generally of the public finance of Saorstát Éireann and all powers, duties and functions connected with the same, including in particular the collection and expenditure of the revenues of Saorstát Éireann from whatever source arising...and the supervision and control of all purchases made for or on behalf of and all supplies of commodities and goods held by any department of state and the disposal thereof.<sup>39</sup>

It was in this vein that the minister for finance, Blythe, stated that the McKenna duties imposed in Great Britain for the purposes of economic protection in that country in 1915 would be renewed in Ireland yet again in 1925.

Michael Heffernan, a Farmers' Party T.D. from Tipperary and later the parliamentary secretary to the department of posts and telegraphs, also reminded Blythe that the McKenna duties had been introduced by the British government 'purely as a temporary measure' during war-time. Whilst Heffernan did not object to taxation upon some items under the resolution governed by the McKenna duties, such as cinema film, he claimed that it was indeed 'a mistake to tax musical instruments' because they were 'certainly very necessary' for the development of

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., col. 2466-8.

<sup>39</sup> The Ministers and Secretaries Act (1924/16, 21 April 1924). Under the terms of this act, the phrase 'ministry of' officially became 'department of', and the title of 'minister of' became 'minister for'. The prescribed nomenclature was not always adhered to, though, by ministers or by departmental secretaries in their correspondence throughout the 1920s.

Irish society.<sup>40</sup> Bryan Cooper also expressed his disbelief at this position taken by the Irish government, especially as those duties had been 'found unsuitable' and had been 'repealed' in Britain, the country of their origin. Cooper now also advanced another aspect to the issue by claiming that in retaining this heavy import tax the minister was in effect placing a tax on musical education. 'Music plays a part', he said, 'an increasing part - in education. You are taxing the raw material of education when you tax musical instruments. We do not want to deprive the citizens of the amenities and conveniences of life.'<sup>41</sup>

It was somewhat ironic that the finance department was giving with one hand the funding for certain initiatives such as a school of music in the army and grants to secondary schools for the production of choirs and orchestras, yet it was taxing with the other hand, the practical means by which those schemes would actually achieve their objectives in producing musicians of a higher calibre than before and contributing to the elevation of musical instruction, culture and education in the Irish Free State. This point was also made by Denis McCullough, the former I.R.B. president who had set up McCullough's music shop in Dublin.

Speaking as a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Donegal, which he had been since 1924, McCullough admitted that whilst he was really 'rather loath to speak of this matter' because it affected his own personal business interests, he believed that the issue of taxation on musical instruments was also one of greater concern which he urged the minister to seriously reconsider. Taking up Cooper's point, he stated that music was being recognised by the government as an 'an essential part of the education in the country', with vocal music or 'singing' being a required subject on the national curriculum. He pointed out that the department of finance was also involved in process by providing funding, albeit minimal, for the teaching of the subject in schools under the administration of the department of education. McCullough, who was also a governor of the R.I.A.M. at that time, held that it this seemed 'rather stupid' to provide money for the musical education of the people while making it almost impossible for them to secure the means by which they could put into practice the teaching they obtained. Whilst he admitted that music was for many 'a luxury in so far as life could go on without it', McCullough believed that it was also 'one of the amenities of life in modern civilisation' which the minister did

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<sup>40</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xi, 60 (22 Apr. 1925).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 57

not have the right to deny to any section of the Irish people. He stated that the duties put undue hardship on, for example, 'the struggling father of a family, trying to educate his children in the better and more artistic side of life'. Thus, he held that it was not too much to ask the minister to, at very least, reduce the duty on imported instruments 'if we are going to have any musical education in the country or any development of musical knowledge on proper lines'.<sup>42</sup>

McCullough also informed the Dáil that, being in the music instrument trade, he had given evidence before the Fiscal Committee in 1923 to the effect that it would be possible for an industry for the production of such instruments as pianos, band instruments, gramophones and melodeons to be established in Ireland but that this would be a process of 'slow growth' over a number of years, due to the highly specialised technical training required, training usually 'handed down in families'. McCullough held that while such an industry was still possible in independent Ireland, musical instruments were still needed in the country in the meantime, though not at the rate at which import duty then stood. Referring to Blythe's conviction that there had not been enough time for the protective potential of his import tax to be known, McCullough suggested that no industry would be created at all by the continuation of such a punishing duty, 'so exorbitant and high' that it failed to serve any purpose, protective or otherwise, especially since, as Cooper had pointed out, the duty had been remitted in its country of origin. Commenting on his own personal experience of the 'injustice' that the import duty of 33 ⅓ per cent was to those actually involved in the trading of musical instruments in Ireland he said that trade had been 'practically brought to a standstill'. He warned the government:

The musical trade in the Saorstát is not so extensive that it can be wisely embarrassed in business. The total number of musical instrument dealers of any standing in the country could be counted on the fingers of one hand easily. They are prepared to submit any evidence required in order to support their arguments. They should not be crushed out of business, which is really what will happen owing to the way in which they are embarrassed and owing to the difficulty of financing their business. The effect of this duty is to make the traders' position practically impossible.<sup>43</sup>

The depiction, by McCullough, of the trade in music and musical instruments in Ireland in the period of Cumann na nGaedheal government is quite a bleak one but it is difficult to gauge the reality of the situation. McCullough claimed that while the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., col. 62-4.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., col. 65-7.

trade did not comprise many people, those who were employed were 'highly-skilled persons' who required high wages.<sup>44</sup>

Population census returns indicate that the number of persons working as 'musical instrument makers and dealers' had almost doubled from 87 to 163 in the years between 1881 and 1911 in the area known by 1926 as Saorstát Éireann.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the numbers of those engaged in the making of and dealing in musical instruments, and incidentally in the publishing, selling and printing of music books, sheet music and materials, are clearly denoted in the census material prior to 1926, the number of people involved in this type of music industry is not discernible from the reports of the census of population in the newly independent state.

In another case in point of the Cumann na nGaedheal government choosing to imitate British procedures, the occupational classifications which had given such specifics were not maintained for the Irish census of 1926, when a new, more general method of classifying occupations in the census returns, adopted by the British administration for its census of 1921, was employed in Ireland.<sup>46</sup> Here, problems of definition arose, as the term 'occupation' itself, as used on the census questionnaire, referred both to the operations performed in earning a living within one particular industry or service or to that found within a number of services or industries.<sup>47</sup> Under these new classifications then, a piano-maker, for example, would have been accounted for anonymously within the occupational category of 'woodworking, manufacture of furniture and fittings', or the like. It is not possible to discern, then, how many were specifically engaged as 'musical instrument makers and dealers' after 1926.

McCullough attempted to persuade the finance minister, Blythe, with the promise that because there was a constant general demand for musical instruments, increased sales would take place which, in turn, would safeguard the department of finance against future financial loss. McCullough said that he had it on good authority that musical instrument dealers were prepared, 'in order to get business moving again', to forget about the fact that they had already paid high taxes on their existing stock if Blythe would at least consider reducing ad valorem tax to a

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., col. 68.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix E, table 1; also Ita Hogan, *Anglo-Irish music, 1780-1830* (Cork, 1966), pp 101-12; Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ire.*, pp 361-4.

<sup>46</sup> Appendix E, table 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

'reasonable' 20 per cent or so on instruments imported in the future. However, McCullough also warned Blythe that although musical instrument trade itself was small, it was one of 'repute and standing', with those involved having premises located 'in the best parts of the cities and towns' of the state. Because, he said, these particular people paid 'very high rates and taxes' their concerns required from the minister 'as serious consideration as possible'.<sup>48</sup>

John Daly, the 'Independent' or unofficial Labour T.D. for Cork East, entered the debate at this point to state: 'We all know that the Irish are a musical people' and to highlight a number of 'advantages to be derived from music' because of the perceived innateness of music in the lives of ordinary Irish people. Firstly, in reference to the connection between music and education, he held that the gramophone had proved to be a particularly useful educational resource for the youth of the 'country house', allowing them to listen to 'great singers, such as John McCormack', in their own homes. Secondly, he contended that music kept the youth 'out of public houses' and took them to civilised dances. Furthermore, he maintained that the 'beautiful music' heard in church on Sundays assisted the Irish person to 'pray twice as well', for 'with one twist of the organ you fancy you can see the Promised Land'. Thus, he fervently appealed to the minister for finance to remit the duty on musical instruments because to tax musical instruments was to tax music itself and 'no matter where you go,' he said, 'you are not fully equipped without music!'<sup>49</sup>

Over the course of proceedings, only one T.D. ever voiced his approval in the Dáil of the rate of taxation on imported musical instruments. Joseph McBride, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Mayo South, stated that he was 'exceedingly sorry' that the duty on musical instruments was not 'trebled', complaining that the 'plethora of pianos in this country' were 'a regular nuisance!'<sup>50</sup> Surprisingly, his complaint did not provoke any response.

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<sup>48</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xi, 68-9 (22 Apr. 1925).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 69-70.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 165 (23 Apr. 1925).

### 3.5 A 'very considerable burden on one aspect of culture'

Ernest Blythe's financial provisions for 1925/6 were, on the whole, well-received.<sup>51</sup> The *Irish Times*, for example, declared that while no finance minister could ever please all of the people in the state, Blythe deserved 'very hearty congratulations', for he had 'done excellently', and as far as the remission of income taxation was concerned, the taxpayer had 'good cause for joy'. However, the paper criticised the continued policy of protective taxation on certain imports - although it was noted that these were 'purely experimental' and that Blythe had undertaken that no fresh duties would be levied on the state 'without the previous sanction of a general election'. Thus, while the tax-payer would be 'always grateful for small mercies' and would appreciate the extent to which taxation had been relieved, it was deemed to have been 'only a beginning'.<sup>52</sup>

As J.J. Lee has pointed out, though, income tax accounted for only about twenty per cent of the total government revenue with the rest coming from customs and excise duties and indirect taxation borne on the 'poorer strata' of Irish society.<sup>53</sup> These people certainly did not constitute the popular support base of the governing party, which by actively presenting itself as the 'legitimate' party, the party of law and order and constitutional principles, came to represent more the interests of those who, in Alvin Jackson's words, 'depended on law and order'.<sup>54</sup> For such people of commercial and professional interests and for larger farmers, the lowering of income taxation was more than acceptable.

Ironically, while the likes of McCullough and Cooper purported to be advocating the remission of duties to assist the poorer 'struggling' people of the state in their attempts to engage in musical and cultural activity, the examples they offered in relation to the difficulties with the duties generally centred on their personal experiences and grievances, from Cooper's Christmas present of a jazz drum to McCullough's own livelihood. That musical instruments were the means by which professional musicians and music teachers earned their living, and thereby a heavy tax on their instruments was a tax on the means of their livelihood, was completely overlooked by all.

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<sup>51</sup> See *I.I.* and *I.T.*, 23 Apr. 1925.

<sup>52</sup> *I.T.*, 23 Apr. 1925.

<sup>53</sup> Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, p. 111. See appendix E, table 2 for details on how much customs duties were actually worth to the Irish state in terms of tax receipts on musical instruments etc imported, at least between 1947 and 1951.

<sup>54</sup> Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998, politics and war* (Oxford, 1999), pp 282-3.

While Blythe refused to respond to McCullough's pleas on behalf of 'the struggling father' attempting to buy musical instruments for his family, except to jibe that he thought 'most of the neighbours of the struggling father would be very annoyed if any more musical instruments were got!', McCullough's personal pleas and veiled threats with regard to the principle of protective taxation seemed to have touched a nerve. Blythe now stated:

All that has to be said in connection with these duties is this: I suppose all taxation is evil; but we have to have some taxation, and when we are reducing taxation it is a question as to where we will give the reduction. You could not remit these duties without affecting remissions proposed elsewhere or putting on other duties. It does seem to me that, on the whole, the articles affected by these duties are good subjects of taxation.<sup>55</sup>

Regarding the difficulties facing those in the musical instrument trade as personally represented to him by McCullough, Blythe felt that because it dealt with 'non-necessities' the musical instrument trade had probably suffered the effects of recent 'agricultural depression and unemployment' more than most. He admitted that if he could be convinced that imports would go up as a result of a decrease in import duty, he would be 'very much influenced indeed' in reducing the duty, but claimed that he would discuss this 'a later stage'.

Discarding his previous justification of the protective value of the duty, Blythe now conceded that he was 'really imposing these taxes for revenue, and if we are going to get more revenue by a remission of duty, that would be what we desire'.<sup>56</sup> The fact that Blythe admitted that his duties on musical instruments were valued more for their revenue than their protective function is very telling about the pragmatic nature of his ministry in the pursuit of a potential source of revenue, and of course about his attitude towards music and the practical means of its production.

It also raises an unanswered question, however, as to why Blythe insisted on retaining taxes as protection for non-existent industries, especially for the fact that the government had, as J. J. Lee put it, 'relegated industry to second place behind agriculture'.<sup>57</sup> The most obvious explanation is, of course, that receipts from the taxes on musical instruments and the like at an ad valorem rate of 33 1/3 per cent were

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<sup>55</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xi, 75 (22 Apr. 1925).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 76-7.

<sup>57</sup> Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, p.119.

simply worth too much to the department of finance to dispose of them.<sup>58</sup> Yet, no further discussion on this particular matter occurred in the Dáil or with McCullough.

The ad valorem duty on imported musical instruments and goods at 33 ⅓ per cent was renewed each year whilst Cumann na nGaedheal remained in government, with the revenue yielded from the duty rising from £23,020, for the financial year 1925/6,<sup>59</sup> to about £40,000 in 1931/2.<sup>60</sup> In the context of the overall revenue to the state in the late 1920s, of about £23 million per annum, this was a relatively small amount of revenue being derived, a point raised in Dáil Éireann by Patrick Baxter, a Farmers' Party T.D. from Cavan, in April 1927. Baxter maintained that because the import duty limited the number of people who could purchase and thereby use musical instruments, the finance minister would be well advised to abolish it altogether, believing that:

It would be well worth while for the state to sacrifice £20,000 in the cultivation and the spread of music. It would make life brighter for the people and from the cultural aspect I think it is the duty of the state to endeavour to foster a taste for music and the ability to use musical instruments.<sup>61</sup>

It is no coincidence that when the duty on imported motor-cars was removed from under the same financial resolution as musical instruments to be dealt with, not as one of the McKenna duties but in a separate resolution from 1928, that the centrality of music, and the practical means of producing music, in the debate between economic protectionists and advocates of free trade largely dissolved also. Apart from the occasional remark from Bryan Cooper in this regard, those proponents of music as a cultural endeavour in Dáil Éireann were now largely concerned with the development of music and musical activity on the national wireless broadcasting service.<sup>62</sup>

When the Fianna Fáil party came to power after the general election of February 1932, the debate on import taxation on musical instruments was revived. Not only did the new finance minister renew the McKenna duties but he proposed to

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix E, table 2. See also J.C.M. Eason, 'An analysis showing the objects of expenditure and the sources of revenue of the Irish Free State during the financial years 1925-26, 1928-29, 1931-32, 1932-33' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland* [henceforth *JSSISI*], xv, no. 4, (1933/4), pp 15-28 and idem, 'Analysis showing the objects of expenditure and sources of revenue of Éire during financial years 1929/30, 1939/40 and 1945/46' in *JSSISI*, xvii, (1947/8), pp 691-704.

<sup>59</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xv, 190 (21 Apr. 1926).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, xl, 339 (2 June 1932).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, 1400 (21 Apr. 1927).

<sup>62</sup> See ch. 4.

make them permanent, in keeping with the party policy of economic autarchy. Richard Mulcahy, the former minister of defence in the Cumann na nGaedheal administration and a future minister for education in the coalition cabinet of 1948, protested that this was not protectionism but was simply 'revenue tax' which imposed a 'very considerable burden on one aspect of culture both in the schools and elsewhere'. He added:

The neglect of music has been very considerable in this country... If revenue has got to be in relation to music I suggest that the minister might get revenue of an improving and developing kind by transferring some of the taxation he gets on musical instruments to schools and others who send fees out of this country in connection with musical examinations conducted by musical establishments that are not of this country. He might consider putting a poll tax on every examiner coming in here from such institutions to examine music in this country. That has had the effect of leaving us with musical institutions here that are not properly organised. The revenue which the minister got in that direction could be used to assist music by taking some of the tax off musical instruments.<sup>63</sup>

The new finance minister, Seán MacEntee, told Mulcahy, who, as defence minister, had initiated one educational enterprise for the elevation of musical culture in Ireland in the army school of music, that it was not 'possible to consider any reduction on the tax on musical instruments' for the foreseeable future. However MacEntee promised that he would have the matter of taxation on fees charged by outside bodies for conducting musical examinations in Ireland investigated with the view to making some provision in that regard in the following year.

The conducting of musical examinations by British musical bodies, such the Incorporated Society of Musicians and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, at various urban centres around Ireland each year was a long established practice in Ireland, and one so profitable that the R.I.A.M. in Dublin had implemented a similar scheme in 1894.<sup>64</sup> However, the practice was decried by the likes of Aloys Fleischmann, professor of music at University College, Cork who wrote that, in the mid-1930s seven or eight distinct musical examining bodies, 'expending an energy in the testing of musical ability that would be better devoted to the teaching of it', were the 'dominant influence' on musical education in the country. The main problem with this, according to Fleischmann, was that each body

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<sup>63</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xix, 339 (2 June 1932).

<sup>64</sup> Brian Beckett, 'Tested teaching: the local centre examination system, 1894-1994' in Pine & Acton (eds), p. 297. See also ch. 6 for a discussion about the extent to which the R.I.A.M. itself relied on this type of revenue.

expected a different standard and each was 'vying with the other in attempting to impress on the public its particular superiority'.<sup>65</sup>

Where there was such competition, Fleischmann claimed that the interest was naturally 'less directed towards the students than towards the amount of profit to be derived from examining them'. This was borne out by the fact that the Associated Board, the body with the highest perceived educational standing, attracted a relatively small number of 422 examination candidates in comparison with the 3,000 examined by the Trinity College of Music in London and the 3,000 examined by the London College of Music. Because bodies, like the former two, had made of the examinations 'a highly organised business concern' by appointing agents to penetrate 'into the corners of every province', Fleischmann argued that a general 'diplomania', prevalent with 'a gullible public' in England since the late nineteenth-century, had now been bestowed on upon the Irish people. This, he claimed, had resulted in 'warping popular opinion in regard to what represents musical ability and what does not'.<sup>66</sup>

Whilst Fleischmann rued that the examination system, which he felt involved the principle of 'misguided cramming on the part of the student', could not be done away with for there was yet a substitute to be found, he advocated that some method of control was required 'to see to it that attention be focussed on the means by which the student may be educated to the standard required by the examinations, rather than on the examinations themselves or the profits therefrom.' He claimed that during the academic year 1933/4, almost 15,000 music examinations had been held at local centres around the country, half of which had been held by English institutions which made a profit of 'some £4,000 per annum'. Fleischmann thus called for the government to impose 'in accordance with the government's tariff policy...an embargo on imported musical examinations' which was, above all else, 'preventing the growth of proper musical education'.<sup>67</sup>

This embargo was, however, never imposed or even discussed again in Dáil Éireann after Mulcahy first broached the subject in June 1932. In fact, MacEntee expressed surprise at Mulcahy's suggestions and his objections to a permanent taxation on musical instruments, on the grounds that Mulcahy's party colleague,

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<sup>65</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'The outlook of music in Ireland', in *Studies*, no. 24 (March 1935), pp 125-27.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*; see also ch. 6.

Ernest Blythe, the former finance minister, had indicated his 'whole-hearted support' for his proposals. Blythe had indeed congratulated MacEntee generally on his budget, believing that the making of the McKenna duties permanent was particularly justified.<sup>68</sup>

However, the budget was criticised by the Irish newspapers for its 'principles' of 'penalisation of the well-to-do classes and the protection of local industry.' The *Irish Times* were particularly harsh in criticising the inconsistency of the budget - offering 'to native industry' protective tariffs that 'were utterly and heartlessly fallacious' while increasing income tax, reducing salaries and placing higher prices on almost all goods – measures that would 'react ruinously on every aspect of local industry.' The paper claimed that 'de Valera's government' had chosen 'the most cruel, the most foolish, the most cynical budget of modern times – a budget that will ruin many, will help none, and will estrange the good-will of the British Commonwealth', adding that if Fianna Fáil's first budget proved to be also its last, 'the injury to the nation's welfare and prospects must be almost irreparable.'<sup>69</sup>

### **3.6 Taxation on gramophone records, 1932-7**

That budget would, however, be the first of sixteen consecutive budgets produced by the Fianna Fáil administration. In keeping with the unremitting yet somewhat inconsistent policy of financial protectionism, MacEntee pointed out that one of the 'anomalies' of the McKenna duties now being made permanent had been the exemption on gramophone records conceded by Blythe in 1923. MacEntee claimed that it was difficult to defend this exemption particularly when musical instruments, 'by means of which professional musicians earn their living' were subjected to a tax. Although MacEntee had seized on a very important point which had been missed in all previous debates on the matter, he proposed to remedy what he promoted as an injustice to musicians by simply making the injustice more equitable and charging the customs duty of 33 ⅓ percent on 'all records and other similar items designed and intended for the reproduction of music by means of a gramophone, or a pianola, or any other similar instrument'.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *I.T.*, 12 May 1932.

<sup>69</sup> 'Descensus Averno' [Descent to Avernus or 'hell'], editorial, *I.T.*, 12 May 1932.

<sup>70</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xli, 1557-8 (1 May 1932).

This particular move, which reflected the attitude of the new Fianna Fáil government towards music, created much debate in Dáil Éireann and more controversy in the newspapers, with the *Irish Times*, indicting MacEntee as someone who ‘robs the well-to-do and cheats the poor’.<sup>71</sup> Even Ernest Blythe, the former finance minister, appealed to MacEntee to afford ‘special consideration’ to the ‘poorest households’ who had ‘no type of musical instrument except these records’. Of course that people did not have musical instruments had much to do with the taxes placed by Blythe on their importation throughout the 1920s.

Using the arguments which had been put to him as finance minister in the 1920s by the likes of Bryan Cooper regarding the abolition of duties on musical instruments, Blythe now told MacEntee that he should exempt records on the basis that the amount of duty was not ‘very large’ and was, therefore, troublesome to collect. Margaret Collins-O’Driscoll, one of three Cumann na nGaedheal T.D.s for the Dublin-North constituency, agreed with Blythe that the taxation on records would only be inflicting ‘great hardship’ on the poorest people of the state who ‘saved their pennies’ in order to purchase records. Sir James Craig, an independent representative of Trinity College, Dublin University, concurred with Collins-O’Driscoll that the playing of gramophone records was ‘the one means of entertainment’ that many Irish families had and he appealed on behalf of the ‘children of the poor’ for the remission of the duties. MacEntee insisted that there was no reason to exempt what he regarded as ‘accessories for the mechanical production of music’ while taxes continued to be applied to the ‘instruments used by musicians to earn a livelihood’. Furthermore, he added that because records were cheaper in 1932 than they had been in 1924 when the tax was abolished by Blythe, the tax was now ‘very much lighter’. ‘After all’, MacEntee said, ‘gramophone records are not necessities of life’.<sup>72</sup>

George Bennett, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Limerick, stated that although records were cheaper by 1932, it was the duty of the government to encourage people to purchase them and not to ‘put good music possibly out of the reach of the poor’. He contended that ‘up to recent days’, people ‘on the mountains and waysides of this state’, had very little opportunity of hearing ‘any relatively good music’.

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<sup>71</sup> *I.T.*, 12 May 1932.

<sup>72</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlii, 2040-1 (1 July 1932).

Any music they did hear was derived possibly from a mouth organ, a penny whistle, or a jew's-harp. They occasionally heard the music of the wayside fiddler when he paid an occasional visit to their humble homes, but on the whole, their knowledge of music was very limited and their opportunities of hearing any music very limited until the advent of the gramophone, which, for the first time, placed within reach of these poor people, opportunities of hearing fairly good music and of hearing reproduced some of the best bands in the world. It was an educational value to the children.<sup>73</sup>

Professor Patrick McGilligan, a lawyer and a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for the National University of Ireland, agreed that whilst gramophone records were not necessities as tea or tobacco might be so considered, a good case could be made for the removal of the duty. McGilligan had been, from 1924, the second minister for industry and commerce in the Cumann na nGaedheal administration, concurrently holding the portfolio for external affairs from 1927, and would be the finance minister of the coalition government of 1948.<sup>74</sup>

McGilligan proposed that, at very least, records should be categorised, into those that were 'completely a pleasure' and those specifically designed as educational aids, and taxed accordingly. He admitted that this was a rather 'rough and ready way' of dealing with the matter. James Dillon, an independent deputy for Donegal, disagreed with McGilligan claiming that he understood MacEntee's reluctance to remit the duty 'on a luxury article of this character, which is a luxury no matter what its educational value'. Dillon proposed that a sliding scale of taxes be introduced with cheaper records of two shillings or less having little or no duty applied and those of a 'highly educational value', being more expensive, having a greater percentage of duty applied.

Any person who can afford to pay 6/6 for a record, or 35/- for a book of records, can very well afford, in times like this, to contribute to the revenue, in order that he may enjoy the educational benefit of such music, but, in the case of the poor and the children who enjoy this harmless amusement, I think the minister would be showing a benevolence that would do him credit, if, with paternal solicitude, he ensured that the records of the young were delivered from the hands of the tax-gatherer.<sup>75</sup>

Eamonn O'Neill, the Cumann na nGaedheal representative for the Cork West area, stated that it was 'ridiculous to class gramophone records as luxuries' for records were the only way that 'the poor' got 'in touch with some of the master minds in the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., col. 2044.

<sup>74</sup> See Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 123-4; and p.127.

<sup>75</sup> *Dáil deb.*, xlii, 2042-4 (1 July 1932).

musical world' and how they acquired 'the more popular airs and songs'. He held that

Any form of culture as applied to the lives of the poor ought not to be taxed. Their lives are drab enough and these gramophones are the means of bringing them some brightness. If you go through the smaller towns and cities you will find gramophones installed in the house of the poor. They cannot afford expensive wireless sets, pianos or violins. Gramophones in their cases are essential and I do not think the minister should define them as luxuries.<sup>76</sup>

MacEntee quipped that it seemed, from all of the issues presented to him by the Cumann na nGaedheal opposition and by the independent T.D.s, that there were 'only two classes in the state who would buy gramophone records, the very young and the very poor'. He stated that there was no evidence that this was the case and insisted that the state would not lose revenue 'simply because two or three hundred children purchasing sixpenny records might have to pay two pence more for them.' He also refuted the claim that the cheaper records were purchased by the poorest people, saying that it was actually people in 'fairly comfortable circumstances' who purchased the cheapest records, buying even two or three a week. He complained that as soon as one jazz tune became popular that tune was purchased on record and made 'the lives of their neighbours a misery playing it daily to the end of the week'. MacEntee was adamant, though, that he would not 'give away money' simply to make it easier for people to inflict the 'plague' of ephemeral music of the 'passing kind' on others 'more frequently'. He added that the proportion of 'really good class music' which was recorded on cheaper records was 'insignificantly small' when compared with music 'of the ephemeral kind'. When pressed to define what he meant by 'good music' he said that while he was not a music critic he supposed 'good music' was 'probably music which has lived'. He added that if he heard a deputy singing 'You are the cream in my coffee', he would know that it was not 'a classical number'.<sup>77</sup>

It was this comment that made the headlines in the Irish newspapers the following day.<sup>78</sup> It also caused some reaction in Seanad Éireann, when the finance bill was considered in that house. James Green Douglas, for example, stated that in reaction to MacEntee's suggestions that songs like 'You are the cream in my coffee' were the only type of music available on cheaper records, his family had compiled

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., col. 2047-8.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., col. 2048-9.

<sup>78</sup> See *I.I.*, 2 July 1932 for a good example.

what he termed 'an amazing list of really first-class music' obtainable on British and 'foreign' records. He felt that while the minister might be particularly pleased to know that 'The Protestant boys' and 'No surrender' could be purchased for one shilling and six pence whereas a copy of 'The soldier's song' on record cost two shillings and six pence. The implication was that the more expensive record was of music of better quality. Douglas said that it was 'a very good sign of the times that really good music' could be obtained on cheaper records in Ireland but that the import duty on them was a 'mistake', for it was not intended as a protective measure, or even to encourage an industry, but simply existed for revenue.<sup>79</sup>

Nonetheless, Fianna Fáil maintained taxation on music records at 33 ⅓ per cent of the value of each imported record until early 1937, when the Gramophone Company, Ltd. (H.M.V.), 'the largest firm in the world engaged in the manufacture of gramophone records' established a manufacturing factory in Waterford. Some 100 people were employed at the factory in Waterford, which the minister for industry and commerce, Seán Lemass, claimed would not have been possible if the importation of records into Éire, as the state was now to be known, was encouraged to continue.<sup>80</sup> The industry itself was regarded as being highly significant by the Irish newspapers. The *Irish Times*, for example, reported that the 'prime objective' of the company was 'to meet as completely as possible the demand which has been found to exist all over the country for records of a distinctively Irish and national character'.<sup>81</sup>

Interestingly though, the type of music which the company was reported to be pressing onto the records produced at the Waterford factory was that of 'a popular nature' and created by 'Irish artistes' who were 'steadily building big reputations as entertainers'. 'Splendid' examples given were Clutsam's 'Myrrah'" and Sanderson's 'As I sit here' sung by Hubert Valentine, a tenor from Dublin as well as the baritone, Peter Dawson, singing Percy French's 'Phil the fluter's ball' and O'Brien and Wallace's 'With my shillelagh under my arm'. However, most of the records produced at the factory were confined to other forms of 'lighter and popular music,

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<sup>79</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xv, 1454-5 (21 July 1932).

<sup>80</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1508 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>81</sup> *I.T.*, 3 May 1937.

including dance music', such as waltzes and foxtrots played by the Orchestra Mascotte, Jack Hylton's dance orchestra and Victor Silvester's ballroom orchestra.<sup>82</sup>

The exploration of the relationship between the state and music offers two good examples of how, in the 1930s, Lemass's department managed to break down, to some extent, what Charles Townshend referred to as 'the stranglehold over economic policy previously exerted by the department of finance', although it did not break the general stranglehold of that department itself.<sup>83</sup> Lemass succeeded in convincing MacEntee that, despite the party rhetoric of tariff protectionism and the beginnings of the Anglo-Irish 'economic war' regarding land annuities which would rage until 1938,<sup>84</sup> printed music and 'the paper ruled for writing music in manuscript' be exempted from duties.<sup>85</sup> The idea was, presumably, that while the demand for music manuscript paper was so very small that it would not be viable to initiate a specialised industry in the state, those composers, musicians or music teachers who required it would not be dissuaded from their art by taxation. This is also quite significant, for the fact that the majority of musicians or singers, who learned to play music or sing songs by ear, would have no requirement for such paper, nor was it required for the type of music taught in the school 'singing' class, but it would have been essential for those learning or writing the theory, harmony and mechanics of music of the European 'classical' genre at a more advanced level.

More notably though, in 1937, Lemass had MacEntee discharge the long-standing 33 ⅓ ad valorem duty on imported records 'intended for the reproduction of *music*' by means of the gramophone and impose a set tax of nine pence on all imported records 'designed and constructed for the reproduction of *sound*'.<sup>86</sup> Most deputies in Dáil Éireann seized on this aspect of the duty, discussing those particular words rather than the set duty of nine pence - which was actually a substantial increase on the value of most records, exceeding the value of the cheapest records in some cases.

William Norton, the Labour T.D. for Kildare, claimed that there was 'a considerable difference between music and sound' and that because this tax was now being applied to 'sound' in general, records used for the learning of languages which

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1937.

<sup>83</sup> Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*, p. 138; see also Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 187-95.

<sup>84</sup> See Fanning, *Ir. dept of finance*, pp 276-307.

<sup>85</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlii (2 June 1932).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, lxvi, 1498-9 (22 Apr. 1937).

had to be imported would be adversely affected. Norton claimed that it was 'a tax on knowledge, a tax on education' and thereby a 'very short sighted policy' on behalf of the government. Professor Ernest Alton, one of the Independent T.D.s for Trinity College, Dublin University, agreed that the government was 'doing a disservice to the country, and to education in general' by taxing records that had to be imported. He also pointed out that musical records were also educational, for 'classical music' could be taught in the 'most scientific way from very fine records' which could not always be made in Ireland. He said: 'You can get on these records the greatest artists and the finest performances right into your house to educate our own musicians.'<sup>87</sup>

James Dillon, a founder of the National Centre Party and representative of that party for Donegal, jibed that Professor Alton need not worry unnecessarily for 'some warrior' who had started making records would impart to him "'The Ring" and "The Valkyrie" and the rest of classical music'.<sup>88</sup> 'The deputy', he said, 'will hear his "Six Symphonies" and he will hear "The Ring", but he may have to pay a little more for the pleasure. He will do it in the sacred cause of Irish industry and he can study the names of the board of directors to find out how many of them were born in Ballydehob'.<sup>89</sup> Dillon's comments are very significant when taken in the context of Larchet's remarks that the state of music was so poor in Ireland that there were 'few' people in the state who were 'acquainted with any important works of a later date than Wagner's "Ring of the Nibelungen"'.<sup>90</sup>

Lemass pointed out that most of the deputies who had commented on the duty had misconstrued various aspects of it and clarified that the nine pence duty on imported records was designed to dissuade people from purchasing imported records. He assured the Dáil that the Gramophone Company Ltd. factory in Waterford would manufacture and supply the same records that were supplied in Britain, at the same price, but that any records, language or music, that might not be manufactured in Ireland 'because of scarcity of demand' would have licences issued to have them imported 'free of tax'.<sup>91</sup>

In the establishment of an industry manufacturing music records and the sale of these records in Ireland at a price that was about a third less than those records

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<sup>87</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1498-1508 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>88</sup> Dillon was presumably referring to Richard Wagner's four-opera cycle "Der Ring des Nibelungen" ("The Ring of the Nibelung") which consisted of the opera "Die Walküre" ("The Valkyrie").

<sup>89</sup> A town in county Cork with a reputation for housing artists and craftsmen.

<sup>90</sup> Larchet, 'A plea for music' (N.A.I., FIN/1/2794) - see Appendix A.

<sup>91</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1498-1508 (22 Apr. 1937).

previously imported, Lemass's 'energy and determination', as Townshend puts it, had quite a positive outcome for the development of musical activity in Ireland.<sup>92</sup> Lemass successfully turned de Valera's rhetoric of protecting existing industries or inducing the foundation of new ones through increased taxation on imports, into a small-scale reality.<sup>93</sup> By this time, however, Fianna Fail's policy of economic autarchy had extended to effect music and the development of musical culture in Ireland in areas other than direct taxation on musical instruments and music records.

### 3.7 'Not calculated to encourage native enthusiasm': wireless taxation, 1926-51

The establishment of the broadcasting service in Dublin in 1926 had caused a considerable boon in the initial sale of wireless sets if not to a manufacturing industry in Ireland, which was not economically viable owing to the fact that the majority of wireless apparatus was protected by patents.<sup>94</sup> Once the broadcasting station, 2RN, had begun test-broadcasting in September 1925, a 'growing demand' for wireless apparatus was reported, with there being 'unequaled' sales recorded during Christmas week of that year.<sup>95</sup>

In January 1926, imports of wireless apparatus had totalled £22,099 but this had fallen to £3,387 by January 1927, a dramatic decline of eighty-five per cent. This was the result of the imposition of ad valorem duty of 33 ⅓ per cent, the same as that imposed on imported musical instruments, on all wireless imports in May 1926.<sup>96</sup> W. D. Hogan of Radio House on Henry Street in Dublin reported, for example, that 'owing to the imposition of this meaningless tax, three months after the Dublin station opened the trade in crystal sets had been completely wiped out, and the demands for valve sets are few and far between...the people will not, or cannot, buy, and consequently the trader, the government, and the listener-in all suffer'.<sup>97</sup>

W. J. Byrne, honorary secretary of the Wireless Retailers' Association of Ireland concurred that the trade was already 'in a bad way because of the import

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<sup>92</sup> Townshend, *Ire. twentieth century*, p. 138. See also Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p. 540; Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 187-95.

<sup>93</sup> See also Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p. 540; Lee, *Ire. 1912-1985*, pp 187-95.

<sup>94</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xix, 2273 (11 May 1927).

<sup>95</sup> *I.L.*, 5 Jan. 1926.

<sup>96</sup> *I.T.*, 22 Mar. 1927. See also Appendix E, table 4 for details of approximate net receipts from customs duties on wireless telegraphy apparatus, licence fees and advertising between 1925 and 1951.

<sup>97</sup> *I.T.*, 22 Mar. 1927. Crystal sets were the cheaper form of wireless receiving apparatus which constricted the listener to using earphones and owing to their limited receiving capabilities functioned only in areas closer to the broadcasting station. Valve sets were the more powerful but consequently more expensive wireless receiving mechanisms.

duty', adding that the tax was 'simply killing the trade, and, indeed, all interest in broadcasting'.<sup>98</sup>

In the absence of a domestic manufacturing industry, such a heavy import duty on wireless sets and equipment was also very quickly regarded as a hindrance to the broadcasting service itself which was dependent on the licensing of sets and the revenue from the import taxation for its survival. In 1926, Bryan Cooper voiced his opposition to this taxation on wireless instruments in Dáil Éireann, as he had to the taxation on musical instruments. When the budget for 1926/7 was being discussed Cooper proposed that the rate of taxation be, reduced to 5 per cent at very least. The tax, he said was dissuading the use of the Irish broadcasting service as a 'particular commodity' which was designed to be 'self-supporting'.<sup>99</sup>

Professor William Thrift, the independent T.D. for the National University who had sat on the special Dáil broadcasting committee which had recommended that broadcasting be a state undertaking, agreed that 'restrictions' should not be placed on the use of wireless if the intention was to 'popularise and make it pay for itself'.<sup>100</sup> The response of the minister for posts and telegraphs, J.J. Walsh, the man who had been responsible for the holding of the Aonach Tailteann, was that such taxation was common practice 'in a great many other countries' and that anyone who desired 'the amenities of radio should pay for radio' without burdening 'his next-door neighbour, who may have no particular grádh [love] for wireless music'.<sup>101</sup>

In Seanad Éireann, Thomas Westropp Bennett, a farmer and future chairman of the senatorial house, wondered if the government was intentionally trying to 'diminish the influence' of what he termed 'an almost essential mode of instruction as well as recreation'. Bennett wondered if the policy of the government was actually intended 'to prevent the spread of broadcasting' because the imposition of such a high level of taxation on wireless imports would easily advance that policy. He added that although the tax existed purely 'for the advantage of revenue', revenue would not be produced because the tax simply prevented people from purchasing wireless sets.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *I.T.*, 22 Mar. 1927.

<sup>99</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxv, 1097 (5 May 1926).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1100. See ch.4 for details of the special Dáil committee on broadcasting.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1106-7.

<sup>102</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, vii, 732 (6 July 1926).

The issue reached its zenith in March 1927, when a number of representations, widely commented upon in the main Irish newspapers, were made by various societies interested in the science and development of broadcasting in the country to Ernest Blythe, the minister for finance. A Joint Wireless Committee representing, amongst others, the Wireless Retailers' Association of Ireland, the Cork Radio Association, the Wireless Society of Ireland and the *Irish Radio Review*, requested that the minister discontinue the import duty 'on the ground that it had caused great harm to wireless development in the Free State'. The *Irish Times* claimed that wireless broadcasting in the Irish Free State had 'failed to make the wide popular appeal expected', and that 'the authorities', when informed that the music programmes were unsatisfactory, explained that they were 'as good as their existing revenue from licences' would 'allow them to give'. The paper held that the removal of the 'meaningless' import duty which, it claimed, was 'crippling broadcasting', could only mean 'an increased demand for new licences, more money for programmes, and consequently a more popular broadcasting service'.<sup>103</sup>

It appears that the annual recurrent licence fee of ten shillings did not cause much controversy and was generally felt to have been a reasonable one 'within the means of many thousands of people with limited means'.<sup>104</sup> Daniel Morrissey, a Labour deputy from Tipperary, pointed out in the Dáil, that wireless reception outside of Dublin was not always satisfactory and many people complained that they were compelled to pay licence fees for a purportedly national service which they could not receive. Nonetheless, Morrissey viewed that the fact that people in Tipperary were so concerned about *not* receiving the music programmes that they read about in the newspapers was testament to the quality of the programmes provided. Morrissey paid tribute to the broadcasting station director, Seamas Clandillon, who, despite the meagre finance at his disposal, was providing a service which was broadcasting 'very good musical talent' that Irish people could be 'rather proud of'.<sup>105</sup> However, the import duty on wireless apparatus meant that fewer than expected licences were being taken out and consequently there was less money available to spend on musical programming.

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<sup>103</sup> *I.T.*, 21 Mar. 1927.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 1287 (10 May 1928). See ch. 4 for details.

Ernest Blythe, however, did not succumb to the public pressure to mitigate the import tax on wireless apparatus and announced in his budget speech for 1927/8 that it was simply another good source of revenue.<sup>106</sup> Much disappointment was expressed by those societies which had 'given the question of the tax their careful consideration from every angle, and reached, in all cases, the conclusion that the retention of the tax would be disastrous to Irish broadcasting'.<sup>107</sup> Greater consternation was expressed though at the figure of £19,000 presented by Blythe as the total yield to date from wireless taxation.

James Kitchen, the honorary secretary of the Joint Wireless Committee, wrote to the *Irish Times*, pointing out that the volume of trade carried out by wireless firms in the Irish Free State was not as healthy as Blythe was leading the nation to believe in order to rationalise the continued taxation at 33 ⅓ per cent on all imported wireless sets. Kitchen highlighted the fact that this figure included duties payable by other government departments for various pieces of wireless apparatus, such as the department of defence for the army signal corps equipment, and even by the post office itself for the apparatus of the subsidiary broadcasting station opened in Cork in 1927.<sup>108</sup>

In Dáil Éireann in April 1927, Bryan Cooper again pressed for the import tax be removed, or at least reduced to about 10 per cent for he felt that 33 ⅓ per cent was 'checking development' of the broadcasting service. He pointed out that the service was not 'paying its way' and never would under such a high import duty.<sup>109</sup> W. E. Thrift, the independent T.D. for the National University who had sat on the special Dáil committee on broadcasting and was also the vice-president of the Wireless Society of Ireland, agreed that unless the Irish government took measures to 'foster the development of broadcasting, and not retard it', it would be a long time before the required number of licensees would be achieved to maintain the service.<sup>110</sup>

However, the import duties on wireless apparatus were retained in order to 'raise the necessary revenue to bridge the gap between the revenue received from

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, 2280 (11 May 1927). See Appendix E, table 4.

<sup>107</sup> *T.*, 23 Apr. 1927.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* See also Appendix E, table 4. The station at Cork, formerly opened in April 1927 under the directorate of Seán Neeson, a musician, singer and music lecturer at U.C.C., only functioned as an 'independent programme producing unit' until 1930 when it became, primarily, a relay station for the southern part of the country. See Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 47-8 and pp 73-5 for details.

<sup>109</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xix, 2275 (11 May 1927).

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2277.

licence duties and the expenditure' on the broadcasting service.<sup>111</sup> In 1927, J. J. Walsh and Ernest Blythe, the post and telegraphs and finance ministers respectively, estimated that on the basis of a comparison with the broadcasting project in Britain, and taking into account the rate of uptake immediately after the opening of the stations at Cork and Dublin, the number of wireless licences taken out by the Irish population, would reach 100,000 by 1930.<sup>112</sup> By the time that Fianna Fáil came to government in 1932, though, there were still less than 30,000 wireless licensees in the country.<sup>113</sup> The *Irish Times* reported: 'The preposterous import duty on wireless sets and parts has checked the growth of "listening-in"; and with all due respect to 2RN, its programmes are not calculated to encourage native enthusiasm.'<sup>114</sup>

Yet the ad valorem duties on wireless apparatus and the imported components of wireless receiving sets were not regarded as any hindrance to the popularity of the broadcasting service and were continued by the Fianna Fáil government as good sources of income to the state. Significantly, none of the revenue taken in by the government on wireless import duties or on licence fees was automatically put into the development of the broadcasting service by the department of posts and telegraphs. All revenue created by the service had to be reverted to the exchequer, or state's central fund, to be voted out to the department by the members of Dáil Éireann the following year. Whilst strict control of broadcasting by the department was thus maintained by the department of finance, the output of the broadcasting service suffered for the long-term planning of musical endeavours was made very difficult.<sup>115</sup>

It must also be borne in mind that the annual wireless taxation figures presented, after 1932, by the government as evidence of the increasing interest in broadcasting and the volume of wireless trade, particularly after the Eucharistic Congress, were indeed as misleading as those presented by Blythe in 1927. They included, for example, figures for expensive technical components imported by the government itself for the new high power station at Athlone.<sup>116</sup>

In an attempt to encourage the assembly, as opposed to the manufacture, of wireless sets in the state itself, the new finance minister, Sean MacEntee, raised from

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2280.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2283-4.

<sup>113</sup> See Appendix E, table 4.

<sup>114</sup> *I.T.*, 1 Feb. 1932.

<sup>115</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Appendix E, table 4.

33 ⅓ to 50 per cent ad valorem the tax upon 'any complete apparatus and to any substantial assembly of component parts' in his first budget in 1932, a tax which remained for the duration of the period in question here.<sup>117</sup> Several representatives of the gramophone and radio trade in Dublin were reported to have declared that 'if the wireless business was bad before, these taxes would probably kill it'. It was not thought that the new tax would result in 'any factory being started in the Free State, as the trade would not be sufficient for the purpose unless such factory was given a monopoly'.<sup>118</sup>

Not only then did the Fianna Fáil government policy of economic autarchy extend to affect music and the development of musical culture in Ireland in terms of direct taxation on musical instruments and music records, but it also limited the popularity of and access to the state-run broadcasting service itself by virtue of the increased taxation placed on the importation of wireless receiving sets. Whilst this had much to do with the apparent policy of encouraging a domestic wireless assembly industry in Ireland, it may also have had something to do with prevailing attitudes regarding the regulation of 'foreign' and morally corrosive influences.

### **3.8 'War on jazz': other aspects of musical regulation in the 1930s**

The department of finance was not the only agency culpable for the regulation of music and musical activity by virtue of its taxation policies on the instruments required for the creation of or engagement with that activity. The 1930s saw the introduction of a number of other government proscriptions which impacted on musical activity, some of which were prompted by lobby groups such as the Gaelic League and the Catholic Church.

Among such measures was the committee on 'evil literature' appointed in 1926, for example, to report on the effectiveness of the contemporary censorship laws which concluded that those laws were inadequate, and that the government had a duty to ban all 'morally corrupting' literature. This resulted in the establishment of the Censorship of Publications Board and Censorship of Publications Act, 1929, an act to make provision for the prohibition of 'the sale and distribution of unwholesome literature'.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *I.T.*, 5 Dec. 1946.

<sup>118</sup> *I.T.*, 12 May 1932. See ch. 4.

<sup>119</sup> 1929/1 (16 July 1929).

In musical terms, the Censorship of Films Act, 1923, which provided for 'the official censoring of cinematographic pictures and for other matters connected therewith' was extended after 1930 to censor 'vocal or other sounds', including 'jazz' music, accompanying pictures.<sup>120</sup> This was, undoubtedly, the result of sustained public debates, particularly by members of the Catholic hierarchy regarding the 'morality' of such music and the Gaelic League regarding the type of dancing that it apparently incited, throughout the 1920s. 'Looseness' of dancing-style was equated with 'looseness' of morality and the corrosion of native characteristics, both of music and dancing and of the very nation itself.<sup>121</sup>

As Diarmaid Ferriter has noted, displays of 'unity, and often triumphalism', such as the Eucharistic Congress of 1932, were not the only measure of a prevailing and pervading Catholic ethos in the Ireland of the 1930s.<sup>122</sup> Even an *Irish Times* editorial in 1932 triumphantly reported that 'after many false alarms, the reign of "jazz" seems positively to be drawing to an end. Nobody will shed tears.' It went on to state that 'jazz' music had been 'the product of a particular type of hysteria' and was being replaced by the 'melodies of the Edwardian era' in the ballrooms of Ireland.<sup>123</sup> This was obviously not the case, however, for pastoral letters and letters to the newspapers and articles in Catholic newspapers continued to deplore 'jazz' music and the 'all-night' activity to which it was perceived to be linked - as well as the holding of unlicensed, and often spontaneous gatherings in country houses or crossroad platforms usually involving unlimited amounts of alcohol.<sup>124</sup> By the early 1930s however, the Catholic hierarchy and the Gaelic League had stepped up their campaign against such unlicensed and unsupervised gatherings and launched a public 'war on "jazz"'.

On New Year's Day 1934, 3,000 people from the south Leitrim area and adjoining counties attended a demonstration 'against "jazz"', organised by local clergy, who were also members of the Gaelic League, in Mohill in County Leitrim. The demonstration, including 'five bands' presumably of the military band type, also featured banners bearing slogans such as 'Down with jazz' and 'Out with paganism'.

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<sup>120</sup> Censorship of Films Act, 1923 (1923/23, 16 July 1923); Censorship of Films (Amendment) Act, 1930 (1930/13, 4 June 1930).

<sup>121</sup> See J. H. Whyte, *Church and state in modern Ireland 1923-1979* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dublin, 1979), pp 25-7.

<sup>122</sup> Ferriter, *Transformation of Ireland*, pp 408-9.

<sup>123</sup> *I.T.*, 18 Feb. 1932.

<sup>124</sup> See issues of the *Irish Catholic directory and almanac* or the *Catholic Standard* newspaper in the late 1920s and early 1930s for numerous examples.

Canon Masterson of Mohill, who presided over the demonstration, stated that jazz was 'a menace' to civilisation and religion in Ireland because 'the Irish faith and Irish music' were the only vestiges 'of national life' to have survived after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. Masterson declared that 'the man who would try to defile these two noble heritages was the worst form of traitor and the greatest enemy of the Irish nation'.<sup>125</sup>

The parish priest of Cloone, Father Peter Conefrey, said that 'jazz' was 'far worse than drunkenness or landlordism' and action was needed to be taken by both church and state to eradicate it. He urged the government to ensure that young school teachers 'be trained for the teaching of Irish music and dancing' and that the Garda Síochána be given powers to forbid the organisation of such dances and to compel all dance halls to close at 11 p.m. Conefrey also urged both of the main political parties to put aside their differences and unite to 'put down this "jazz"'.<sup>126</sup>

The secretary of the Gaelic League, Seán Óg O Ceallaigh, who also attended the demonstration, mentioned that the playing of jazz music on the national broadcasting service was unacceptable and stated: 'our minister for finance has a soul buried in jazz and is selling the musical soul of the nation for the dividends of sponsored jazz programmes. He is jazzing every night of the week.'<sup>126</sup> O Ceallaigh added that, as far as he was concerned, Seán MacEntee, the finance minister, knew 'nothing' about nationality and would be the man 'who would kill nationality if nationality was killed in the country'. Ben Maguire, the Fianna Fáil T.D. for Leitrim-Sligo, defended the minister though saying that although 'broadcasting was not as national as it should be' it was unfair to make such a personal attack when MacEntee was not present to defend himself.<sup>127</sup>

Hundreds of letters were reportedly received by the anti-jazz campaigners, amongst them messages of encouragement from the primate of All-Ireland, the Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal MacRory, and the president of the executive council of the Irish Free State and head of the Irish government, Eamon de Valera which were read aloud at the demonstration. De Valera wished the campaign every success with its efforts 'to restore national forms of dancing' and 'the reasonable

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<sup>125</sup> See *I.T.* and *I.I.*, 3 Jan. 1934 for almost identical accounts of the events in Mohill. The Treaty of Limerick signed in 1691 between supporters of James II and supporters of William of Orange in Ireland ended the Williamite war and led to the flight of many Jacobite supporters, 'wild geese', to the European continent and eventually to 'penal laws' against Catholics from 1695.

<sup>126</sup> See ch. 4 for details of sponsored programming on the national broadcasting service.

<sup>127</sup> *I.T.* and *I.I.*, 3 Jan. 1934

hours which have always been associated with Irish entertainment'. MacRory, on the other hand, 'heartily' wished every success to the Gaelic League on the campaign 'against all-night "jazz" dancing' admitting that he knew nothing about jazz except that it 'jazz' dances were 'suggestive and demoralising'. Jazz apart, MacRory said that all-night unsupervised dances were objectionable enough, being 'fruitful' sources 'of scandal and of ruin, spiritual and temporal'.<sup>128</sup>

Of course, like MacRory, few people actually knew what 'jazz' music was, with most relating it to whatever nocturnal or immoral activities they read or heard that it was associated with rather than a form, or forms, of musical expression.<sup>129</sup> Seán Óg O Ceallaigh, the Gaelic League secretary, for example, admitted that he was 'not so much against jazz as against the mentality that it induced' which was 'that things should come nicely and easily', while the dancing that went with Irish music 'put spirit into a man'.<sup>130</sup>

Father Conefrey, the parish priest of Cloone, also revealed that he was often asked 'in good faith' what 'jazz' was and whether or not it excluded waltzes and barn dances. Conefrey said that his usual answer to that question was that any dance which was not 'in keeping with public Christian decency' could not be excluded by the anti-jazz campaign. Furthermore, he stated that Irish people should not even mention the word 'jazz' for 'it was borrowed from the language of the savages of Africa, and its object was to destroy virtue in the human soul'. He added that there was 'nothing that occupied a more important part in the life of the nation than decent Irish dancing' and that de Valera should have been 'ashamed of his face to stand by and allow this conduct'.<sup>131</sup>

The fact that 'jazz' was largely a product of Afro-Caribbean expressive culture from the late nineteenth century in New Orleans meant that it was variably received and often portrayed rather badly in the U.S.A. itself as 'nigger' music. However, the fact that it had been adopted by the young, affluent, rebellious and defiant post-war generation meant that it was also another term for 'modern' or 'popular' music of the day. It was, therefore, all the more offensive to those who disapproved of the new social mores ushered in by the 'Roaring Twenties'. Thus,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, xii, pp 903-15 for a treatment of the meaning of the word 'jazz' and details of the origin and development of 'jazz' music in the period in question here.

<sup>130</sup> *I.T.*, 11 Jan. 1934.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 9 Feb. 1934.

because of its dual, 'black' and 'modern', associations, it was initially received in Britain and Ireland from the U.S.A. as the epitome of the worst of base primeval instincts and loose morality.<sup>132</sup>

Yet, as in its country of origin, it was adopted as modern music by dance bands for its lively, syncopated rhythms which were guaranteed to simply get people dancing and for which novel dances such as the jitterbug or foxtrot were introduced. However, debates continued to rage in the late 1920s amongst musicians, in England in particular, about the merits of jazz as a musical genre. Sir Henry Coward, a conductor, choirmaster and music lecturer at Sheffield University, for example, claimed that jazz, no matter how it was played, was 'the essence of vulgarity'.<sup>133</sup>

Jack Hylton, of Jack Hylton's Dance Orchestra countered that jazz should not be judged after hearing it played by a four or five piece band any more than a Beethoven symphony could not be judged properly after hearing it played by a small café orchestra. Hylton, who had also convincingly debated the merits of playing jazz on the B.B.C. radio, pointed out that composers like Wagner had once been branded as 'vulgar' too. As far as Hylton was concerned, though, those who opposed jazz music were really only concerned with the 'fat dividends' which dance orchestras playing that type of music were drawing when those playing more 'old-fashioned' music had 'empty concert halls'.<sup>134</sup>

This may also have been a less obvious factor in the Gaelic League's opposition to 'jazz', meaning popular and modern dance music, for dance halls playing such music provided the main competition for the dances or céilíthe held by the league itself. The 'céilí' was initiated by the London branch of the Gaelic League, towards the end of the nineteenth century, as a new form of 'Irish' social activity and was based on the Scottish céilí, or social, evenings of music, song and dance held in London. By the 1920s, the Irish version of the céilí had come to consist more of an evening of group dancing with musical accompaniment at which use of the Irish language was encouraged. However, because most of the dances were 'sets, quadrilles and waltzes' danced to 'Irish' tunes, they were considered to be of dubious 'un-Irish' origin. The Gaelic League had to employ collectors to find more authentic

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<sup>132</sup> See *I.T.*, 6 Aug. 1927, for an article entitled 'Nigger music comes from the devil'.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1927.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

group or figure dances in Ireland to be danced at their functions. Most of these dances came from Cork and Kerry.<sup>135</sup>

Following the New Year's Day demonstration at Mohill in 1934, letters were sent to almost every teaching organisation, every local committee, every county council and every national body considered relevant in the state, including G.A.A. clubs and Garda social clubs around the country, which had suffered heavy criticism for advertising 'all-night' or 'jazz' dancing events, requesting the national adoption of a number of resolutions against jazz and 'foreign dances'. These resolutions drafted by the Gaelic League called for legislation limiting and regulating the use of dance halls, for the exclusion of children under sixteen years of age from all entertainments and for the exclusion from all entertainments, public or private, of dances 'of an objectionable nature'. They also called for a nationwide condemnation of the playing of jazz music on the national broadcasting station, something which the Gaelic League held to be 'against Christianity, learning and the spirit of nationality'. The league requested that its resolutions be adopted by every body and committee and the government be petitioned so as to prevent social erosion, such as 'young ladies smoking people'.<sup>136</sup>

By branding those who supported the 'jazz' or more modern music and dance forms as 'traitors' attempting to undermine the intelligence, characteristic morality and indigenous musical expression of the nation, the Gaelic League subtly attempted to undermine the competition. This was certainly the suspicion of Father P. Vaughan, the president of St Flannan's College in Ennis in County Clare who stated that 'national' music was not being abandoned at all by the national broadcasting station for it broadcast 'Irish music every night without exception'.<sup>137</sup> The evidence shows that this was in fact the case.<sup>138</sup> Thus, Vaughan asked the Gaelic League for a definition of 'jazz', adding that he thought that there was 'something else, other than sincerity, behind this agitation against what is called "jazz"'.<sup>139</sup>

Opinion against jazz, however that was interpreted, was not unanimous everywhere. At a meeting of Dublin Vocational Committee held to consider the Gaelic League resolutions and campaign, for example, one committee member J.P.

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<sup>135</sup> Vallely (ed.), *Irish trad. music*, pp 60-64.

<sup>136</sup> *I.T.*, 12 Jan. 1934.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1934.

<sup>138</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>139</sup> *I.T.*, 27 Jan. 1934.

Dooge, described the campaign as 'most nonsensical' and the committee, being divided four votes to three against the league's resolutions, eventually decided not to take any action on them.<sup>140</sup> Yet the Gaelic Leagues resolutions combined with their clerical sanctioning was convincing enough elsewhere so that within a couple of months seven county councils had adopted resolutions urging the general banning of 'jazz' with Sligo County Council explicitly declaring it contrary to the spirit of Irish Christianity and Irish nationality.<sup>141</sup>

However, P.T. McGinley, the acting president of the Gaelic League, reminded league members that although the campaign against jazz had become one of the main issues for the league and that they would remain 'the determined enemies of jazz' this was only a small part of their agenda. McGinley told a branch of the Gaelic League in Dublin, newly-formed following the anti-jazz demonstration, that not only were they 'against jazz' but 'against all things foreign in this country and wanted to get back to native culture', the first step being to destroy 'every trace of English culture in Ireland'.<sup>142</sup>

### **3.9 Taxation on dances and musical entertainments**

The Fianna Fáil government eventually succumbed to the pressure of the sustained campaign by the Gaelic League and the Catholic hierarchy and the Public Dance Halls Act was passed in 1935. Significantly, this act did not refer specifically to any type of music or musical activity but provided for 'the licensing, control and supervision of places used for public dancing, and to make provision for other matters connected with the matters aforesaid'.<sup>143</sup>

All venues where any form of dancing took place, henceforth, required a licence, which could only be obtained by persons of 'good character' from a district judge and no dancing could legally occur without a licence. Consequently, the personal musical taste of the judge often dictated whether or not a musical event which included dancing was granted a licence. As Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin notes, the act was 'misapplied as often as it was applied' with much 'confused interpretation'

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1934.

<sup>141</sup> *I.P.*, 26 Jan. 1934.

<sup>142</sup> *I.T.*, 11 Jan. 1934.

<sup>143</sup> Public Dance Halls Act, 1935 (1935/2, 19 Feb. 1935).

and where a blind eye was turned in one area it was not in another.<sup>144</sup> The overall result, however, was a crackdown on crossroad-dancing, spontaneous music-making and dancing in private houses, something which raised further issues.

Many house dances, for example, were often held as ‘benefits’ to collect funds for local members of political groups such as the I.R.A. and the Blueshirts or for destitute families in the local community but this ‘service’ was wiped out as such gatherings became ‘prime targets’ for raiding by the Garda Síochána or the clergy. On the other hand, many parochial halls were built in the late 1930s with the dancing, usually céilí and waltzing, therein supervised by clerics.<sup>145</sup>

Whilst there had been some initial controversy about the foreign origins of the ‘rinncidhe fóirne’, or group dances, such as the four- and eight-hand reels, being collected by the Gaelic League in the late 1920s and early 1930s, some of the more acceptable dances to be danced at céilídhthe would be published in the official handbooks of the Irish Dancing Commission between 1939 and 1969. These included dances by such titles as ‘The walls of Limerick’, ‘The waves of Tory’ and ‘The rakes of Mallow’. The popularity of the céilí had quickly spread from London to Ireland and the U.S.A. in the 1920s, and although largely for the purposes of musical volume, had been promoted on the national broadcasting station.<sup>146</sup> By the mid-1930s, neatly coinciding with their campaign against more modern forms of dancing on moral and national grounds, céilídhthe, meaning social evenings or dances, were being held by the Gaelic League, and indeed many organisations for a variety of purposes, all over the country.<sup>147</sup>

This, in turn, meant the dislocation of the type of music required for this type of dancing from the more private sphere of the house dance setting to the local hall. Because of the need for volume and endurance for more demanding dancing patterns ‘céilí bands’ or groups of musicians playing traditional music began to replace the solo instrumentalist who had previously sufficed in a more intimate setting. Instruments such as piano and brass were introduced meaning that traditional tunes in older modes and using notes and ornamentations incompatible with such instruments were often ‘modernised’ or simply abandoned. Céilí bands were thus

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<sup>144</sup> Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, ‘Dancing on the hobs of hell: rural communities in Clare and the Dance Halls Act of 1935’ in *New Hibernia Review*, ix, no.4 (2005), p.11.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> See ch.4.

<sup>147</sup> Valley (ed.), *Irish trad. music*, pp 60-64.

founded, or at very least local musicians were thus organised, for the purposes of providing music for the céilí dances, in almost every small town in Ireland and even, as already noted, within the Garda Síochána. As Ó hAllmhuráin has commented, though, this was a significant source of change in local cultural and musical activity in Ireland with the commercial potential of the local licensed hall allowing the céilí band to be 'facilitated in becoming a key feature of Irish musical life'.<sup>148</sup>

Although the Fianna Fáil government had capitulated to the Gaelic League and Catholic clergy by ensuring that all dancing was held in prescribed and supervised venues to ensure the moral decency of the Irish nation with the one hand, they benefited from the tax revenue yielded by such activity with the other. The scope of the 'entertainments duty', which had been introduced in 1916 under the British administration enforcing the payments of duties on admission fees to various entertainments for the purposes of raising public revenue and preserved under Cosgrave's administration, was extended substantially by the Fianna Fáil government.

'Entertainments' had been defined by the Finance (New Duties) Act, 1916, as 'any exhibition, performance, amusement, game or sport' to which persons were admitted for payment.<sup>149</sup> Certain exemptions were applicable to musical entertainments for charitable or educational purposes. These included most performances by the army and police bands.<sup>150</sup> However, after 1932, the 'entertainments' tax was now extended to cover *all* forms of entertainment which charged an admission fee, including many dances which had been previously exempted. The manager of the Metropole Ballroom in Dublin, was reported to have condemned the extension of the tax to dances as one 'bound to irritate the public'. He explained that dances were usually held by various sports and social clubs, with the ballroom of the 1930s being 'an annex almost to the home', 'where everyone knows everyone else', and maintained that the results would not justify the tax. 'The cost', he said, 'of officials, collectors and the general control of entry to dance halls would exceed the revenue so gained.'<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, 'Dancing on the hobs of hell', pp 17-8.

<sup>149</sup> Parts of this act are cited and discussed in Thekla J. Beere, 'Cinema statistics in Saorstát Éireann' in *JSSISI*, xv, no.6 (1935/6), pp 83-110.

<sup>150</sup> *F.J.*, 16 Aug. 1923. This article notes that the exemption of the entertainments tax was instrumental in allowing for the presence of the bands at many events and also for the attendance of so many people at them.

<sup>151</sup> *I.T.*, 12 May 1932.

This point was also raised in Dáil Éireann by the former finance minister, Ernest Blythe, who assumed that those who had proposed the extension of the entertainments tax had 'mostly in mind dances in Dublin'. He said that his 'inquiries' had disclosed to him that, as it was, many dances across the country already operated at a loss, for the people who attended them would not pay higher prices for admission tickets. Any added duty, Blythe claimed, would enforce the organisers of dances to raise the admission prices and, in the case of 'the present financial conditions prevailing', dances would cease, hotel ballrooms would 'be left idle and unused' and 'waiters and musicians' would be unemployed.<sup>152</sup>

Professor Patrick McGilligan, the former industry and commerce minister, agreed that about 75 per cent of dances held in Ireland could not be described as 'economic ventures' and stated that the main consequence of the extended entertainment tax would be unemployment.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, the census figures show that while the number of musicians that there were in the country declined overall from 492 to 468 between 1926 and 1936, the rate of unemployment amongst those musicians rose from 7 to 10 per cent. What is also quite striking is that the number of 'self-employed' musicians also rose from 21 to 30 per cent in the same period.<sup>154</sup>

Brook Brasier, an independent T.D. for Cork East, pointed out that the local dance was one of the means 'whereby the teaching of music in remote counties is helped. In many cases musicians, for a very small charge per head, are able to earn a living.'<sup>155</sup> Apart from the unemployment of musicians, the extension of the entertainment tax to dances also raised questions about what exactly constituted a 'dance'. Whilst charity dances or 'balls' continued to be generally exempted from taxation, deputies in Dáil Éireann wondered whether or not 'ceilidhthe' were included in the tax. In July 1932, though, Seán MacEntee confirmed that only those céilidhthe held under the auspices of the Gaelic League were exempt from taxation, even if they were for financial gain and charged admission fees, because they were run by what was considered as 'an educational association'.<sup>156</sup>

Measures to deal with entertainments that were also or 'predominantly' educative had been debated in the late 1920s. Because it had been concluded,

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<sup>152</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xliii, 146 (5 July 1932).

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 156-7.

<sup>154</sup> See Appendix F, table 7.

<sup>155</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xliii, 148 (5 July 1932).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 345 (7 July 1932).

however, on a number of occasions by both government and opposition deputies that it was very difficult to determine 'where education ends and where amusement begins', it was decided that any group or institutions which applied for an exemption would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.<sup>157</sup>

Whilst most deputies alluded to performances by various literary and dramatic societies as examples of educative entertainments, Richard Anthony, the Labour representative for Cork Borough, referred to musical institutions and groups such as the 'Cork Operatic Society'. These societies, he said, met with 'very great discouragement' for 'having devoted considerable time to educating themselves, and incidentally the public', they incurred 'considerable financial loss' at the end of each concert season.<sup>158</sup> This was an enduring problem which John Larchet had also highlighted in the 'plea for music' in 1923. Larchet had claimed that every orchestral or choral society which had been formed over the previous two hundred years 'underwent the same humiliating experience, the same mortifying and ceaseless struggle to find the necessary artistic and financial support for its bare existence, until it finally died of neglect'. He concluded that 'the further back one goes the more one is convinced that the same condition has always existed'.<sup>159</sup>

In 1929, Richard Anthony called for the government to intervene in the interests of encouraging educative entertainment and culture of a higher standard, by 'indemnifying these societies against loss' once they proved to the satisfaction of the minister that they were of 'educational or cultural character'.

This loss would not be much to the state, but it means a very great deal to these societies, which are striving gallantly against tremendous odds to produce the best works both in drama and music for our people. It is within my knowledge that even an alien government did not look with disfavour on the early activities of the Gaelic League, as the British government used to exempt, in London at any rate, certain Gaelic League entertainments from the amusement tax on special occasions, such as St. Patrick's night and so on.<sup>160</sup>

Whilst the Cumann na nGaedheal government ignored the 'educational character' of most societies which claimed it, the then finance minister, Blythe, did exempt all Gaelic League entertainments from the entertainment tax on the basis of their educational association, a position which would last for the rest of the period in

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<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx, 1618-30 (21 June 1929).

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1625.

<sup>159</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>160</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1626 (21 June 1929).

question – and a point highlighted by MacEntee when questioned about the continuation of the exemption in 1932.

James Dillon, of the National Centre Party, queried: ‘I take it the minister is not serious when he says that if I take part in the “Waves of Tory” I pay no tax, but if I take part in a foxtrot I do?’ Michael Hayes, the former ceann comhairle, now sitting for the National University, responded that he had ‘done both’ and pointed out that he had paid no tax at certain dances where “The Waves of Tory” was danced, even if the English language was spoken, but that dances at which the ‘fox-trot’ was danced were liable for taxation, even if Irish only was spoken.<sup>161</sup> Patrick Hogan, a labour representative for Clare, expressed his personal opinion that ‘the genius of a nation’ found expression in its music, sport and games but that any inference that Irish people were discriminating against other forms of these cultural activities or entertainment was ‘not right’. Irish people, he said, had to discriminate, not against others, but ‘in favour of our own.’<sup>162</sup>

While MacEntee admitted that there were such ‘anomalies’ inherent in the administration of the entertainments tax, he snidely attributed their origin to ‘the wisdom’ of his predecessor in government, stating that, having ‘no desire to reform the world’, he himself would uphold, as a good source of revenue, the extended taxation and its inherited exemptions. He estimated that the revenue yielded from the entertainments tax to the finance department for the year 1932/3 would be about £59,000, £25,000 of which would come from dances alone.<sup>163</sup> MacEntee reminded the Dáil that not only was he ‘minister for finance for a Fianna Fáil party’ but he was also the minister ‘charged to serve the whole people of this country and to procure on their behalf the moneys to carry on the public services’ they deemed necessary.<sup>164</sup>

### **3.10 Ballrooms, dance halls and the employment of musicians**

In 1946, the entertainments tax was revoked by Fianna Fáil. This occurred under the ministry of Frank Aiken, not because it was perceived as an ‘unjust tax’ but because he apparently believed it proved too difficult to collect, particularly in more remote country areas.<sup>165</sup> Interestingly, Aiken abolished a tax which was actually a good

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., xliii, 343-5 (7 July 1932).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., col. 386.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., col. 363.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., col. 393.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., cxvi 1165-6 (22 June 1949).

source of revenue and which does not appear to have been that difficult to collect. The amount collected had almost tripled from about £50,000 in 1942/3 to £148,000 in 1945/6, which indicates that despite the tax, there were more dances and thereby more musical activity.<sup>166</sup>

Perhaps, the remittance of the tax had something to do then with fact that Frank Aiken was married to Maud Davin, a prominent and active woman in the Irish music network. At the time her husband was finance minister, Maud Aiken, a former director of the municipal school of music in Dublin, was a governor of the R.I.A.M., becoming a vice-president of that institution in 1950.<sup>167</sup> By that time, the finance minister of the new coalition government under the leadership of John A. Costello and the Fine Gael party, was Professor Patrick McGilligan, who had concurrently held the industry and commerce and the external affairs portfolios under the Cumann na nGaedheal administration. McGilligan presided over his new ministry with, what F.S.L. Lyons termed, 'stern austerity'.<sup>168</sup>

McGilligan had, in 1932, opposed the extension, by Fianna Fáil, of the entertainment tax to dances, arguing that about seventy-five per cent of dances could not be considered as 'economic ventures' and the main result of the extended entertainment tax would be unemployment. In 1950, however, he re-imposed the very same tax upon all dances that were held within three miles of every centre of population of 500 persons or more in the country. This was a fact pointed out to him in Dáil Éireann by his predecessor Frank Aiken, now a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Louth, who had abolished the tax as a 'bad tax in every way.'<sup>169</sup>

Thomas O'Higgins, a Fine Gael T.D. for Cork Borough, in turn, criticised Aiken for his disparagement of McGilligan, pointing out, that in light of the reason why he had abolished the tax, his opposition to the tax was now 'merely just another exhibition of Fianna Fáil's determination to play any little game that may find any little support for them anywhere in the country.' He said that the people of Ireland would recognise that this was a fair tax when balanced against the provision of 'increased social services for the people generally' and the simultaneous remission of income tax for those on lower incomes.<sup>170</sup> It is particularly striking, that

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., cxxi, 170 (14 June 1950).

<sup>167</sup> Pine & Acton (eds) *To talent alone*, pp 452-53.

<sup>168</sup> Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, p. 562.

<sup>169</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxvi, 1156 (22 June 1949).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., col. 1167.

McGilligan's general expansionist policies, sat, as Alvin Jackson observes, rather well with those 'mulled over' by Séan Lemass when he held the industry and commerce portfolio, although they 'certainly outraged some of the more conventional thinkers on the Fianna Fáil frontbench', like Aiken and MacEntee.<sup>171</sup>

Michael Fitzpatrick, the Clann na Poblachta T.D. for Dublin North-West, disagreed with the McGilligan's tax saying that it had been brought to his notice that as a result of reports of its re-imposition, dances in 'all the ballrooms in the city' and 'a number in the country' had been cancelled. The result, he said, would be that 'members of the bands' would be out of employment.

Generally, the position will be that people earning their livelihood in ballrooms and dance halls will be knocked out of employment and naturally they will go back on the dole. They will be collecting back some of the revenue brought in. It is to be remembered, too, that a number of the men engaged in orchestras on seven days a week pay a big amount in income-tax. If they lose their employment and their income there will be no income-tax to get from them. Instead, they will have to seek unemployment money.<sup>172</sup>

Fitzpatrick, who was a prominent republican, trade union organiser and former chief of staff of the I.R.A. who had spent some time making contacts in the communist Soviet Union in the late 1920s, had a personal vested interest in the abolition of the tax, for he was also involved with a number of social clubs, including the Balalaika Ballroom in the Parnell Square area of Dublin.<sup>173</sup>

However, John McCann, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for the Dublin South-Central constituency and a future lord mayor of the city, agreed that Fitzpatrick had made 'a very sensible and sound case', for since the remission of the tax in 1946, money had been put into the setting up of a number of ballrooms and dance halls in Dublin city. McCann, who had also been a governor of the R.I.A.M., said that his concern was more for musicians, rather than dance hall proprietors, and claimed that the minister had not acknowledged a request made by the Irish Federation of Musicians (I.F.M.) on 31 May 1949 to meet with him. The I.F.M., which had a membership of about 600 musicians and was based in Dublin, had been founded in 1936 and registered as a trade union in 1944 and was particularly active in the late 1940s in campaigning for Irish jobs for Irish musicians. This was one of six such professional bodies for musicians in existence in the independent Irish state during the period in question,

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<sup>171</sup> Jackson, *Ire. 1798-1998*, p.310.

<sup>172</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxvi, 1161 (22 June 1949).

<sup>173</sup> Brian Hanley, *The I.R.A. 1926-1936* (Dublin, 2002), p. 192.

three of which had only been founded in the late 1930s and 1940s.<sup>174</sup> This particular organisation aimed 'to secure and maintain proper terms and conditions of employment' for its members who earned their living 'in whole or in part' as musicians.<sup>175</sup>

Although McCann showed him a copy of their letter, McGilligan claimed that he had not received any such request but McCann informed him that the federation assured him that the tax would affect 'some hundreds of their members, either full-time or part-time', something which the Fine Gael T.D. for the Kildare constituency, Gerard Sweetman, dismissed as: 'nonsense!' This infuriated McCann who exclaimed:

Perhaps when these men lose their employment the minister for industry and commerce will offer them employment on the bogs. We shall have the spectacle then of violinists and pianists at the labour exchange being offered work at Clonsast. When they refuse to do that work, we shall have the spectacle of them looking for unemployment assistance.<sup>176</sup>

Peadar Cowan, a former captain in the state army and a founder member of Clann na Poblachta, sitting for Dublin North-East, agreed, adding that a probable revenue yield of about £75,000 did not justify the widespread unemployment of musicians. He added that it was 'no time for doing anything that may disturb people in their employment' and 'certainly not a time for creating conditions that may lead to unemployment.'<sup>177</sup>

However, Alfred Byrne, an independent T.D. for Dublin North-East, a former senator and lord mayor of Dublin, insisted that this would happen because of the substantial numbers of musicians involved in dance bands in the 1940s. He said that while the 'average-sized' band in Dublin city in the 'biggest and best halls' comprised twelve to fourteen members, these bands would now be faced with reducing their numbers to six or eight musicians, for dance hall proprietors would, in looking to reduce expenses, employ smaller bands with fewer musicians to pay. This however would mean that the quality of music at dances would be less lessened and

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<sup>174</sup> The other five bodies were Irish Musical Fund (1787), The Leinster Society of Organists and Choirmasters (1919), Musicians' Section, Cork No.2 Branch, Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (1934), The Music Teacher's Association (Cork) (1936), The Music Association of Ireland (1948).

<sup>175</sup> Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ire.*, pp 101-102.

<sup>176</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxvi, 1169 (22 June 1949). Clonsast was a vast area of bog in Co Offaly that supplied fuel to the Electricity Supply Board power station at Portarlinton, which had just opened in 1949.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1170.

the dances themselves deemed less successful, because dancers required 'a band sufficiently good for the music to be heard from one end of the hall to the other', something only a 'full band' of at least ten members could achieve.<sup>178</sup>

Bernard Butler, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for the Dublin South-West constituency and a serving governor of the R.I.A.M., picked up on this point expressing particular concern for the knock-on effect this would have 'training in music, vocal and instrumental'. He commented that, in his view, such 'training' had already deteriorated much over the previous thirty or forty years due to 'the gramophone, the wireless and the tinned music that we have in the cinema'. He said that while he was 'not blaming the present government in any way' for a state of affairs that had 'existed for a long time', the re-imposition of the entertainment tax on dances might result in a reduction in the number of musicians 'or the possibility of employment for them' and thereby dissuade people from getting any training in music at all.<sup>179</sup>

James Coburn, a Fine Gael T.D. for Louth, agreed with Butler's sentiments in the sense that he was disparaging in his attitudes towards the music provided at dances by dance bands, saying:

We have had it advocated here that it will do away even with our culture and drive out the love of music from our people. We used to be very renowned for that, but surely no one on the opposite side will attempt to argue that there is music in dance bands. The more canned music they get in a dance band, the more they like it nowadays. I happen to know a wee bit of music and have a good ear, and I know good music when I hear it.<sup>180</sup>

However Coburn also disagreed with Butler's position in that he did not subscribe to 'the gloomy forebodings that a terribly catastrophe' was going to befall the state, in terms of unemployment and lack of amusement, as result of the tax.<sup>181</sup> This was supported by McGilligan who claimed that while there about 700 registered dance halls in the country about 250 of these would be free from paying any tax because they were not in a three mile radius of a centre of population of 500 people or more.<sup>182</sup>

Evidence gleaned from the census reports suggests that, despite all the debate in Dáil Éireann, no catastrophe did actually befall musicians employed in dance halls as an occupational group in the state in the period 1922 to 1951. In fact, while the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., col. 1191-2.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., col. 1202.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., col. 1211-12.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., col. 1211.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., col. 1193.

total number of musicians in Ireland declined by 23 per cent from 857 in 1926 to 662 in 1936, the number of musicians employed in 'other entertainments and sports', the census grouping under which dance band musicians would most likely have been categorised, actually increased by 12 per cent from 230 to 258 for the same period. And while the total number of musicians increased somewhat between 1936 and 1946, the number of musicians likely to have been employed in dance bands was in fact slightly higher than the number for 1926. Furthermore, although the total number of musicians had continued to increase between 1946 and 1951 to 810, this number was still less than it had been in 1926, but the number of musicians employed in dance bands and the like was 246. This was more than it had been at the outset of the period and prior to the extension of the entertainments tax to dances by the Fianna Fáil administration.<sup>183</sup>

### **3.11 Musicians, cinema and variety theatre**

What is even more striking about the census information over the period between 1922 and 1951 though, is that the number of musicians employed in the picture houses, cinemas and theatres of Ireland declined dramatically in the middle of the period. Even as early as 1929 the governors of the R.I.A.M. had reported that a marked decline had occurred in the numbers of students attending instrumental classes, such as piano and strings, at the academy, which they attributed 'to the abolition of the small orchestras in the cinemas' which it felt deprived pupils of an 'opening for their abilities.'<sup>184</sup>

While the total number of musicians in Ireland decreased by 23 per cent between 1926 and 1936, the number of those musicians employed in cinemas and theatres actually decreased by a very significant 53 per cent to 158 in the same period, a figure which was 10 less than the number of musicians employed in the same area in 1911, when cinema was only beginning to become popular and there were far fewer picture houses. This figure also represented a proportion of 24 per cent of all employed musicians in employment in cinemas compared with 39 per cent employed in dance halls and other entertainment venues. This may indicate, as Michael Fitzpatrick, a Dublin ballroom owner and a Clann na Poblachta T.D., did in 1950, that musicians who were 'originally employed in theatres and picture houses in

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<sup>183</sup> See Appendix F, table 11.

<sup>184</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1929*, p. 17.

the 1920s and early 1930s had by the late 1930s and early 1940s 'started again to find reasonable employment in the ballrooms where they were engaged nightly'.<sup>185</sup>

However, the numbers of those employed in cinemas and theatres did also increase somewhat to 243 by 1946 so that the proportions of musicians employed there and those employed in dance halls were almost even at about 34 per cent. By 1951 though, the number of musicians employed in venues like cinemas appears to have increased to 394 by 1951.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, the total number of musicians employed in the areas of cinema, dance halls and broadcasting put together had increased by a substantial 13 per cent when compared with the percentage of those employed in 'professions', as organists and the like, which remained around 10 per cent by 1951.<sup>187</sup> There is evidence then that government policy towards entertainment in the form of taxation actually had a serious direct effect on musical activity in Ireland, particularly in the cinemas and particularly in the years between the 1920s and the early 1940s.

One method of reproducing music that had been exempted from direct taxation under both the Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil administrations was that of cinema film 'designed and constructed for the reproduction of music in conjunction with the exhibition of pictures'. This could be viewed as somewhat unusual for MacEntee had, in the opposition benches, supported a proposal by his predecessor Blythe to increase the tax on 'sound films' or 'talkies' in 1931, from one penny to three pence per linear foot of film. This was intended to serve as a form of 'compensation' to those who 'earned their living by following music as a profession' after the introduction of the sound film had 'enabled every picture house in the Saorstát to dispense with its orchestra.' At the time MacEntee had said:

We know that in the largest picture-houses in Dublin the orchestra has been entirely dispensed with and these Dublin citizens who formerly earned their living as members of these orchestras are, many of them, now facing destitution. I believe that some of them ultimately will either be compelled to emigrate or will be supported out of public funds. Merely as compensation for the public moneys which would be spent in supporting those disemployed [sic] members of the orchestras, the tax on sound film would be justifiable.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxxi, 1717 (14 June 1950).

<sup>186</sup> This figure also included those musicians involved in radio broadcasting in that year.

<sup>187</sup> See Appendix G, tables 11 & 12.

<sup>188</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxix, 1581 (8 July 1931).

The proposal was not carried however and all cinema films which produced sound themselves or were accompanied by a sound record were taxed at the same rate as the silent ones.

MacEntee continued this level of duty on film when he came to office but now intended to 'compensate' musicians by charging to the public an increased rate of 'entertainments tax' upon the admission fee paid by cinema-goers for the pleasure of hearing a sound film and recorded music, as opposed to a performance which was 'wholly or mainly' live or 'personal'. A personal performance referred specifically to 'a dramatic performance', 'a musical concert, whether vocal or instrumental', or both, or 'a number of variety turns such as are ordinarily given in a music-hall'. Certain tax concessions were given to theatres though, such as 'The Royal, 'The Capitol' and 'The Olympia' in Dublin in respect of letters-patent issued under an act of parliament in 1786, although the same principles applied to them.<sup>189</sup>

It was this issue of taxation on musical entertainment at cinemas, theatres and dances and the resultant implications for the employment of musicians at these venues, rather than taxation on musical instruments or records, which now defined the direct relationship of the finance ministry of the inter-party coalition government with music between 1948 and the end of the period in question. The new finance minister, Professor Patrick McGilligan, not only re-imposed a previously abolished tax on dances at which musicians were employed but he also amended MacEntee's financial resolution of 1936 to restrict tax exemptions to theatres which promoted 'wholly' personal performances only. However, concessions to the patented theatres were to be continued for they were deemed by McGilligan to have 'always had cine-variety shows and 'genuine' variety shows. Patrick Lehane, a Clann na Talmhan T.D. for Cork South, protested at this preferential treatment that the patent theatres in Dublin appeared to be getting from the government. He claimed that there was in Cork, a theatre which produced a 'very real and genuine' variety show and which was prepared to appoint 'a permanent orchestra' of ten to twelve musicians, in addition to employing various acts each week. He said:

The fact of having a permanent orchestra of about twelve musicians would be a definite advantage to the city and county of Cork. I think that the minister should have a little regard to this particular theatre in Cork which is really genuine and which would give considerable employment. It would also be of

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., lxi, 114-151 (2 May 1936). See also Beere, 'Cinema statistics in Saorstát Éireann' in *JSSISI*, xv, no.6 (1935/6), pp 83-110.

assistance in various ways in advancing culture and music by having about twelve musicians permanently employed. These people would be able to give tuitions, and so forth, in their spare time.<sup>190</sup>

McGilligan's predecessor, Seán MacEntee, also criticised McGilligan's policy, claiming that he had introduced the original tax concession for the purpose of encouraging the employment of musicians through the production of variety shows by cinema theatres. The former industry and commerce minister, Seán Lemass concurred that the effect of the duty would now be 'to give no advantage to the cinema which employs any live artists and disemployment among musicians and cinema artists' would result. McGilligan, argued that, on the contrary, many cinemas had simply 'pretended to go over to variety' to evade tax but that no extra employment had really been given to musicians and that any cinema manager who was truly concerned for the employment of its musicians would be welcome to 'go the whole way and have completely personal performances' to avail of a tax concession.<sup>191</sup>

McGilligan stated that there were, in 1948, about 360 'picture houses' in the state, 248 of which claimed to have 'live' shows, where 'they got someone in to play a tin-whistle or strum the piano or play about with a melodeon or something like that' prior to the showing of a picture, simply for the purposes of a tax concession. Even, the Clann na Poblachta T.D. for Dublin North-West and ballroom owner, Michael Fitzpatrick admitted that he 'had got away without paying the tax by having a few duds on the stage' for an hour or so.<sup>192</sup> A further 11 of the 360 picture houses claimed to give variety performances only for the purposes of tax exemption but were not 'in the habit of feeing variety artistes'. McGilligan also said that because the cinemas in question, located in Lucan, Navan, Oldcastle, Kilcullen, Kildare, Naas, Baltinglass, Portlaoise and Moville 'could not employ 400 or 500 even in five years' claims by various deputies that this number of musicians faced unemployment as a result of the tax were exaggerated.<sup>193</sup>

However, the evidence provided by the census reports suggest that while a number such as 500 may not have been accurate, for there were not, as McGilligan implied, that many musicians even employed in the sector as a whole, a substantial

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<sup>190</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cx, 1695 (19 May 1948).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1084-7.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, cxvi, 1160 (22 June 1949).

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, cx, 2088-9 (19 May 1948).

number of musicians did appear to have suffered unemployment as a direct result of the introduction of sound films and records in the cinema. John McCann, a Fianna Fáil representative for Dublin South-Central and a former R.I.A.M. governor, continued to disagree vehemently with McGilligan saying that he had it on 'good authority' that between 300 and 500 variety artistes would be put out of employment and appealed to the minister to repeal his rewording of the tax exemption which he said had been introduced, in the first place, 'to give Irish artistes a chance of replacing bluenose Cockney comedians on the Irish stage.'<sup>194</sup>

### **3.12 The 'invasion' of 'non-national' musicians, 1948-51**

This was something which had also concerned John Larchet in 1922 when he claimed that music meant songs 'and nothing else but songs' to the majority of Irish people and identified only one hybrid form of musical enterprise being supported in Dublin, in particular, in the 1920s. This was the 'ballad-opera' variety concert which was 'of frequent occurrence', was 'lavishly patronised' and was 'of considerable profit' to the promoters who were 'generally English'. The programme consisted of two or three 'celebrity' vocalists who presented a repertoire of songs of a similar style, usually a well-known operatic aria with the rest of the programme consisting of sentimental ballads.<sup>195</sup>

Larchet said that the operatic aria, removed from its original orchestral accompaniment and dramatic setting in Irish recital venues, was entirely out of place whilst the sentimental ballads were popular simply because they climactically ended with what was popularly referred to as the 'top-note'. As far as he was concerned, this type of programme, having no educational value to it, highlighted 'the very low level of good taste and artistic appreciation prevalent in Dublin' which was being fostered and nurtured by artists and concert promoters alike, for artists did not risk presenting material outside of the popular hybrid sort for fear of upsetting concert promoters who in turn would only employ those who made considerable profit from satisfied concert-goers. For Larchet, financial profit was thus the 'sole value' of such concerts for they were 'a cause of injury rather than of benefit to the musical taste' of the state.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., col. 1446-7 (12 May 1948).

<sup>195</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

Such concerts could be considered to be beneficial to musical activity in that, at very least, they provided music and song in the state and encouraged people to engage with music in attending these concerts. However, Joseph Ryan points out that such concerts also stifled native musical development as audiences expected a particular type of programme and it removed the Irish musical population from the responsibility of providing its own music.<sup>197</sup> Whilst a perusal of contemporary newspaper advertisements reveals that the ploy of promoting concerts on the name of a 'celebrity' musician or singer to attract audiences continued to form the basis of musical activity, particularly in Dublin, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the situation appears to have changed, to some degree, by the late 1940s.<sup>198</sup>

The Fianna Fáil T.D. and former R.I.A.M. governor, John McCann, informed the Dáil that many people had given up their regular employment 'to take up full-time work on the variety stage when English artistes were not available' during 'the Emergency'. He claimed that in 1937 and 1938, Irish musicians had constituted only one per cent of live variety artists in Ireland with the rest coming from outside the state. He said that there was now, in 1948, 'a chance' of building a completely 'Irish variety theatre' but that the new minister was merely proposing to 'victimise' cine-theatres across the country, the result of which would be a reversion 'to the old-time practice of the Irish stage being filled by artistes from across the water'.<sup>199</sup>

Any dependence on foreign, and particularly British, musicians and singers might not be expected in such a politically charged time as the consolidation of the independent Irish state but as at state level, things continued in the domain of music, in this sense, as they had done prior to political independence. Indeed foreign musicians were not only celebrity artists visiting the country but there were many resident in the state who were influential players in various musical ensembles around the country. The census reports reveal that 19 per cent of all of the 857 musicians resident in Ireland in 1926 were born in England, Scotland or Wales but this figure had fallen to 17 per cent even by 1936.<sup>200</sup> There was, however, also a long tradition of foreign, those being non-British, musicians working as teachers, and

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<sup>197</sup> Ryan, 'Nationalism and music in Ireland', p. 381; see also White, *The keeper's recital*, pp 26-28 & pp 152-53 for a discussion of the merits of 'ballad-opera' in the political context of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Dublin respectively.

<sup>198</sup> See *F.J.*, 29 Sept. 1923 and *I.I.*, 1 Dec. 1928 for some good examples of 'International celebrity subscription concerts' regularly advertised by the Theatre Royal in Dublin in the 1920s. See also *I.T.*, 9 May 1924, for examples of the 'celebrity' gramophone records available from H.M.V.

<sup>199</sup> *Dail Éireann deb.*, cx, 1446-7 (12 May 1948).

<sup>200</sup> See Appendix F, table 6.

violin teachers in particular, at such places as the R.I.A.M., and these people accounted for about 3 per cent of all music teachers resident in Ireland across the period in question.<sup>201</sup>

In 1950, Michael Fitzpatrick, the Clann na Poblachta T.D. and ballroom owner, spoke of a recent 'invasion' into the 'territory' of professional musicians by 'English dance orchestras', which drew the attendance of Irish people by being 'advertised as broadcasting orchestras from the B.B.C.'. By 'foolishly' attending the dances at which such orchestras performed, Fitzpatrick claimed that the Irish people were 'depriving Irish musicians of an opportunity to earn a livelihood.' The finance minister, Patrick McGilligan, argued that, to his knowledge, there were 'very few cases' where 'non-national musicians' were employed and that by comparison with the numbers of dances actually being run, the proportion of those employing English bands was 'very small'. Seán Keane, a Labour party T.D. for Cork East agreed that Irish musicians did not appear to be in any danger of losing employment to English bands, particularly in County Cork, where he claimed that there was 'scarcely a night' when the local bands did not have an engagement. He suggested that if musicians in Dublin found themselves without engagements on a couple of days a week, they could 'relate themselves to some other class of gainful work' as did those musicians who were not 'extreme professional', those being full-time, members of bands in 'rural Ireland'. However Fitzpatrick continued his attempts to convince the minister to seriously consider 'the invasion of English dance musicians' by pointing out that the finance department was also losing potential income-tax which could be secured on the income of Irish musicians but not on that of the members of 'English dance bands coming into this country, getting well paid for playing in the country, and going away.'<sup>202</sup>

This was an issue of economic protection of individual musicians and the music profession in Ireland by the imposition of taxation on foreign musicians and bands. It also had echoes of the pleas made by Professor Aloys Fleischmann in 1936 to the government to impose protective tariffs on foreign musical bodies and their examination systems for the benefit of the musical education of the people of Ireland, rather than on instruments or records. As happened in the case of foreign musical examinations, McGilligan was not convinced that there was any threat to the

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<sup>201</sup> Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, pp 522-30; see also Appendix F, table 6.

<sup>202</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxxi, 1730 (14 June 1950).

employment of musicians, pointing out that he would take in an increased revenue of £175,000 from the tax on dances in 1950/1, which he attributed to a greater number of people dancing at more dances and thereby an indicator of more employment for musicians.<sup>203</sup> As noted, the overall number of musicians in Ireland had decreased over the entire period from 1922 to 1951, while the number of musicians employed in dance bands was greater than it had been at the outset of the period.<sup>204</sup>

While the issue of unemployment for musicians in both dance halls and cinemas took up some parliamentary debating time in Dáil Éireann in June 1950, it was this particular subject of foreign musicians being employed in Ireland that was most contentious particularly in relation to the employment of such musicians in the only symphony orchestra in the country.<sup>205</sup> In 1947, P.J. Little, the Fianna Fáil minister for posts and telegraphs announced the expansion of the orchestra of the national broadcasting station from forty players to a full symphony-strength number of sixty-two and the establishment of a light orchestra of twenty-two members. However, he warned that while every effort would be made to secure musicians from within the country, he had been advised that it would be necessary to recruit musicians from outside of the country.<sup>206</sup>

Whilst many T.D.s regarded this as a positive musical development, many others considered it to be a bad 'national' move. Seán Collins, a Fine Gael T.D. for Cork West, for example, stated that the importation of foreign musicians did not equate with what the national broadcasting service should be, which was simply 'symbolic of Ireland and her tradition'. This symbolism and tradition of Ireland, Collins said, could only be 'best transmitted to the world through the medium of people born and reared in this country and steeped in the tradition of this country who have proved their efficiency either as musicians, singers or various other types of artistes'.<sup>207</sup>

The minister was also pressed to consider 'the establishment of a suitable school' for the training of Irish musicians and was asked what 'facilities' he proposed to offer 'in order to foster and encourage suitable native talent' so as to 'ensure constant remunerative employment for native talent'. Little replied that it

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<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 1728-30.

<sup>204</sup> Appendix F, table 11.

<sup>205</sup> See also ch. 4.

<sup>206</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cv, 1296-7 (23 Apr. 1947).

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, cxii, 847 (20 July 1948).

was not the function of the broadcasting service to provide such facilities 'for students of music' for these already existed in Dublin and elsewhere in the country and pointed to the recent founding of a summer school of music by the department of education, with the co-operation of the broadcasting service, 'for advanced students of music'.<sup>208</sup>

Following the pleas on behalf of musicians employed in dances bands and smaller orchestral ensembles calls were again made to the inter-party government for the broadcasting service to ensure the proper training of singers and musicians. Although his party colleague P.J. Little had argued that such facilities already existed, the former Fianna Fáil education minister, Thomas Derrig, warned the new minister for posts and telegraphs, James Everett, that this needed to be done in order for Irish musicians to take their rightful places in the orchestra and 'to acquit themselves as well as foreigners'. He continued:

If we are serious in the idea that it should not be necessary to employ foreigners, we must provide the facilities and the means for young musicians to be equipped to take their places. It is quite impossible for them to do that in the present circumstances. They have not the means and, as has been pointed out, it is such a very hazardous business devoting one's life to the profession of music that it would be absolutely unreasonable to expect young people, with the present prospects, to borrow money or acquire financial aid in some other way to perfect their musical training.<sup>209</sup>

The former posts and telegraphs minister himself urged Everett to ensure that foreign musicians and conductors would continue to be introduced for, as he argued, unless 'the atmosphere' of composition and conducting was created in the country, Ireland could not 'expect to build the greatness which is in us and always has been as a musical country'. Foreign musical experts were needed to train the younger generation 'to accustom them to the very best'. Little said that it was not for the want of searching that Irish composers or conductors could not be found. Michael Fitzpatrick, the Clann na Poblachta T.D. and musical union agitator, countered that there was a grave danger that there would be 'too many foreigners' but Little said that this was not the case for Irish musicians would naturally always get priority as long as there was no 'bad playing or mediocrity'.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., cvii, 314-5 (26 June 1947).

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., cxxi, 663-4 (25 May 1950). See also articles written in the newspapers at this time, such as those written by the editor of the *I.T.*, R.M. Smyllie, under the pseudonym 'Nichevo' - *I.T.*, 24 and 30 June 1950.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., cxvii, 521-2 (8 July 1949).

Fitzpatrick also raised the issue of pay and conditions for Irish orchestral musicians with Everett. He claimed that the I.F.M. were particularly concerned that Irish musicians were not getting 'a square deal' and that foreign musicians were enjoying privileges, such as higher wages with lower income tax, not afforded to native musicians. He said that while he was not opposed to the introduction of musicians for their expertise he was opposed to the introduction of musicians simply because of the mere fact that they were foreign or exotic, having 'a high sounding name'. 'Is that the qualification that these foreign musicians have?' he asked claiming that the position of musicians in Ireland was 'precarious' enough without having to compete with such exoticism.<sup>211</sup>

The Fianna Fáil T.D. and former R.I.A.M. governor, John McCann, speaking on behalf of the Writers', Actors', Authors' and Musicians' Association (W.A.A.M.A.) who were pushing the department of posts and telegraphs for higher fees comparable to those paid to their members in the theatres, also pointed out that musicians in the Radio Éireann orchestra did not have opportunities for other engagements or regular work such as teaching because of rehearsals and public concerts. McCann expressed annoyance at the fact that whilst ministers talked 'long and loudly of art, culture and civilisation', musicians were allowed to live 'on the verge of starvation' by being paid 'miserable pittance'.<sup>212</sup> He claimed that they were not being paid extra for the acclaimed public concerts nor were they being paid commensurate with the praise with which music programming received. Likening the national broadcasting service to an 'amateur concert hall' on a number of subsequent occasions, McCann also stated: 'You will get national culture at its best only when you are prepared adequately to pay the performers.'<sup>213</sup>

Whilst he felt compelled to congratulate Little on taking a big step in providing 'a first-rate orchestra', McCann remained dissatisfied with the issue of pay and conditions and the fact that the orchestra was not 'composed solely of Irish nationals'.<sup>214</sup> Roderick Connolly, the Labour T.D. for Louth, however, disagreed saying that while foreign musicians should be employed as a permanent feature of the orchestra that there should be a quota so as to encourage native musicians,

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., col. 575-7 (12 July 1949).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., xciii, 1412 (25 Apr. 1944).

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., lxxxvii, 1156-60 (17 June 1942).

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., xci, 1768-9, 1771-2 (9 Nov. 1943).

declaring: 'Music is one of the international arts and there should be interchange and exchange of the competent musicians of different countries.'<sup>215</sup>

James Everett, the new inter-party posts and telegraphs minister and himself a former trade union official, assured the Dáil that of the 84 positions in the two broadcasting orchestras, only 15, or 18 per cent, were filled by foreign musicians, and these being of 'absolute necessity' in the absence of any suitable specific instrumentalists. He added that any vacancies in the orchestras would only be filled temporarily by foreigners until such time as Irish musicians of sufficient competence were found. He responded to I.F.M. concerns that Irish musicians were being paid less than foreign musicians by pointing out that there were different rates payable to single and married musicians and that the only difference between native and foreign musicians was a 'temporary disturbance allowance' payable to foreigners as compensation for having to 'set up a house here in new and strange surroundings'.<sup>216</sup>

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Radio Éireann orchestra was not the only area of musical activity in independent Ireland where foreign musicians were engaged, for, as already noted, many foreign music teachers were employed by the R.I.A.M., for example. Aloys Fleischmann noted, in 1951, that out of 27 organists engaged in 27 Catholic cathedrals in the state in that year, 4 were Irish clergymen, 11 were 'non-Irish' and were mainly 'graduates of continental schools of church music' and only 3 of the remaining 12 'Irish laymen' had any academic qualifications.<sup>217</sup>

Fleischmann pointed out that it had been 'customary', since the late nineteenth century, to send abroad to schools of church music at Regensburg, Aachen or Malines for musicians to play organs in cathedral towns. This also highlighted 'a determination on the part of the church authorities to secure a fully-qualified musician, when no local or native musician with adequate qualifications was available'. Many of these musicians had, Fleischmann said, had 'a valuable influence on church music and on music generally' in Ireland. However, he added that it was 'an anomalous and regrettable state of affairs' that no Irish institution

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., cxvii, 589-90 (12 July 1949).

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., col. 626-7. See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 124-5, tables G and H for details of the members of both radio orchestras in 1948.

<sup>217</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'The organization of the profession' in idem (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 83.

existed in 1951 which could offer full training of church organists and choirmasters.<sup>218</sup>

Whether or not there were actually enough talented musicians in the country with the necessary experience and ability to play in the country's first symphony orchestra, there were also those who simply would not work for the terms and conditions offered by the national broadcasting station. The former Cumann na nGaedheal industry and commerce minister and the future finance minister of the inter-party government, Patrick McGilligan, highlighted this in 1947. He stated that there was 'artistic talent enough in the country' but because of the 'conditions of service', some of those who possessed this talent did 'not readily allow themselves to be recruited'.<sup>219</sup>

An examination of the direct relationship between the most influential state department, finance, and music and musicians is therefore a telling reflection of the attitudes of the successive governments of the independent Irish state in the years between 1922 and 1951 to that cultural endeavour to which John Larchet deemed man was most responsive. Furthermore, this relationship with music also pointed to certain anomalies in the financial and economic policies of those governments. As seen in the case of imported musical instruments, gramophones and records from outside the state, inherited taxation was intentionally continued by the Cumann na nGaedheal administration, ostensibly to protect potential domestic production in musical goods although this was contrary to the party's general fiscal policy as determined, to a large extent, by the inherited civil servants of the finance ministry. And few adjustments were made to the inherited fiscal system to actually encourage the development of any such new industries within the new state.<sup>220</sup>

Such was the direct and enduring effect of the particular taxation on all imported musical instruments which was retained at 33 ⅓ per cent for the duration of the period in question, that Joseph Grocock, in his survey of music in the state in 1961, said of brass and reed bands:

There is great variety in the types of instruments used by bands. Some appear to be of very ancient vintage, almost obsolete! They would certainly have been scrapped by now, and replaced by new ones, if it were not for the high

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cvii, 1628 (23 Apr. 1947). See also ch. 4.

<sup>220</sup> Foster, *Modern Ire.*, p.523.

cost of instruments. The import duty adds an additional burden to those who are gallantly trying to re-equip their bands.<sup>221</sup>

The Fianna Fáil administration did nothing to remedy this because of the importance of revenue. In extending the inherited taxes to such places where there was musical activity and where musicians were employed appears to have actually affected unemployment amongst musicians.

The relationship of the finance department with music highlights the reversal of stances taken by successive finance ministers to those they had when in opposition in Dáil Éireann and the utilisation by those in opposition of arguments levelled against them when they had been in government. It also highlights the absence of a policy for music and the pragmatic measures undertaken by particular ministers in successive governments under public pressure as demonstrated by the cases of exemptions and reductions in taxation on gramophone records or the introduction of foreign musicians to form a national symphony orchestra or even the introduction of more censorious legislation such as the Public Dance Halls Act.

Yet even some of the apparent pragmatic measures generally resulted, intentionally or otherwise in substantial financial gain for the state, which was, more significantly, not put back into the development of musical activity of better or more acceptable quality or even into the development of the educational apparatus to meet the musical needs of one symphony orchestra. It was, thus, that the M.A.I., founded by prominent members of the music profession in 1948, would state:

Where the government cannot be persuaded to take measures on behalf of music which would cost the exchequer nothing, or even to remove unnecessary and useless impediments such as the tax on musical instruments, we might be tempted to conclude, on the face of it, that we are controlled by one of the most materialistic administrations this side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>222</sup>

In this context, it will be most instructive to explore how the particular attitudes and policies of the successive finance ministers, and the administrations to which they belonged, impacted more indirectly upon music and musical activity through their relationships and dealings with the other two state departments, education and posts and telegraphs, wherein potential developments in support of music would be more likely to occur.

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<sup>221</sup> Joseph Grocock, *A general survey of music in the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin, 1961), p. 60.

<sup>222</sup> M.A.I., 'Music and the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610). See Appendix M.

## Chapter 4

### THE IRISH BROADCASTING SERVICE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL MUSICAL CULTURE

In assessing the relationship between state, nation and music in the years between 1922 and 1951, one particular state enterprise, in the form of the national broadcasting service under the auspices of the department of posts and telegraphs, must be considered further. Like most other state initiatives which involved musical activity, it was not particularly intended as a means of developing that type of activity or indeed of the art of music itself. It was, in fact, intended as a means of developing the trade and possible manufacture of electrical and wireless goods in the new state.

Broadcasting as a cultural endeavour was initially perceived, even at state level, as a potentially dangerous new technological medium, although the majority of the output from broadcasting stations around the world in the 1920s was music. The potential of this new medium to develop musical culture, whether in the sharing of regional styles of traditional instrumentation and singing or in the national promulgation of 'art' music, was appreciated by few, particularly at state level. Long and protracted discussions about the establishment of a broadcasting service, and whether or not such a service would be state-run, occurred in Dáil Éireann following the civil war. Confusion proliferated about the dual, educative and entertainment, functions of broadcasting, which was almost wholly music broadcasting in Ireland, as it did in the cases of gramophone records and educational entertainments previously discussed.

Yet this initiative would prove, above all others, to be the most significant in terms of its effects on the development of music and musical activity in independent Ireland. However, as will clearly be seen here, these developments were largely determined by the contemporary political climate as well as the particular musical interests, or lack thereof, of the relevant minister for posts and telegraphs and of course, all developments were very strictly regulated by the department of finance.

#### 4.1 An 'Irish' broadcasting service

The initiative to establish an Irish broadcasting service was prompted by a number of requests made in 1922 by foreign companies, such as Marconi's Wireless Telegraph

Company Ltd. in London and the Siemens Company in Berlin, to the Irish government to grant licences to found broadcasting stations in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> While the minister of the post office or postmaster-general of the Irish Free State, J.J. Walsh, eventually turned down the requests on account of ‘the present disturbed conditions’ of the civil war, Walsh later admitted that there was concern at state level about the intentions of an English company in particular, which already operated a number of wireless telegraphy stations along the western coast of Ireland, to establish a wireless franchise in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> However, because of the successes of the service provided by the British Broadcasting Company since its foundation in 1922, there was an increasing domestic demand for the establishment of an Irish broadcasting service, particularly from the numerous amateur wireless societies and from within the nascent wireless and electrical goods trade which Walsh wanted to ‘be in a position to give facilities to’.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the desire to establish an Irish broadcasting service though, the postmaster-general, himself a former civil service telegrapher under the administration of the British government in Ireland, did not wish the ministry of the post office to run the service. It was his view that the state should not incur financial liability for what was generally considered as a business and entertainment concern related to the wireless manufacturing industry. He claimed that ‘the business of arranging concerts and general entertainment programmes was not one which a state department ought to undertake’ and thereby ‘a broadcasting station would not be proper investment for state monies’.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, the means of achieving an Irish broadcasting service, advocated by J.J. Walsh in Dáil Éireann, was the adoption of something akin to what he considered to be the ‘excellent model’ provided by the British Post Office.<sup>5</sup> In Britain, the postmaster-general, by only granting a single broadcasting licence, had induced a number of wireless manufacturing companies and other interested concerns to co-

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<sup>1</sup> *First, second and third interim reports and final report of the special committee to consider the wireless broadcasting report together with proceedings of the committees, minutes of evidence and appendices* (Dublin, 1924), documents 18, 61, 136-8 (henceforth cited as *Broadcasting committee reports*). The evidence given to the committee was numbered by paragraph, the appendices containing the relevant documentation numbered by document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 18. See also Richard Pine, *2RN and the origins of Irish radio* (Dublin, 2002) p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Broadcasting committee reports*, doc. 58: J. J. Walsh to Richard Mulcahy, 11 April 1923. Pine, *2RN*, pp 42-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1081-2 (14 Feb. 1924).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1077-8.

operate and form a single-interest composite company that would eventually become the royally-chartered British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) in 1927.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in April 1923, at the height of the civil war, Walsh invited Irish persons interested in the manufacture and supply of electrical goods and wireless apparatus, in the area of the new political state only, to apply for licences to establish a broadcasting station with a view to forming an Irish broadcasting company along the lines of the British endeavour.<sup>7</sup> By November 1923, only six months after the end of the civil war, five Irish firms had agreed to form the Irish Broadcasting Company (I.B.C.) and Walsh submitted a 'White paper' to the Dáil outlining his ministry's proposals for wireless broadcasting in the new state using this particular company.<sup>8</sup>

Walsh proposed that whilst the broadcasting consortium I.B.C. would provide the capital to establish the Irish broadcasting station and would operate the daily transmission of music, with some news bulletins, from a Dublin location, the government itself would maintain control of the service by granting a sole state broadcasting licence to that company. The tax-free importation of wireless sets and components and the right to issue licences on these imports were to be confined solely to the I.B.C., which would then charge licence fees to listeners and impose taxation on imported wireless sets, a percentage of which would go to the government, the rest to be retained as profit for those involved in the composite company.<sup>9</sup>

It was thus manifestly for the purposes of creating an industry for the manufacture of wireless sets and components and for enhancing the market for the general sale of electrical goods in the state, and not a concern for the articulation or development of any particular type of music or any other social or cultural activity by the state, that J. J. Walsh advocated the setting up of a broadcasting station. In Dáil Éireann, Darrell Figgis, an independent T.D. for Dublin County, who had also spoken out strongly against the rate of taxation on imported musical instruments in 1924, moved that a special parliamentary committee be set up to investigate the structures and financing of any proposed broadcasting service in Ireland and to report

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<sup>6</sup> See Rex Cathcart, *The most contrary region: the B.B.C. in Northern Ireland 1924-1984*, (Belfast, 1984) pp 16-17 for details.

<sup>7</sup> Rex Cathcart, 'Broadcasting – the early decades' in Brian Farrell (ed.), *Communications and community in Ireland* (Cork, 1984), p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> The five companies involved were Cork Radio Company and the Irish International Trading Corporation, Ltd. in Cork and Irish Developments, Ltd., Dixon & Hempenstall, Ltd. and Philip Sayers in Dublin.

<sup>9</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1086-7 (14 Feb. 1924); see also *Broadcasting committee reports*, par. 469-71.

on the viability of the proposal submitted by Walsh. Figgis was particularly concerned with the proposal 'that the state should pass over the right to license and tax incoming wireless apparatus' to a private company such as the I.B.C.<sup>10</sup>

The special Dáil committee on broadcasting which was then established produced three interim reports between January and March 1924 and a final report in April.<sup>11</sup> The deliberations which occurred in the Dáil on these reports were marred by confusion and uncertainty regarding the nature and function of broadcasting and programme material, by uninformed and often irrelevant questions posed by the special committee members, by circuitous evidence offered by various witnesses regarding broadcasting, by time spent by sub-committees investigating subsidiary issues such as the admission of the press to committee meetings, by blatant personal animosity, and above all, by allegations of corruption and 'self-interest' on the part of certain committee members themselves.<sup>12</sup>

This myriad of issues surrounding the subject of broadcasting, with what Peter Mulryan described as 'unsavoury commercial overtones', dominated the committee proceedings, the subsequent debates on the committee's findings in the Dáil and all of the newspaper coverage in subsequent months whilst discussions on the nature, mechanisms and functions of music broadcasting itself were neglected.<sup>13</sup> Yet some important insights into the cultural mindset of parliamentary representatives and of government officials in Ireland in the early 1920s can be gleaned from the lengthy and generally oblique debates which occurred in the Dáil. Confusion, anxiety and uncertainty about the nature and function of wireless broadcasting generally manifested as either complete ignorance or lofty idealism regarding the potential of this new medium and that of its programme material to inculcate or articulate ideas of 'national' and indeed of musical identity.

Whilst J.J. Walsh, for example, did not regard 'the business of arranging concerts and general entertainment programmes', which he saw as the purpose of

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 1101-2 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>11</sup> The ten original members of the special Dáil committee on wireless broadcasting were: Chairman - Pádraic Ó Máille (Cumann na nGaedheal), Darrell Figgis (Independent), Thomas Johnson (Labour), William Magennis (National University), William Thrift (Dublin University), Seán Milroy (Cumann na nGaedheal), Seán McGarry (Cumann na nGaedheal), Patrick Hogan (Labour), Donal McCarthy (Cumann na nGaedheal) and Richard Henrik Beamish (Independent).

<sup>12</sup> See the *Broadcasting committee reports* for evidence of all of these aspects; see also the coverage in the *F.J.* and *I.T.* for this period particularly in relation to the debates which occurred in Dáil Éireann on 14 and 15 February & 3 and 4 April 1924.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Mulryan, *Radio, radio*, (Dublin, 1988) pp 3-5.

broadcasting, as the function of his ministry, he did concede at an early stage, that 'Irish cultural developments' would be at an advantage if an Irish broadcasting station was to provide 'lectures, concerts, music and the like to develop and cultivate an Irish taste in the matter of the arts as practised in Ireland'. The members of the special Dáil committee on wireless broadcasting concurred with this view and decided that any Irish broadcasting service, as well as providing 'distinctly Irish stations', should be kept 'strictly under Irish national control'.<sup>14</sup>

The broadcasting committee did not, however, see fit to place control of such a service in the hands of a private enterprise, such as the I.B.C. proposed by Walsh, and recommended that broadcasting be established under 'government control' and under the management of the post office. It was felt that a private company would soon 'look more to the question of dividends than to what would be in the best interests of the state', whereas broadcasting under a 'director who could be removed at any time' by the postmaster-general would be 'more likely to be more national in tone and sentiment'.<sup>15</sup>

This might support a contention that the committee members themselves were ignorant of the potential, or of the need, to direct a broad range of programme content to appeal to the various musical needs of the Irish nation and might allow it to be dictated by the individual taste of the postmaster-general and his department. On the other hand it suggested that the committee felt that J.J. Walsh, the man who had been responsible for the organisation of the Aonach Tailteann in 1924, was to be entrusted with guarding the 'nationality' of the state in terms of the music broadcasted. It appears, though, that the committee actually tended more towards the belief that the station, its technical equipment and staff would be under the financial control of the government but that the music broadcast by its equipment could be created by other sources, even if these did not necessarily originate in Ireland.

Therefore, in February 1924, the committee called for the immediate issue of licences to legalise the possession and use of wireless receiving sets in the Irish Free State and to acquaint Irish people with the wireless as a medium of entertainment in advance of the setting up of an Irish station.<sup>16</sup> Owing to the importance attributed to

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<sup>14</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1078-9 (14 Feb. 1924).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2861-2 (3 Apr. 1924).

<sup>16</sup> It was from this time that the Irish daily newspapers began to publish radio programme schedules from the principal stations in Great Britain such as London, Bournemouth and Cardiff. See *I.T.*, 13 Feb. 1924 for example.

the seizure of telegraphy stations by each side during the civil war, and the fact that there were no legitimate wireless manufacturers in Ireland, the issue of licences for the installation or use of apparatus for wireless telephony had been suspended and the importation and possession of such receiving apparatus had been deemed illegal.<sup>17</sup>

The legalisation of wireless reception of foreign stations prior to the inception of an Irish station raised particular concern amongst some of the leading members of the music profession who addressed a public letter to J.J. Walsh. The signatories of the letter, expressed their 'alarm' that the issuing of licences might lead to calls to abandon the building of a domestic broadcasting station. The signatories included John Larchet, Arthur Darley, the violinist who had assisted Larchet in drafting the design for a national academy of music which was rejected by the government in 1923, George Hewson, the renowned organist and teacher at the R.I.A.M., T.H. Weaving, a teacher and later governor of the R.I.A.M., Denis McCullough, the R.I.A.M. governor who had secured Colonel Brase's musical services for the army school of music and a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. from November 1924, Harold White, the composer and music critic, and Vincent O'Brien, the choral conductor and future musical director of the first Irish broadcasting station.<sup>18</sup>

Any 'unsympathetic control' of an Irish station, they argued, would inflict 'serious injury' to 'native music', for Ireland would not 'have equal facilities of broadcasting her music, arts, etc., as every other country'. They appealed to Walsh to 'inspire confidence' in Irish cultural endeavours and to use 'every influence' at his disposal 'to guard the interests of our native talent', claiming that 'the only means' by which the arts, including music, could be given 'equal opportunities of reaching other countries' was by the establishment, in Dublin, of a broadcasting station 'under the control of Saorstát Éireann'.<sup>19</sup>

J. J. Walsh assured the representative body of musicians that he had 'laid it down from the outset' that broadcasting in Ireland would be done by 'a distinct Irish broadcasting station, under a control which would ensure the fullest use of Irish artistes and the fullest expression of Irish cultural activity'. He also claimed that the scheme which he recommended to the Dáil in his 'White paper' had been framed

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<sup>17</sup> For details see Pine, *2RN*, pp 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix G for the full text of this letter published in the *I.T.* on 13 February 1924 together with Walsh's response.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

from the 'Irish-Ireland' point of view and that those interested in the proposed I.B.C. were practically all 'well-known Irish-Irelanders'. He stated that the 'potentiality in strengthening and promulgating Irish national culture' that broadcasting had was not yet realised by Irish people, adding: 'I should regard it as absolutely fatal from every point of view if a station were set up here not under preponderatingly Irish-Ireland control, and as even worse if no stations were set up at all and we were left at the mercy of the British Broadcasting Company for our broadcasting programme.'<sup>20</sup>

Walsh also used the occasion to criticise what he termed 'the Irish-Ireland element' for remaining 'absolutely silent' in the mass of press correspondence which had taken place on the general subject of broadcasting over the previous months. He agreed with the musicians, however, in their view that there was a 'danger' associated with the immediate issue of licenses in advance of the setting up of an Irish station. He claimed that this danger was 'accentuated' by the fact that those who purchased wireless sets would have 'grown accustomed to the English programme', and would not want to have Irish programmes substituted thereby strengthening 'the agitation in favour of allowing broadcasting to be used a means of further anglicising this country'.

Nevertheless, Walsh guaranteed the music profession that he would continue to fight 'every suggestion which tended to hamper either the establishment of a separate Irish station or the effective Irish-Ireland control of that station'. He was confident that while the broadcasting committee might reject his particular proposals, any scheme which did not provide for a 'separate station under Irish-Ireland control' would not be considered by the Dáil.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4.2 'British music-hall dope and British propaganda'**

Although Walsh had addressed the general cultural anxieties of the representative musicians, the 'Irish-Ireland' perspective he advocated held little relevance in musical terms. Indeed, the records show that as the parliamentary debates on broadcasting progressed through 1924, economic considerations regarding the establishment of a broadcasting station were increasingly couched by Walsh in

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<sup>20</sup> *I.T.*, 13 Feb. 1924. See Appendix G.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

cultural or 'Irish-Ireland' rhetoric.<sup>22</sup> He would remain, however, consistently vague on the actual details of the musical programming of the proposed Irish broadcasting station. In that regard, the term 'native' employed in the musicians' letter is particularly noteworthy considering the signatories of the persons involved, for whilst it might have appealed to an essentialist or 'Irish-Ireland' mindset by ostensibly referring to an indigenous music of the country, it was most probably intended as a less prescriptive term signifying the artistic capabilities of 'Irish' musicians, regardless of the genre of music actually practised.

The broadcasting committee responded in the Dáil to the concerns expressed by both the representative body of musicians and by Walsh with the explanation that the issuing of wireless licences was to provide Irish people with opportunities for 'listening-in', legally, to other foreign stations. They felt that any fears that Walsh, or anyone else, had that Irish people might grow accustomed to the enjoyment of programmes furnished from other sources and resist the establishment of an Irish broadcasting service were unfounded. Rather, the committee members agreed that Irish people, by being exposed to music from other stations, would 'appreciate from experience' what broadcasting could afford them 'in the way of education and cultural entertainment', and would thereby begin 'to demand the provision of further pabulum of a distinctive Irish character'. This, it was hoped, would instil such a 'belief in Irish artistic capacity' that Irish people would demand that 'foreign listeners-in' be given the opportunity 'of being acquainted with the development in Ireland of the civilised arts as exhibited in the matter broadcasted' from Ireland.<sup>23</sup>

J.J. Walsh cleverly capitalised on this angle of debate in order to rally support for his particular scheme for establishing broadcasting in Ireland as a commercial concern under the control of a native private enterprise with a monopoly on licensing and taxation. He warned the members of the Dáil that in failing to vote for the implementation of his proposals they created two potentially serious risks for the new state. Firstly, he argued that the government would be opening up the country to exploitation by British companies regarding the sale of wireless sets so that the Irish state would be, for their purposes, 'simply a continuation of an English shire'.

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<sup>22</sup> See Martin McLoone, 'Music hall dope and British propaganda? Cultural identity and early broadcasting in Ireland' in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, xx, no. 3 (2000), pp 301-15 for observations about the supplanting of the 'economic logic' of Walsh's proposals for broadcasting by 'the cultural agenda' in 1924.

<sup>23</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1080 (14 Feb. 1924).

Secondly, he held that the state would be turning the Irish airwaves over to an incursion of undesirable 'British music-hall dope and British propaganda'.<sup>24</sup> In the face of anxieties expressed by the likes of the representative body of musicians, concern for the cultural and musical aspects of broadcasting, was again presented by Walsh as an underlying tenet of his proposals, despite the fact that his explicit intentions had been for the creation of an industry for the manufacture of wireless sets and components and a market for the general sale of electrical goods in Ireland.

Bryan Cooper, the independent T.D. for Dublin County and another deputy who had spoken out strongly against the heavy taxation on imported musical instruments, was one of the few parliamentary representatives who actually addressed the question of musical programming on the proposed broadcasting station. He countered Walsh's claims about 'British music-hall dope and British propaganda' by highlighting some of the programme material being broadcast from London that evening, and challenged Walsh to explain how such material as Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* could be dismissed merely as 'British propaganda'. Though Cooper stated that he did not generally agree with state monopolies, he believed that, in terms of musical development, there was a very strong argument for direct state control of any Irish broadcasting service and that such a service should be viewed as an aid to education, and in particular music education.

However, Cooper warned that a proper educational system, within which a broadcasting service could play a significant role, would not be achieved in the newly independent Ireland by 'building a Chinese wall' around the country, especially with regard to music. Whilst he praised the efforts of the 'first-class military band' under the directorate of Colonel Fritz Brase in Dublin, he pointed out that Ireland did not have the resources of London, Paris or Manchester 'in the way of orchestras' and thereby any intention of the postmaster-general to restrict Irish people from listening to music performed by British and continental orchestras over the airwaves would be a 'great loss' to Irish people. He appealed to Walsh as 'a good patriot' to encourage 'some great musical genius', but warned that such 'genius' would not be developed in Ireland if budding composers were deprived of hearing and being acquainted with the works of the great European composers, which Cooper

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., col. 1084-5.

felt an Irish station would 'never' have the financial or the orchestral capacity to provide 'on a satisfactory scale'. Cooper stated:

If we are to have wireless established on an exclusively Irish-Ireland basis, the result will be 'Danny Boy' four times a week, with variations by way of camouflage. Every performer will be told: 'The postmaster-general wishes you to sing something of an exclusively Irish character.' The result will be 'Danny Boy'...after a short time the people will begin to look for variety...we cannot set up a Chinese wall around the country or establish an exclusive civilisation. If we wish to do that, let there be no wireless broadcasting.<sup>25</sup>

Cooper's inclusive cultural viewpoint has already been discussed in relation his views on the taxation of musical instruments and gramophone records. Cooper was, as Martin McLoone observes, the voice of 'a declining political force and his liberal accommodation with the running tide of nationalism was echoed in few other places'.<sup>26</sup>

One such place was the *Irish Times* newspaper which argued in one particular editorial that while holders of wireless sets would not listen 'to concerts in London or Paris' if they could hear 'equally good programmes from Dublin', this was an expensive endeavour which 'the Free State could not possibly afford'. It was however, explicitly stated that there was 'no objection' to the establishment of an Irish station, in fact, it was believed to be 'an excellent thing' to 'bring the people of one nation into close contact with those of another' and 'give people in England and other countries a chance of hearing Irish talent'. Nonetheless, the editor advised that whilst a desire for 'all-Irish' programming was understandable and indeed 'Irish music and culture should occupy a prominent place', the broadcasting of this type of material only on an Irish station would become 'tiresome'. The 'beauty' of the programmes broadcast from London was the fact that they were 'international' and no attempt was made 'to tie subscribers down to this school of music or to that'.

Irish 'listeners-in' are getting an opportunity for the first time in their lives of hearing at first-hand the best talent that the world can produce. It would be a thousand pities to parochialise 'broadcasting' in this island...we should be very sorry to think that all other music and all other 'culture' would be taboo...The public wants good programmes and it wants them varied. If it cannot get what it wants in the Free State, it will turn naturally to other stations and 'Irish-Ireland' broadcasting will waste its sweetness on the desert air.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1117-20 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>26</sup> McLoone, 'Music hall dope and British propaganda?', p. 311.

<sup>27</sup> *I.T.*, 13 Feb. 1924.

In the context of such press coverage and comments which were curiously prescient of many of the criticisms which would befall the programme schedules once the Irish station was eventually established, J.J. Walsh was forced to address the issue of musical content and the perceived desire on his part 'to exclude foreign music' from any broadcasting service. Walsh admitted that he felt that much of what was conveyed through the wireless from outside the country was 'dope'. He insisted, though, that he was not suggesting that 'foreign music' *should* be excluded - because even if he wished to do so, he simply could not prevent its dissemination once instruments for wireless reception of external material were available in the state. Walsh expressed it as his duty as postmaster-general to ensure that material 'of the utmost importance to the life of this country, material concerning the country and concerning its culture, should not be quietly placed aside to leave the field free for this foreign material'.<sup>28</sup>

Bryan Cooper agreed with Walsh that it was important to 'protect' Irish people from 'foreign propaganda' but that the way to do this was by counter-broadcasting what he termed 'genuinely Irish propaganda'.<sup>29</sup> However both Cooper and Walsh failed to actually explicate exactly what sort of musical material they believed should or should not be thereby broadcast. Perhaps, they felt that this was best left to the broadcasting advisory board, a panel of voluntary representatives chosen from various scientific societies and other bodies interested in the diffusion of knowledge as well as musical and other cultural associations, which the broadcasting committee had recommended would run the proposed broadcasting station along with the postmaster-general and a station director. Cooper held that any such board should include, for example, 'such people as the minister for education, Dr Larchet, and Colonel Brase, the director of the Army School of Music', the type of people whom he presumed would encourage 'the kind of entertainment that the Irish people would need'. 'Remember', Cooper concluded, 'that good music is not merely entertainment; it is an education as well.'<sup>30</sup>

As has been noted with the case of import duties on musical instruments, gramophones and records, this in itself was a contentious issue and it, as well as the

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<sup>28</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1122 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2886 (3 Apr. 1924).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

notion that the government could or should cater adequately for the education and entertainment of the Irish people, was not readily acceptable to many parliamentary representatives.

Whilst the members of the broadcasting committee expressed appreciation of many of the points made by Walsh, even if they did disagree with his proposals on the whole, the attitude of the head of state, the president of the Irish Free State executive council, W. T. Cosgrave, was rather dismissive about broadcasting and actually contributed very little to the parliamentary debates on this issue. He did point out, however, that the issue of broadcasting highlighted 'a constitutional position' with which the government had 'scarcely had an opportunity of dealing with so far', in that Walsh was, until 1924, an external minister responsible to the Dáil and thereby the executive council had no responsibility for his department - apart from 'questions affecting finance'.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4.3 'In like a lion...out like a lamb'**

Broadcasting was one such divisive question and Cosgrave advised the members of Dáil Éireann that the whole matter be considered as 'a business proposition upon which every deputy ought to be perfectly free to exercise his discretion and judgement according to the best of his ability', so that the 'utmost possible justice should be done to an extern minister'. However, he also conveyed to deputies that he personally believed Walsh's broadcasting proposition 'to be the most outlandish one' he had ever heard of and a 'case of company-promoting' that he did not think the Dáil should subscribe to.<sup>32</sup> It would appear that amidst all of the confusion and apprehension regarding broadcasting in Ireland and the numerous related issues debated in Dáil Éireann at this time, Cosgrave's dictation of his own personal opinion, being one of the least ambiguous statements given in this regard and couched in language advocating 'free voting', influenced the rejection by the Dáil of Walsh's proposal.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> There were three other 'extern' ministers, Patrick Hogan (Agriculture), J. A. Burke (Local Government) and Fionán Lynch (Fisheries), who were also not members of the executive council until the restructuring which occurred as result of the Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924. See Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, pp 475-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1106-11 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>33</sup> See *ibid.*, col. 1113-15 (15 Feb. 1924) for commendations by broadcasting committee member Professor W. E. Thrift (Dublin University) for Cosgrave's apparent elucidation of the matters which the members of the Dáil were being requested to consider.

Nevertheless, one deputy who did challenge the government's position and the general perception that broadcasting was merely a 'business proposition' for the provision of musical entertainment was D.J. Gorey, a Farmers' Party T.D. from Carlow-Kilkenny. In a determined speech foretelling that 'broadcasting in the future may develop into one of the greatest elements in our national life...almost as important in a national and moral sense as our schools', Gorey advised the government to regard the proposition as 'one of great national importance' and 'to be very careful as to who controls it and how it is used'. He claimed that any government who were 'careful of the national, as well as the moral, life of the nation' would want broadcasting to be 'controlled in the same way as our national education' and not hand it over to 'a private company or a foreign company'.<sup>34</sup>

However, Gorey's party colleague, Michael Heffernan, a T.D. for Tipperary who would be the parliamentary secretary to the department of posts and telegraphs from 1927, argued that the state was incapable of providing any type of adequate public service and concurred with Walsh's initial assertion that it was 'not advisable that the state should be placed in a position of trying to control entertainments'. Heffernan felt that while the wireless in itself was a good thing, especially to remedy 'the useless way' in which people in 'rural communities' spent their time, he thought it most unwise of the state to undertake to control any proposed broadcasting service for he did not believe that 'entertainments controlled by the state would be accepted by the people as meeting their requirements'.<sup>35</sup>

Heffernan's comments about music broadcasting as a means of entertaining people living in rural areas are particularly striking for they represented a certain parliamentary mindset which, despite the general lack of knowledge or discussion about programme content and the fact that broadcasting content in the 1920s across the world was primarily music, had attributed to the service civilising and educational functions which would become the primary points of discussion once broadcasting became a reality. Patrick Hogan, a Labour Party T.D. from Clare, however, contested Heffernan's argument that a government department was not the right centre for the establishment and development of a broadcasting service in Ireland, from the point of view of 'cultivation of the Irish language, Irish literature, Irish culture and Irish music'. It was Hogan's view that everything appertaining 'to

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., col. 1112-13 (15 Feb. 1924).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., col. 2862-3 (3 Apr. 1924).

the revival of Irish culture and everything that is proper and distinctive in the life of the nation' should be placed under the control of a state department to ensure 'growth and cultivation'. Hogan queried whether any private body would 'take the same interest in the revival of the Irish language and of Irish music as the state would take' in ensuring the provision of a service 'pertinent to the life of the nation or to helping cultivation of Irish distinctiveness'.<sup>36</sup>

There was disagreement from William Hewat, a Businessmen's Party deputy from Dublin North, who concurred with Heffernan's view that the government should not be responsible for a broadcasting service in Ireland. Hewat held that Walsh's 'White paper' was the 'soundest proposition' available because government departments were 'not particularly prone to exhibiting a large amount of initiative' and suggested that, in any case, the minister for finance, Ernest Blythe, would be very much 'disinclined' to consent to expenditure for any proposed service.<sup>37</sup>

Blythe and his department were, in fact, wholly opposed to the broadcasting committee's proposal that broadcasting in Ireland be operated as a state service, for it would put 'very heavy calls on the exchequer'. C. J. Gregg, an assistant secretary at the department of finance, on loan from the Board of Inland Revenue in London to reorganise the civil service in Ireland and establish the department of finance, wrote that 'it would be utterly wrong for the state to build wireless stations and carry on the enterprise itself. I think the post office idea is essentially right that some outside body should undertake the enterprise...we have not got sums of £20,000 to play with'.<sup>38</sup> Blythe feared that the acceptance of the broadcasting committee's recommendation by the Dáil meant that the Dáil was effectively sanctioning the establishment of a broadcasting station as a state service before 'due' financial consideration had been given to it.<sup>39</sup>

The committee's recommendations had no legislative effect, though, and according to Michael Hayes, the ceann comhairle of the Dáil, had 'no effect in compelling financial expenditure'.<sup>40</sup> However, with all of the press controversy and the popularity of the recent legalisation of wireless reception of foreign stations in Ireland, Blythe had to admit that if the Dáil members did vote to reject Walsh's

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., col. 2864-5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., col. 2870-1.

<sup>38</sup> C. J. Gregg, departmental minute, 15 Feb. 1924 (N. A. I., F8/1/25) cited in Fanning, *Irish department of finance*, p. 111. For an outline of Gregg's career in Ireland see *ibid.*, pp 77-80.

<sup>39</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 2866-7 (3 Apr. 1924).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, vii, 388 (7 May 1924).

I.B.C. proposal by favouring the state service recommended by the broadcasting committee, it was not something that would be 'turned down lightly by the minister for finance' although he insisted that he 'should not be bound by this'.<sup>41</sup>

Walsh himself, however, felt that the broadcasting committee had in fact dismissed his proposals outright for the state service that they recommended was not a 'practical alternative'.<sup>42</sup> As Walsh saw it, the whole issue had evolved into one of 'nationalisation versus private enterprise' coloured by allegations of corruption. Whereas he had proposed a scheme which would cost the state nothing yet would maintain, with minimal administrative supervision, 'all the necessary control which a state should require...without financial responsibility', the Dáil had accepted the recommendations of the broadcasting committee. These proposals, he believed, were 'likely to rape the finance of the nation'.<sup>43</sup>

Committee member, Professor William E. Thrift, an Independent T.D. for Dublin University and vice-president of the Wireless Society of Ireland, countered that the committee supported broadcasting as controlled by the government just because it *was* 'nationalisation' and because the potential developments of broadcasting were 'so important, so uncertain at present' that the state could 'not let control out of its own hands'.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the broadcasting committee's recommendation that wireless broadcasting be operated solely as a state service, with start-up costs to be financed by state capital but maintained by licence fees, was adopted by the members of the Dáil on 7 May 1924.<sup>45</sup>

It was then up to the postmaster-general to prepare a new scheme, 'bearing in mind' the recommendation of the committee which had 'become the recommendation of the Dáil' and justify it to the minister for finance, who, in turn would 'have to seek the consent of the Dáil' for the expenditure on the scheme.<sup>46</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* commented that a 'disappointed public' would 'anxiously' await further news of broadcasting for it seemed 'as if the question was being deliberately shelved' or was 'not of sufficient importance on which to waste too much time'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., vi, 2874 (3 Apr. 1924).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., col. 1081 (14 Feb 1924).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., col. 2877 (3 Apr. 1924).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., vii, 387 (7 May 1924).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., col. 390.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., col. 384-5.

<sup>47</sup> *F.J.*, 8 May 1924.

On the other hand, an *Irish Times* editorial, noted that while the business of broadcasting which ‘came in like a lion’ had very much ‘gone out like a lamb’, the new broadcasting scheme would not be awaited with much enthusiasm by ‘the nation’. This newspaper reported that there was general satisfaction with broadcasting as it was in the Free State and no desire ‘to exchange Uncle Caractacus for Uncle Cúchullain’. Rather, it was stated, that there was concern that a ‘national system of broadcasting’ might ‘curtail or hamper the Free State’s existing access to the aerial programmes of the world’.<sup>48</sup>

While Walsh’s initial concern had been the lack of ability or desire of his department to administer a medium of musical entertainment, he now employed Blythe’s rhetoric to criticise those Dáil deputies who had acceded to ‘the unnecessary expenditure of public funds’ on a ‘cultural luxury’, which need not have been funded by the state. This was, he pointed out, at a time when post offices around the country were being closed down, jobs were being lost, the salaries of public servants cut and even the old-age pension reduced.<sup>49</sup> This point was also made in a number of newspapers, with the *Irish Times*, in particular, contending that due to the finance minister’s insistence that the Free State was ‘a poor country’, an Irish broadcasting system was effectively ‘a luxury’, even if it was ‘a state scheme’. At the same time though, it was hoped that the postmaster-general would do his work ‘faithfully’, even though it was ‘well-known’ that his views were ‘hostile’ to state control of broadcasting, and that in this attitude he was supported by ‘a large body of opinion in the Dáil’.<sup>50</sup>

In November 1924, one year after the submission of his ‘White paper’ to the Dáil and now titled ‘minister for posts and telegraphs’ after the reorganisation of his department under the ministers and secretaries act of that year, J. J. Walsh, had submitted a scheme for broadcasting under the auspices of his department to the minister for finance. The scheme planned for the building of a main station in Dublin, which would become 2RN, and a subsidiary station in Cork at a cost of £9,000 each, while the cost of broadcasting music was estimated to amount to £20,000 per annum, which was intended, after three years, to pay for itself through

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<sup>48</sup> *I.T.*, 8 May 1924. Caractacus was a mythological British chieftain who supposedly led the resistance to the Roman conquest of Britain in the first century AD whilst Cúchullainn was a mythological Irish hero-warrior.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2880.

<sup>50</sup> *I.T.*, 8 May 1924.

licence fees of £1 per wireless set.<sup>51</sup> Walsh affirmed that his ministry would, of course, endeavour ‘to push forward a scheme of broadcasting on the lines suggested’ by the broadcasting committee and accepted by the members of the Dáil, despite initial public statements that ‘the whole prospect of Ireland’s cultural development through broadcasting’ had been ‘lost’ by the rejection of his own proposal.<sup>52</sup>

Walsh remained disdainful of the fact that the department would now be directly responsible for distinguishing ‘between rival organ-grinders, rival tenors and people of that kind’. ‘We will do it’, he said, ‘but we will do it at a price’.<sup>53</sup> That ‘price’, of extensive financial restrictions placed on the department of posts and telegraphs by the department of finance, was one that would directly affect developments in music broadcasting, and indeed the creation of a musical culture in Ireland, right throughout the period in question here and beyond.

In fact, despite the haste with which the unknown medium that broadcasting was in Ireland in the early 1920s was actually discussed and decided upon by the members of Dáil Éireann in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, due to the hesitancy of the finance ministry about the scheme, it was another seven months however before Ernest Blythe sanctioned the scheme. This ‘tactic of delay’ became one which Maurice Gorham, director of the broadcasting station between 1954 and , claimed was used effectively by the department of finance in the following years as ‘an alternative to outright refusal’ to requests by the department of posts and telegraphs for funding.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4.4 ‘Mediocrity...and maddening monotony’: wireless music, 1926**

Broadcasting in the Irish Free State eventually began on 1 January 1926, from a small studio containing two grand pianos located on Little Denmark Street, off Henry Street in Dublin.<sup>55</sup> The first station director, Seamus Clandillon was a civil servant on secondment from the department of health and evidently satisfied the advertised criteria that the director was to be ‘a man of broad views and wide sympathies,

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<sup>51</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 17. The licence fee was reduced to 10s. 6d., the same level as in Britain, in August 1926.

<sup>52</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vi, 1085 (14 Feb 1924); *ibid.*, vii, 389 (7 May 1924).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 2877 (3 April 1924).

<sup>54</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 28. See also Fanning, *Irish department of finance*, pp 112-3.

<sup>55</sup> Broadcasting in Ireland was thus a rather late endeavour by comparison with other countries. See Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, xx, pp 728-743 for details of the establishment of ‘radio’ in many countries across the world.

interested in life and literature, and especially in Irish literature and culture'.<sup>56</sup> Clandillon, the husband of the sean nós singer Maighréad Ní Annagáin, was well-known country-wide as an Irish language singer, an enthusiast for 'traditional' music and organiser of Feis Ceoil competitions and various musical concerts throughout the country. He would also perform regularly on the new broadcasting station.<sup>57</sup>

The appointment of a musician, and such a musician, who was identified as 'a nationalist and a Gael' to such a post as would determine the entire wireless programme content is significant on a number of counts.<sup>58</sup> Firstly, despite advertising that the director, and thereby the station, should exhibit 'broad views and wide sympathies', the choice of Clandillon who was associated nationally with 'traditional' music appears to have been an identification of the new state initiative with the preservation of an 'Irish-Ireland' view, as it were. On the other hand the choice of such a nationally-known figure as Clandillon, despite his musical leanings, was perhaps a strategic, if not a pragmatic one, for his contacts and personal friendships with an array of musicians and singers might ensure a supply of various artists for music broadcasting notwithstanding the stringency applied by the department of finance.

Secondly, the appointment simply attests that musical entertainment was the staple of wireless programme content in the 1920s. Then again, the fact that he who would determine the musical output of the national broadcasting station was not a professional, full-time musician, music teacher or composer highlights on the one hand the varied interest and capabilities of Clandillon but also perhaps the prevailing naivety and ignorance regarding broadcasting at a time when this was almost solely the broadcasting of music.

The station's musical director, Vincent O'Brien, was a professional musician and composer, the organist at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, and the founder and conductor of the Palestrina Choir at that cathedral, amongst other musical societies, yet he would remain employed on a part-time basis only, in spite of the fact that music was the main output of the station.<sup>59</sup> The type of personnel directing the Irish station were also significantly different to those at the B.B.C. station in Northern

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<sup>56</sup> Paddy Clarke, *Dublin calling: 2RN and the birth of Irish radio* (Dublin, 1986), p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> Valley (ed.), *Irish trad. music*, pp 72-3; Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 20-1.

<sup>58</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 56, 1023 (15 May 1935).

<sup>59</sup> *I.T.*, 21 Apr. 1941, on the occasion O'Brien's retirement.

Ireland, for example, where the station director, Major Walter Montagu-Douglas-Scott and his two assistants had no apparent musical experience.<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps, then, the combined appointments of Clandillon and O'Brien as two musicians of notably different musical backgrounds were actually intended to suggest a conscious attempt at general musical diversity, if not a conscious desire to account for the different musical expressions extant. Indeed, Douglas Hyde's speech inaugurating the new broadcasting station, attempted to set the cultural tone in terms that clearly appealed to a romantic 'nationalist' or 'Irish-Ireland' sentiment but which did also sound a warning against insularity: 'A nation is made from the inside itself, it is made, first of all, by its language, if it has one; by its music, songs, games and customs. So, while not forgetting what is best in what other countries have to offer us, we desire to especially emphasise what we have derived from our Gaelic ancestors – from one of the oldest civilisations in Europe.'<sup>61</sup>

Certainly, if the opening programme schedule itself was the musical mission statement of the new station then it does not appear that this new medium was intentionally being used to serve the sole interests of 'Irish-Ireland' nor was it blatantly promoting any particular type of musical genre as 'national' music. The programme lasted about three hours and consisted, apart from Hyde's inaugural speech and a weather report, wholly of musical content.<sup>62</sup>

The reaction of the Irish newspapers to the inaugural musical wireless broadcast was generally positive with an *Irish Times* editorial in particular commenting that 'for a start, the entertainment was admirable' and the programme as a whole 'very successful'. However, this editorial also echoed some of the particular sentiments expressed not only in its own pages over the course of the previous two years, but also by the likes of John Larchet, Bryan Cooper and Douglas Hyde, regarding the need to exhibit the musical capabilities of the new state to other European nations, but warning the state against allowing artistic parochialism in striving to create, if not maintain, something representing the nation, something 'distinctively Irish' for 2RN was not 'catering for the Free State alone'.

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<sup>60</sup> Cathcart, *Most contrary region*, p. 26.

<sup>61</sup> *I.T.*, 2 Jan 1926. Richard Pine shows that this speech had actually been 'carefully commissioned' by Clandillon who may, in turn, have been strongly influenced by P. S. O'Hegarty, the secretary of the department of posts and telegraphs. See Pine, *2RN*, pp 146-8

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix G.

The object of the station, as the *Irish Times* saw it, was to furnish programmes, which, while somehow distinctively Irish, would 'escape the reproach of parochialism and interpret the artistic genius of the nation not only to its own citizens, but to the whole of Europe.'<sup>63</sup> The editor did not explicate how the station directors might ensure that musical programming did 'escape the reproach of parochialism' but the very fact that this would continually be highlighted indicates that there was, outside of the music profession, at least some contemporary awareness of, firstly, the threat that political and economic insularity posed to developments in musical activity in Ireland, and secondly, the need to present to other countries the new Irish Free State as a musically competent nation.

The *Irish Times*, which also commented that 'naturally enough, the Gaelic element predominated' in the programming, presumably meaning that a 'traditional' or some type of 'Irish-Ireland' impression was given overall, had to concede, however, that there was in the opening programme 'plenty of variety in the musical items'.<sup>64</sup> Even by contemporary assessment, there was indeed much variety, including brass and woodwind arrangements, instrumental solos playing in a 'classical' or 'art' music idiom, 'traditional' Irish instrumental music, Irish language songs and popular 'ballad' airs in the English language. Significantly though, this 'variety' was also an indication of the full range of musical activity and the extent of musical resources available in Dublin in the late 1920s.

Most of the soloists, for example, who performed on the inaugural programme were associated with the R.I.A.M. in some capacity or other and indeed, very soon after the station was established, O'Brien, the musical director, requested the academy to allow its students to perform regularly. Although many of the academy's governors were reluctant, one, Sir John Irwin, insisted that not only was it 'the duty of a state-aided institution such as this to assist the government broadcasting station' but it also provided 'a favourable opportunity of appealing to a much larger audience...and giving the Irish public generally, proof of the high standard of the teaching' at the R.I.A.M.<sup>65</sup>

This identification by the academy with the government of the Irish state and of the academy itself as an institution which could assist in a state music

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<sup>63</sup> 'Dublin calling', editorial, *I.T.*, 2 Jan 1926.

<sup>64</sup> *I.T.*, 2 Jan 1926.

<sup>65</sup> Sir John Irwin to the R.I.A.M., 17 Feb. 1926 (N. A. I., 1120/1/27). Irwin would later be appointed as a member of the broadcasting advisory committee.

broadcasting endeavour, whilst capitalising on an opportunity to promote the work of the academy, is noteworthy. In the subsequent months and years, the R.I.A.M. did in fact provide a regular number of students and teachers as musical contributors to the state broadcasting service and towards the end of the period in question, the Students' Musical Union of the R.I.A.M. also provided live broadcasts of their larger musical productions.<sup>66</sup> Of course, the musical material, such as works by Brahms, Bach, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Schumann, Debussy and Liszt, played by these musicians, largely mirrored that which was taught at the academy.

The manner in which the development of the Irish broadcasting service also benefited significantly from the support of the school of music of the national army has already been mentioned. The two primary bands of the school, in particular, substituted for a station orchestra on a regular basis and supplying the conductors and wind and brass instrumentalists who would form the nucleus of the fledgling orchestra of the radio station in the 1930s and 1940s. The Army School of Music, No. 1 Band, which generally relayed its musical selections from Beggar's Bush Barracks in Dublin and which had opened and closed the inaugural programme, a musical act telling enough in itself, generated some of the most positive commentary about the new broadcasting service around the country. It was very often, due to its greater sound, the redeeming feature of the service in places, like Cork, where the wireless reception of the station from Dublin, prior to the erection of a station there in 1927, was claimed to have been rather poor.<sup>67</sup>

Only a few days after the station went on air the newspapers were replete with reports and correspondence criticising the nature of the musical items presented and providing comparisons with the output of the British stations. One writer to the *Irish Times* complained, for example, that there was nothing but 'badly varied' local programmes to be heard, with an 'overdose of classic and choir descriptions'. He suggested that more variety be introduced and that 'some light popular dance' music be relayed from London each evening to provide 'something bright after the business of the day'.<sup>68</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed in Seanad Éireann in 1926 with John T. O'Farrell, a trade union official and member of the Labour Party, being

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<sup>66</sup> See Pine & Acton, *To talent alone*, p. 362.

<sup>67</sup> See *I.T.*, 2 and 4 Jan 1926 and *I.I.*, 5 and 16 Jan. 1926 for numerous examples of commendations for the sound produced by the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band and criticisms regarding wireless reception from around the country, particularly from the south of the country.

<sup>68</sup> *I.T.*, 6 Jan 1926.

particularly vociferous about what he termed as 'the mediocrity of programme' and 'maddening monotony of repetition'. He asked:

Is this the best that Dublin, and the whole of the Free State which it has at its disposal, can turn out? If the answer is in the affirmative, then we have no need to be proud of the talent at our disposal, but I hardly think that it is the best that can be turned out....Night after night, week after week, we have with just a slight re-arrangement, the same artistes, the same songs, the same jokes, pretty well the same order and then they are certainly not of the very highest....After all it is a broadcast to the world and we should have a little pride as to the type of stuff we are going to broadcast.<sup>69</sup>

In Dáil Éireann also, numerous deputies cited their own experiences and those of their constituents regarding wireless reception and musical content. The Labour Party leader, Thomas Johnson, for example, claimed that those who had been introduced to 'listening-in' had, so far, heard a 'greater variety of pleasant, delightful and educative music' than they would have had access to had the broadcasting service not been in operation, but that the government had to bear in mind that people did not generally attend 'similar concerts two or three nights a week'.<sup>70</sup> The Independent Dublin County T.D., Bryan Cooper agreed that whilst the musical content to date was certainly 'reasonable', he criticised what he called the 'ballad concert' type of programme which was 'practically the same' every night. 'A gentleman is to sing a couple of songs; Clery's Trio, which is doing most excellent work, will play orchestral selections; a lady will sing a few songs, and an instrumental soloist will perform, sometimes on the banjo and sometimes on the piano.'<sup>71</sup>

Cooper also regarded it as a 'mistake' to play the exact same song on two consecutive nights but identified this as a problem inherent in having only one type of song and one type of live artist in Ireland, 'the ballad type of artist and the ballad type of song'. However, he held the musical director, Vincent O'Brien, responsible for putting this 'ballad concert' type of programme out on the air, stating that O'Brien did not have the 'knowledge of all the people likely to give a satisfactory performance' and was thereby 'drawing artists from too small a field'. He advised Walsh to create a consultative committee on the broadcasting of music as had been recommended by the special Dáil committee on broadcasting in 1924, the members

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<sup>69</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, vii, 733-4 (6 July 1926).

<sup>70</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiv, 285 (28 Jan 1926).

<sup>71</sup> Clery's Trio were an instrumental ensemble who played in at Clery's tea-rooms in Dublin and had been one of the 'test' musical ensembles for 2RN in 1925.

of which he suggested should include representatives of the universities, the Gaelic League and the Royal Dublin Society, as well as John Larchet and Fritz Brase, 'both of whom would give a wider view of music, and possibly a greater knowledge about people who could be approached to broadcast'.<sup>72</sup> Cooper's slight on O'Brien's work appears to have been quite unmerited, for, considering the closeness of the musical network in the Irish state, there is no evidence to suggest that O'Brien did not or would not know a variety of musicians to approach or that he did not have as 'wide' a view of music as Larchet or Brase. After all it he had conducted some of the best choirs in Dublin, had 'discovered' John McCormack, had accompanied him on his world tour of 1913 and would be given an honorary doctorate in music by the National University of Ireland for his musical services at the Eucharistic Congress held in Dublin in 1932.<sup>73</sup>

What is more, the 'ballad concert' musical stereotype highlighted by Bryan Cooper appeared to parallel the musical choices of the people of the capital city if not of the nation itself. After all, it has been seen that the type of musical performance apparently favoured by the general public in the period in question was of the hybrid 'ballad-opera' concert variety whilst singing constituted 'music' for most people and was what passed for music in the schools, thereby it is not surprising, particularly in view of the limited supply of suitable instrumentalists available, that this musical type also prevailed in broadcasting. Thereby, the performance of a 'ballad concert' programme inevitably led to the broadcasting of a limited range of music, musical forms and instruments.

#### **4.5 'The shadow of the department of finance'**

Another factor that would continue to make musical variety difficult for broadcasting stations the world over was the payment of copyright fees to composers and artists. Reports from as far away as Australia indicated that broadcasting stations were paying at least a fifth of their expenditure on copyright fees and appeals were being made to the 'Commonwealth government' for 'some relief in the matter'.<sup>74</sup>

In Dáil Éireann, Peter de Loughrey, the Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Carlow-Kilkenny, stated in 1929 that whilst it was only right that 'composers of

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<sup>72</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiv, 280-3 (28 Jan. 1926).

<sup>73</sup> See *I.T.* 9 Nov. 1932 and 21 April 1941.

<sup>74</sup> *I.I.*, 27 Jan. 1926.

music and songs' were paid for their 'ability', it was 'an intolerable thing' that a society in London could 'fix' the fees for royalties on music without any apparent 'court of appeal'.<sup>75</sup> Despite the issues of copyright which the government had to deal with to acquire for the nation 'The soldier's song' as the national anthem, no further discussion was held on that matter.

In any case, the apparent variety of musical resources which had been drawn together for the inaugural 2RN performance simply could not have been maintained every evening, for there was only a certain number of musicians in Dublin city who were willing to broadcast for the engagement fees paid to musicians by the station, which were substantially less than those received by musicians who played at orchestras in the city's main cinemas for fewer hours.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, considering the simple fact that the station had been in operation for less than a month, such criticisms about the lack of musical variety were rather premature.

The station had actually begun broadcasting before the relevant financial provisions had been made in Dáil Éireann or the relevant legislation wireless telegraphy had been discussed and passed,<sup>77</sup> something which the finance minister, Blythe, blamed on 'the boundary crisis and other matters'. Thus, the erection of the station itself and the purchase of basic equipment had been provided for out of a government contingency fund.<sup>78</sup> Musicians, rather remarkably, had not been a financial priority. It was not until two weeks after the station officially went on air in 1926 that four musicians - a pianist, a cellist and two violinists - were actually added to the complement of station staff, which numbered twenty.<sup>79</sup>

Up until then the music played on the station, apart from the inaugural broadcast, was provided voluntarily by musicians 'at the personal request of the station director and the musical director' and programmes were arranged on a day-to-day basis.<sup>80</sup> This was markedly different to the situation at the B.B.C. station in Manchester, for example, where the complement of staff numbered fifty-three and twenty-five of those were orchestral musicians.<sup>81</sup> Even in Northern Ireland, E. Godfrey Brown, the first music director of the Belfast B.B.C. station, 2BE which had

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<sup>75</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxix, 2184 (16 May 1929).

<sup>76</sup> Pine, *Music and broadcasting*, p. 46.

<sup>77</sup> Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1926 (1926/45, 24 Dec. 1926).

<sup>78</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiv, 268 (28 Jan. 1926).

<sup>79</sup> *I.I.*, 14 Jan. 1926.

<sup>80</sup> *I.T.*, 7 Jan. 1926. Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 24-5.

<sup>81</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiv, 271 (28 Jan. 1926).

begun broadcasting in 1924, was the first member of staff employed at the station and had put together a wireless orchestra before the station went on air, the practice of broadcasting stations in most countries.<sup>82</sup>

As early as 28 January 1926 though, Walsh himself demanded that the department of finance make financial provisions for musical equipment and for an immediate increase in the number of musicians involved in the station 'orchestra', which he held was 'entirely inadequate'. Finance was granted for two extra musicians only and thus the broadcasting station functioned with a sextet until Fianna Fáil came to government, despite the persistent recommendation of the broadcasting advisory committee, which was constituted in 1927, to increase the orchestra as matter of urgency in order to increase the musical standard and variety.<sup>83</sup>

The advisory committee, of 22 members, each nominated for a term of two years, consisted of many of the persons that Bryan Cooper had suggested might be suitable.<sup>84</sup> The composition of this body, which contained more civil servants than representative experts, was viewed by bodies such as the Wireless Society of Ireland as an intentional ploy by the department of posts and telegraphs to side-track the original intention of the committee. Despite the fact that music amounted to 80 per cent of all material transmitted by 2RN at that time, it is rather surprising that only about 30 per cent of the committee consisted of people who had primarily musical interests or a musical background. These included John Larchet, Arthur Darley, Professor William Starkie, Sir John Irwin, Séamus Clandillon, Denis McCullough and Senator Ellen Costello, a folksong collector from Tuam in Co Galway.<sup>85</sup>

Requests presented to the minister, Ernest Blythe, by the Wireless Society of Ireland for information as to the names of all of the committee representatives and the interest represented by each were regularly turned down and the government was

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<sup>82</sup> Cathcart, *Most contrary region*, pp 20-21.

<sup>83</sup> See P&T files 119/55/1 and 119/55/2 (R.T.É., P.A.), for correspondence between the departments of posts & telegraphs (p & t) and finance, and particularly between the respective departmental secretaries, P. S. O'Hegarty and H. P. Boland, regarding the ongoing attempts of the posts and telegraphs department to secure increased funding for the station orchestra. O'Hegarty continually insisted on the provisional nature of the 2RN musical scheme and the fact that the musical requirements had simply been unknown prior to the station going on air. See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 40-66.

<sup>84</sup> Broadcasting (Advisory Committee) Order, (no. 31/1927) (24 Mar. 1927). Other original committee members included P. S. O'Hegarty, secretary, p & t dept. as chairman, J. McDonnell, p & t dept., M. R. Heffernan, T.D. (Farmers' Party, Tipperary), Professor W. E. Thrift, T.D. (T.C.D.), Mr. W. Norton, T.D. (Labour, Dublin County), Professor W. Magennis, T.D. (N.U.I.), Próinsias O Fathaigh, secretary, Gaelic League, Edward Bohane, director, Royal Dublin Society, Desmond McAteer, Wireless Society of Ireland, D. J. McGrath, lands & agriculture dept. and Seoirse MacNiocaill, education dept.

<sup>85</sup> Cathcart, 'Broadcasting', p. 42.

accused of 'autocratic control and secrecy' and 'flagrant disregard of the public interests and opinions' in the matter of broadcasting.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, because any recommendations made by the advisory committee were not legislatively binding and therefore were rarely implemented, there was regularly conflict between the members and the department of posts and telegraphs. In fact, because of the continuous failure of the department of finance to provide the funding for the expansion of the station orchestra, several members including Fritz Brase, who was appointed in 1929, tendered their resignations on a number of occasions.<sup>87</sup>

Although the committee's primary recommendation that the orchestra be increased was immediately implemented once Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932, all of the voluntary members representing specialist groups were replaced by the government with 'an all-official committee'. This committee consisting solely of civil servants from the departments of posts and telegraphs, education and agriculture, the type of people about whom Gorham remarked 'could be guaranteed to embarrass nobody'.<sup>88</sup> This would remain the position until the 1940s when the committee was reconstituted with relevant experts as originally intended, although it was described in 1950 by the *Irish Times* as 'an impotent body which meets at irregular intervals and lacks authority to insist that its recommendations be adopted'.<sup>89</sup>

In the meantime, however, Ernest Blythe had, from October 1927, taken over the posts and telegraphs portfolio from Walsh (following Walsh's resignation from the government) whilst concurrently holding the finance brief and the vice-presidency of the executive council.<sup>90</sup> Thus, broadcasting came, as Gorham succinctly put it, 'even more closely under the shadow of the department of finance'.<sup>91</sup> Strict control of broadcasting by the department was maintained by the reversion to the exchequer, or state's central fund, of all revenue created by the station each year to be voted out to the department by the members of Dáil Éireann the next year.<sup>92</sup> This was a rather impractical practice which made planning for

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<sup>86</sup> *I.T.*, 26 Feb. 1929.

<sup>87</sup> See *ibid.*, 5 and 26 Feb. 1932.

<sup>88</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 83.

<sup>89</sup> *I.T.*, 2 June 1950.

<sup>90</sup> Walsh, *Recollections*, p.71. Walsh stated that he resigned in protest 'at the abandonment of protection for native industries' by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in 1927.

<sup>91</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 50.

<sup>92</sup> See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 105, 1936-7 (1 May 1947).

musical programmes difficult and complaints about a lack of musical variety continued as a result.

The parliamentary secretary to the department of posts and telegraphs, Michael Heffernan, who was also the chairman of the Farmers' Party with which Cumann na nGaedheal were allied, admitted in the Dáil that the 'occasional monotony' of the programmes was due to 'certain definite financial and artistic limitations'. Despite these limitations he was confident that 2RN supplied 'a well-balanced programme of high artistic quality' and did not accept that music programmes provided by the Irish service were inferior to those of other countries.<sup>93</sup> Heffernan pointed out that those who wrote to the newspapers usually only did so to express grievances and claimed that letters received by the department praising the programmes broadcast were 'far more numerous' than letters of criticism. He said that listeners who disliked a particular item, whether it be 'classical music', 'light music' or 'talks', had the impression that that type of item predominated on the wireless.<sup>94</sup>

Heffernan acknowledged, though, that it was impossible to cater for all musical tastes and that the best the department could hope to achieve was 'to provide a programme pleasing to the majority of their listeners'.<sup>95</sup> Patrick Shaw, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Longford-Westmeath, however, pointed out that the government should be making every effort 'to popularise and develop Irish broadcasting', because with 'world-wide competition in broadcasting', people who had a wireless had a choice of external musical stations to 'listen-in' to. He argued that more money be spent on relaying 'operatic music from the continent', from stations such as Toulouse and Koenigsberg, as well as more music from 'the orchestras in the Capitol, the Metropole and the Grafton picture houses' and from the Irish army and Garda Síochána bands which, in his opinion, could 'not be beaten' and would attract more listeners.<sup>96</sup>

Peter de Loughrey, a Carlow-Kilkenny T.D., disagreed with his party colleague, Shaw, stating that the music programmes broadcast on 2RN could already hold their own with any other station. He did however claim that there was not enough of, what he termed, 'the ancient Irish music' broadcast, an example of which

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<sup>93</sup> *I.T.*, 28 Oct. 1929.

<sup>94</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxix, 2165-6 (16 May 1929).

<sup>95</sup> *I.T.*, 28 Oct. 1929.

<sup>96</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxix, 2176, 2184 (16 May 1929).

he cited as “‘The boys of Kilkenny’...an excellent old Irish song’.<sup>97</sup> Fianna Fáil T.D. for Donegal, Frank Carney, agreed that although it was ‘not much appreciated by certain people’, there had not been as much of what he termed ‘the old music’ as one might like. Carney felt that it was ‘the rank and file of the people’ who paid licence fees who should be catered for and not those who would ‘raise an objection because national music is broadcasted’.<sup>98</sup>

Heffernan assured Shaw that his suggestions for musical programming would receive ‘careful consideration’ but responded quite flippantly to de Loughrey’s apparent grievance ‘that traditional airs from Kilkenny were not broadcasted’. ‘We have been broadcasting a great deal of traditional Irish music’, he said, ‘and on the next occasion I shall take pains to see that the Kilkenny boys will not be forgotten!’ Heffernan also stated that letters were regularly received by the department of posts and telegraphs from places such as Wales, the Orkney and the Shetland Islands expressing approval of both the reception and the musical content as it was. These people ‘in far-away parts’ seemed, in his opinion, ‘to appreciate Irish national music much more than people at home’.<sup>99</sup>

Although what exactly was meant by ‘national music’ was not stated, the identification of such a song as “‘The boys of Kilkenny’” as ‘ancient Irish music’ and thereby the ‘national music’ of the state is significant. The largely positive response from outside of the state to the type of music broadcast from Ireland seemed to attest to the ‘Irish’ nature of the music. One writer to the *Irish Independent* from Kent in England claimed that ‘dozens’ of people there tuned in every night to be ‘charmed by the song and music from Dublin’. The writer considered it a ‘splendid idea’ that the ‘glorious traditional music’ of Ireland was being broadcast and pointed out to ‘the carping critics’ of such music that “‘Cúchulainn’s farewell” – also known as “‘Danny Boy” and “‘The Londonderry Air”” was ‘raved about’ when broadcast from the B.B.C.’s London station, 2LO. He advised Clandillon, the station director, to continue to make the broadcasting from Dublin ‘distinctly Irish’ for every other country in the world had ‘a distinctly national broadcasting programme’. ‘It is’, he

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., col. 2184.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., col. 2185.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., col. 2193-95.

said, 'only natural that Ireland should have one too. It is expected by other nations.'<sup>100</sup>

Again, although no explication of what musical material was considered as 'glorious traditional' or 'distinctly Irish' was given, those who had been concerned about the 'Irish' nature of musical output prior to the commencement of broadcasting in Ireland seemed to have been generally satisfied in the late 1920s. Seán T. O' Kelly, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Dublin North and a future president of Ireland, for example, stated that it appeared to him and those with 'Irish-Ireland ideas', that there was 'fair satisfaction' with the programme material to date.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly it appears that, perhaps, many of the complaints reported in the newspapers or in the Dáil reflected provincial grievances rather than a failure on the part of the department of posts and telegraphs to ensure a 'national' ethos by virtue of the music played.<sup>102</sup>

Patrick Shaw, the Longford-Westmeath T.D., cited his own experience of being in England where he observed that 'a large number of people' tuned in 'specially to listen to the music supplied by our army band', which he personally thought could not be 'excelled by any band in the world'.<sup>103</sup> This is very significant, for the material played by the army bands was not always, as already discussed, of an essentialist Irish character with the type of orchestral music which was played by the band at the Theatre Royal or the Phoenix Park in Dublin also featuring on radio. Hence it may be that people abroad listened to 2RN specifically for 'Irish' music, however they defined that, or simply for 'good' music relayed from Ireland by a good orchestral ensemble.

While difficulties in constructing varied programmes would continue for, due to the financial restrictions imposed by the finance ministry, the money needed to pay for the variety of artists required for a more balanced musical schedule was not available, the department of posts and telegraphs itself remained generally satisfied that the programmes broadcast, on the whole, were 'reasonably good'.<sup>104</sup> Thus, for the rest of the Cumann na nGaedheal administration, 2RN, under the auspices of the department of posts and telegraphs, continued to serve what Rex Cathcart termed,

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<sup>100</sup> *I.I.*, 14 Jan. 1926.

<sup>101</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 1300 (11 May 1928).

<sup>102</sup> This is also borne out by the fact that similar complaints were made about the musical content broadcast from the B.B.C. station in Belfast, 2BE, that it was not 'Ulster' enough. Even the unionist *Northern Whig* newspaper queried 'why do they broadcast so little Irish national music?' (3 Apr. 1931). See Cathcart, *Most contrary region*, pp 65-6.

<sup>103</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 1296 (11 May 1928).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv, 271-9 (28 Jan 1926).

‘an almost undiluted diet of live music’, including recitals by small groups of instrumentalists, solo ‘traditional’ musicians, singers and amateur choirs with intermittent performances by the Garda Síochána and army bands. Indeed, a substantial amount of the station’s budget was also being spent on occasional live performances of orchestral symphony concerts and operas relayed from the B.B.C. with such musical material averaging at about 17 hours a year between 1926 and 1932 at a cost of about £15 per hour.<sup>105</sup>

Such co-operation ran wholly contrary to Walsh’s protestations prior to the inception of the Irish station that all music coming from British radio stations was merely ‘propaganda’ or ‘dope’ which could not be allowed to infiltrate the minds of Irish people. There may have been some element of protectionism here for the choices of material relayed were often criticised for being ‘the heaviest and the most discouraging items on the whole programme’.<sup>106</sup> Even so, any co-operation between the B.B.C. and the Irish broadcasting service points to the implicit role that the B.B.C. played in the establishment of the Irish service, something which Walsh himself explicitly acknowledged.<sup>107</sup>

#### **4.6 Stereotypical programmes and ‘obvious’ education**

Despite the previous hostilities between the independent Irish state and the United Kingdom, this was another instance where the Cumann na nGaedheal government learned from the existing British system another process that would underpin a legitimate and competent state. Significantly though, the use of relayed musical material from the B.B.C. by the Irish state-controlled station also highlighted a pragmatic musical approach which the department of posts and telegraphs adopted amidst calls for a more balanced musical schedule from the public and their representatives in Dáil Éireann. Yet public calls for such an approach to the duties charged on imported wireless apparatus were, as already noted, ignored.<sup>108</sup>

It is relevant to also note that whilst much of the concern about the effects of the wireless tax had concerned the trade in wireless apparatus there was as much

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<sup>105</sup> Cathcart, ‘Broadcasting’, p. 42. This was almost the entire budgetary allowance for the employment of musical artists for one week.

<sup>106</sup> See *Seanad Éireann deb.*, vii, 743 (6 July 1926).

<sup>107</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiv, 273 (28 Jan 1926). Both the B.B.C. managing director, J. C. W. Reith, and the musical director, Percy Pitt, sat on the panel which interviewed for the first director of the Irish station. Technical training was also provided to the director and engineers of the new service by the company. See Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 19.

<sup>108</sup> See ch. 3.

concern articulated about the effects that it had on the quality of musical artists and music programmes broadcast. Many of these concerns reflected the notions expressed earlier in the 1920s that music broadcasting would serve as a civilising influence, bringing to the ordinary rural people elements of 'culture' which would occupy their minds and prevent them living lives of immorality. These concerns also highlighted a continued uncertainty about the dichotomous function of broadcasting as an educative or entertaining cultural medium, an uncertainty which had also informed concerns about the effects of taxation on imported gramophone records.

As early as January 1926, a writer to the *Irish Independent*, for example, had claimed that the taxation of wireless receiving sets was effectively a tax on education 'in a country which sadly lags behind the majority of the countries in Europe in educational progress'. The writer warned the government that broadcasting was 'going to be the great educational and cultural medium of the world, and if those responsible for the government of the Free State really desire that we should keep abreast with other nations, and incidentally make their own broadcasting station a success, they will lose no time in removing the present tax on wireless sets'.<sup>109</sup>

In Seanad Éireann, Thomas Westropp Bennett, who had wondered if the government were intentionally dissuading people from using the wireless, stated that the tax prevented people from 'enjoying a source of instruction and amusement which would be of the greatest possible assistance in alleviating the monotony of life in the country'.<sup>110</sup> In Dáil Éireann, William Thrift, argued that if broadcasting was intended to 'extend or improve the education of the country' it had to be made 'as accessible to the ordinary people as possible'.<sup>111</sup> Richard Wilson, a Farmers' Party T.D. for Wicklow, agreed that wireless had become 'a necessary element in civilisation', and was 'in rural areas...utilised with the most beneficial results'.<sup>112</sup>

Wilson's party colleague, D.J. Gorey, the Carlow-Kilkenny deputy who had advised the government to regard broadcasting as one of 'national importance' rather than a 'business proposition', added that the wireless tax was preventing ordinary 'rural' people from engaging with the wireless as a means of entertainment. He pointed out that outside of the larger towns there were 'practically no amusements of any description' and 'no educational entertainments'.

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<sup>109</sup> *I.I.*, 14 Jan. 1926.

<sup>110</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, vii, 732 (6 July 1926).

<sup>111</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxv, 1101 (5 May 1926).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1104.

The people have nothing to do after a hard day's work except to take up some work in their own home or sit down and do nothing. There are no concerts, no theatres, no cinemas, no music halls, no bands, and they cannot listen-in to the central station as it is not within reach of a cheap wireless set. To put on a tax of thirty-three and a third per cent would aggravate still further the extraordinary position in which the rural population is placed.<sup>113</sup>

Gorey accused the minister for posts and telegraphs, of playing the part 'of Shylock, any tax being justified under the circumstances, because, as a last resort, the man will pay...no matter how unreasonable or unjust the tax is'.<sup>114</sup>

Walsh, still then the minister of posts and telegraphs, pointed out that it was the finance minister's place, and not his, to decide the amount of taxation on wireless imports and whilst he appreciated that strong arguments could be made 'in favour of a state subsidy', he personally felt that 'it would be wrong to take money from the national exchequer for a specialised purpose of entertainment like this'.<sup>115</sup> Despite his rhetoric prior to the inception of the service about its cultural and musical benefits, it was clear that Walsh still viewed broadcasting as a source of entertainment which was not the financial responsibility of the government.

Although the potential for the new national 'institution' to be used as an educational tool capable of inculcating and articulating the musical direction of the nation, rather than solely for the purposes of musical entertainment, had been highlighted by the likes of Bryan Cooper before the actualisation of the broadcasting scheme, it appears to have only really become apparent to the Cumann na nGaedheal government itself in the latter years of its administration.

By May 1928, it was the explicit policy of the department of posts and telegraphs under Walsh's successor, Ernest Blythe, 'to direct and develop public taste by always giving in the programme something a little better than the average listener wants', although the chief function of broadcasting remained 'entertainment'. This, Michael Heffernan, the parliamentary secretary to the department, believed would ultimately create a demand for a higher standard of musical programme content, indeed for 'the best in everything.' Special features of the musical programme broadcast for the year 1927/8, which Heffernan highlighted as fulfilling the department policy, were a series of public symphony concerts held by Vincent

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., col. 1098.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., col. 1099. Shylock, a miserly Jewish money-lender, was a central character in William Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., xix, 2280 (11 May 1927).

O'Brien, the musical director, using an augmented station orchestra, a number of full operas such as *Il Traviatore* and Verdi's *La Traviata*, oratorios such as Haydn's *The Creation* as well as a number of substantial symphony concerts relayed from B.B.C.<sup>116</sup>

However, George Wolfe, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. representing Kildare, stressed that while 'all classes' in his constituency were 'participating in wireless...down to the very bottom', 'a great many of them' thought that there was too much music performed that was 'above their comprehension.'<sup>117</sup> Bryan Cooper pointed out that in Dublin the majority of those 'listening-in' were not 'very rich men' but 'comparatively poor people' who worked 'for a weekly wage' and who found in the wireless 'a pleasure for their evenings, a source of cheap and healthy entertainment'.<sup>118</sup> In contrast to Wolfe's opinion though, Cooper held that the music broadcast on Irish radio needed to be of a much 'higher educational value' for these people than was currently proffered and suggested that the services of a friend, Professor William Starkie of T.C.D., who was willing to present instructive musical items such as 'a talk of a quarter of an hour on Spanish music, illustrating this on the violin', be requested.<sup>119</sup>

Significantly, the service was not really considered by the department of education itself for the intentional education, musical or otherwise, of the Irish people until the late 1930s. The service did not have a specific educational advisory committee, as the B.B.C. did, and the representation of the education department on the broadcasting advisory committee was more perfunctory than engaged. In 1930, it was reported though that the education department might consider using the broadcasting service for special educational transmissions to schools but not 'until such time as a high-power station is established'.<sup>120</sup>

By this time, the Cumann na nGaedheal government had decided to take practical measures to improve and extend wireless reception, to induce more licensees to generate more revenue for the provision of better music programmes in order to direct public taste. In October 1929, Michael Heffernan, the parliamentary secretary of the posts and telegraphs department, had announced that 'after an

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., xxiii, 1285 (10 May 1928).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., xvii, 353-4 (30 Nov 1926).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., xix, 2275-6 (11 May 1927).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., xiv, 283 (28 Jan 1926).

<sup>120</sup> *I.T.*, 23 Jan. 1930.

exhaustive examination of the various methods of extension open to them in the Irish Free State', the department had decided to build a high-power station to provide the majority of the country with crystal set reception. This extension of the broadcasting service was intended to 'cater mainly to the rural population' and Heffernan was confident that the increased revenue from the wireless licences and import duties by way of the extension of the service would be sufficient to defray all expenditure on it.<sup>121</sup>

Whilst the idea of a high-power station, which was to be based at Athlone was generally welcomed, the Wireless Society of Ireland warned that with the new station there should occur a change in programmes which it was felt 'were not modern enough and were too stereotypical – altogether devoted to musical items and "obvious education"', something which it claimed was a result of 'a too narrow-minded idea of what broadcasting could be used for'.<sup>122</sup> For what exactly broadcasting could or should have been used was not specified though.

The high-power station itself did not come about though until Fianna Fáil had replaced Cumann na nGaedheal in government, when it was opened specifically for the purpose of broadcasting the various civic and religious ceremonies associated with the Eucharistic Congress of June 1932. This and even the inclusion, for example, of vocal liturgical music from Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* and Aichinger's "Regina Coeli" sung by O'Brien's Palestrina Choir in the inaugural 2RN programme in 1926 could be viewed as an intentional deference to the Roman Catholic ethos of the new polity by the directors of the new state service. However, with regard to the Eucharistic Congress in particular, it points more simply to the enormous national and state occasion that it was and the capitalisation by the directors of the broadcasting service upon that occasion to attract more listeners by relaying and reporting on the religious ceremonies from Dublin.

The plainchant movement was also enjoying something of a revival in Ireland at this time, evidenced by the foundation of a summer school of plainsong at University College Dublin in 1926,<sup>123</sup> and of plainchant classes at the R.I.A.M.,

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<sup>121</sup> *I.T.*, 28 Oct. 1929.

<sup>122</sup> *I.T.*, 23 Jan. 1930.

<sup>123</sup> See Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Music and religion in Ireland' in Gerard Gillen and Harry White (eds), *Irish Musical Studies*, iii: *Music and Irish cultural history* (Dublin, 1995), pp 128-134 (hereafter cited as Gillen & White (eds), *Irish Mus. St.*, iii).

under the direction of Hubert Rooney, in 1937.<sup>124</sup> The inclusion also of such choral music in the inaugural programme then points more to a consciously inclusive musical eclecticism and the exposition of O'Brien's own work with one of the most highly regarded musical resources in Dublin. Thus the broadcasting of choral music on the Irish broadcasting station was more likely to have been the acknowledgment of another contemporary outlet for musical expression rather than any intentional attempt to inculcate Catholicism. Indeed in 1935, Richard Corish, a Labour Party T.D. for Wexford, stated that it was 'strange' that one had to tune to a B.B.C. station to hear regular mass or talks of 'Catholic' interest: 'If you want to hear a Catholic programme you will not get it from Dublin or Athlone; you have to switch on to supposedly pagan England.'<sup>125</sup>

Wireless licences did increase substantially in the 1930s following the Eucharistic Congress, following the abolition of £5 licence for hotels and restaurants and the £1 licences for schools and other institutions were abolished and following the introduction of an all-round licence fee of 10 shillings. Still, Irish people appeared to have been, as J.J. Walsh himself claimed, 'somewhat slower to take on a matter like broadcasting' than in other countries.<sup>126</sup> Daniel Morrissey, the Labour T.D. for Tipperary, however, claimed that the number of licensees, which stood at about 60,000 by 1935, could easily be quadrupled if broadcasting was not 'being killed at the source by the government' through heavy import duties. Morrissey held that broadcasting should be financed properly as 'a national service worthy of this country, a service of which we should be proud'.<sup>127</sup>

#### **4.7 'That sort of jazz stuff': sponsored programmes and music education**

While the taxation on wireless imports was continued, and indeed extended, by the Fianna Fáil administration, so too was the posts and telegraphs departmental policy of intentionally directing public taste in music. Notably, the musical output broadcasted by 2RN as a government undertaking had only really come under keen scrutiny after the elected members of Fianna Fáil parliamentary party had taken their seats in Dáil Éireann in 1927.

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<sup>124</sup> Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, p. 529.

<sup>125</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 1031 (15 May 1935). It was not until 1948 that weekly high mass was broadcast and not until the 'holy year' of 1950 that the Angelus bell was broadcast a number of times daily at the suggestion of the archbishop of Dublin, Charles McQuaid.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, 2283-4 (11 May 1927).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, lvi, 1022 (15 May 1935).

However, there appears to have been little or no consensus between ordinary listeners, their parliamentary representatives, the department of posts and telegraphs or the station directors about what constituted suitable musical output, let alone musical 'taste'. Even within the Fianna Fáil party there was not homogeneity of thought on the matter. In 1928, for example, Thomas Mullins, a Fianna Fáil T.D. representing Cork West, whilst approving of plans announced to extend the relayed programme schedule to include music from other wireless stations across western Europe as opposed to the B.B.C. alone, had expressed the hope that such programmes would bring 'more programmes for the plain people of a little bit more of a jazzy nature.' Mullins alleged that 'the man in the street' listening to wireless generally found that Irish programmes were 'too classical' in contrast with other programmes relayed by the B.B.C., particularly from their stations in Daventry and London. He pointed out that as most people tended to use their wireless 'for relaxation in the evening after a hard day's work' their complaint was that the music programmes were generally 'too high brow'.<sup>128</sup>

Séan Goulding, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Waterford, however, pointed out that his party colleague, Mullins, 'did not mean actual *jazz* music' but music of a lighter variety, suitable for dancing.<sup>129</sup> Goulding was of the opinion that there 'too much light music being broadcast' and greater efforts should be made to create 'a better musical taste amongst the people' for to cater always for 'the lighter side of things' was to 'fail entirely from an educational point of view'.<sup>130</sup>

It is interesting to note also that the Fianna Fáil T.D.s who commented on the music broadcast by 2RN did not appear to be particularly concerned with the promotion of an Irish station or a particular type of Irish music though, viewing music not in 'national' or 'patriotic' terms but rather in terms of 'class' or taste, or even what they considered to constitute non-national music, believing that it would be a very bad thing for the nation to hear relayed 'that sort of jazz stuff.' Sean Goulding, for example, claimed that was 'not music at all...simply noise'. He said that if people were anxious to have 'dance music' relayed from the Dublin station, he suggested that they tune in to stations in Germany, 'the best place to go for it', adding: 'I hope that we are not going to be afflicted in the future with more of that

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., xxiii, 1288-9 (10 May 1928).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., col. 1299-1300 (11 May 1928).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., xxxiv, 2099 (16 May 1930).

class of music that sometimes the Daventry station sends out...unfortunately they have to cater in England for dancing crowds, and the result is that sometimes we are afflicted with a share of that class of stuff.’<sup>131</sup>

Although the Irish broadcasting service had been modelled on the B.B.C. and the B.B.C. had cooperated in the establishment of the Irish service, it was substantially different in one way. 2RN was a state operation financed solely by licence revenue and some advertisers who ‘bought time’ on the radio as opposed to the B.B.C., which was a public-service operation by a state-appointed board, financed by licence fees but which banned advertising. From the early 1930s in Ireland, there was, with the slow uptake in licences, a move towards ‘sponsored’ programming, with various confectionery, cigarette and cosmetic companies spending about £30 an hour on their music programmes.<sup>132</sup> Whilst this was more than the station could afford to do for a week, varying concerns were expressed, however, at the facts that the station director had no control over the content of the sponsored programmes and that because the sponsors could choose whatever musical artists they desired, for they were paying for their services, many chose to play gramophone records rather than use live artists.

In 1931, Sean Lemass of Fianna Fáil, for instance, asked the minister for posts and telegraphs, Ernest Blythe, if, in view of the ‘prevalent unemployment amongst musicians’, the department would consider insisting that all musical items in sponsored programmes broadcast by 2RN be supplied ‘by native musicians and bands’ and not by gramophone records. Heffernan, the parliamentary secretary of the department, responded, on behalf of the minister, that it would be impractical and ‘inadvisable’ to exclude gramophone records entirely from the radio but that ‘having regard to the desirability of providing employment for artistes’ the department was already ensuring that their use was being ‘strictly limited.’<sup>133</sup> Yet, when Fianna Fáil came into government the following year, the finance department, realising the prospect of large revenues from international companies, actually advertised the sale of airtime on 2RN.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., xxiii, 1299-1300 (11 May 1928). See Appendix G for a comparison between the music played by 2RN, Daventry and London on 10 May 1928, for example.

<sup>132</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 64.

<sup>133</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxix (8 July 1931).

<sup>134</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 86-7.

A perusal of the programme schedules in contemporary newspapers and evidence from various speeches given in Dáil Éireann indicate that in the mid-1930s gramophone records were generally used as 'filler' items and were otherwise usually confined to Sunday afternoons.<sup>135</sup> However, calls for the sole promotion use of 'native' music and musicians reflected, not only concerns for the employment of Irish musicians, but also the prevailing attempts to ensure the sole promulgation of 'native' values in music and culture, particularly in light of the protests made by the Gaelic League and the Catholic hierarchy about 'jazz', usually meaning modern or popular, music and culture in the early 1930s.<sup>136</sup> The playing of such music on imported gramophone records was interpreted as the advertisement of the pervasive influences of modern 'foreign' culture and the negative or un-Irish moral values suggested by the music played and thereby associated with the product advertised. In addition, because of the B.B.C. ban on advertising, there were fears that British cosmetic and confectionery companies were simply using the Irish station to advertise their products to British people in Britain.<sup>137</sup>

Whilst some of the complaints about sponsored programmes were explicitly voiced in terms of ensuring the preservation of Irish moral values and traditions, others were more subtle, expressing concern about the 'quality' of the music played, the definition of 'quality' usually bearing more correlation to personal opinion on the importation of foreign music than 'quality' in musical terms. In Seanad Éireann, for example, the trade union activist, John O'Farrell, stated in 1933, that 'a tremendous amount of terribly mediocre, cheap stuff' was heard on sponsored programmes and the practice of handing over the station as a 'cheap advertisement medium' every evening was tantamount to 'a terrible admission' that the government was unable to support a national broadcasting station.<sup>138</sup>

On the other hand, James Dillon, the Centre Party T.D. for Donegal, claimed in Dáil Éireann that as far as he was concerned, the 'sponsored programmes' on the wireless, by the likes of Beechams, were 'the best programmes' and the ones 'worth listening to' and that those for which the station was itself responsible for producing were 'so manifestly inferior'. The new Fianna Fáil minister for posts and telegraphs, Gerard Boland, remarked that most people thought the opposite to how Dillon did,

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<sup>135</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 1021, 1024 (15 May 1935).

<sup>136</sup> See ch. 3.

<sup>137</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 90.

<sup>138</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xvii (20 July 1933).

believing that the sponsored programmes were inferior to those produced and paid for by the department itself.<sup>139</sup>

The policy on sponsored programming and advertising was reviewed in 1934 following the 'war on jazz' waged by the Gaelic League with the support of the Catholic hierarchy, the league's declaration of the playing of jazz music by the national broadcasting service as being 'against Christianity, learning and the spirit of nationality' and personal attacks on Seán MacEntee, the finance minister, for 'selling the musical soul of the nation for the dividends of sponsored jazz programmes'.<sup>140</sup> Gerard Boland, the posts and telegraphs minister, announced that the broadcasting station would accept 'only advertisements relating to Saorstát products and enterprises'. Whilst this did involve an immediate reduction in revenue, Boland added that this was necessary for there were 'obvious objections on the grounds of national policy to the broadcasting of non-Saorstát advertisements from state stations'.<sup>141</sup> Yet, as long as the department of finance insisted that broadcasting remain self-supporting, there was little question of discarding altogether sponsored programmes, and more importantly the revenue generated by them, and so the criticisms of the playing of 'jazz' music on the national broadcasting station continued.<sup>142</sup>

In 1936, Patrick Kehoe, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Wexford, told the Dáil that it had been suggested to him that 'jazz could be completely eradicated' from the radio programmes, adding that if jazz music was desired by some people, it could be got 'via England in the very best possible form'. When asked by Deputy Frank McDermot, the Centre Party T.D. for Roscommon, to define what he meant by 'jazz' music, Kehoe stated: 'It seems to be a cross between a waltz and all-in wrestling.'<sup>143</sup> Boland informed Kehoe that he could not just 'eliminate jazz' although he would choose to if he could and while he quipped that he was not sure that the definition of 'jazz' given by Kehoe was the 'correct' one he felt that on the whole there was not 'so much jazz broadcast now' anyway by the Irish service.<sup>144</sup>

The following year, Boland's successor, Oscar Traynor, highlighted the fact that only one hour a day was being given to sponsored programming and the main

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<sup>139</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 1383-4 (27 June 1933).

<sup>140</sup> *I.T.*, 12 Jan. 1934. See chapter 3.

<sup>141</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 1016 (15 May 1935). See also appendix G, table 4 for details.

<sup>142</sup> Gorham, *Forty years*, p.66.

<sup>143</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 378-9 (26 Mar. 1936).

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 401.

sponsored programme on the Irish broadcasting service was run by an Irish company, the Irish Hospital's Trust, which tended to use live Irish artists. This company, which sponsored the 'Irish Hospitals' Sweepstakes' programme, to promote the sale of tickets for the Irish Sweepstake, was free to play whatever music they chose and that the only control that the station director exercised over the music programmes was to ensure that there was 'nothing objectionable' about them. Boland's party colleague, Thomas Kelly, representing Dublin South, argued that the material played on the Hospital's Trust programme was 'principally jazz stuff' and that there was 'very little Irish music'. Traynor countered that the music was 'of a varied character' but that because objections had been raised in the Dáil the matter would be looked into.<sup>145</sup> Nothing was done to change the situation, however, and the Hospital's Trust programme proved one of the most popular on the radio for many years after.<sup>146</sup>

By 1937, Clandillon had been replaced as station director by Dr T.J. Kiernan, the former secretary to the office of the Irish high commissioner in London and unlike Clandillon, he was not a musician or singer. Like Clandillon, however, he was a civil servant on secondment from another department and was married to a singer, the famous ballad singer Delia Murphy.<sup>147</sup> Kiernan managed to persuade the department of education to realise the importance of the wireless as a medium of education, and particularly with regard to inculcating musical 'taste'. In 1936 the department inaugurated a series of programmes for the purposes of teaching music in primary schools in cooperation with both the department of posts and telegraphs and of defence. The programmes consisted of works played by the army bands with commentaries on the instruments played and on the lives of the relevant composers.<sup>148</sup>

The following year a more varied series was put in place with performances and commentaries by the Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilí Band, the Irish language singer Pilib Ó Laoghaire and ballad singers amongst other. Indeed as Oscar Traynor, the posts and telegraphs minister, pointed out, the particular type of education

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., lxvi, 1584-5 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>146</sup> See Gorham, *Forty years*, pp 88-91 for details.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp 91-3.

<sup>148</sup> *Radio Éireann annual report for 1936*, p.6. Annual reports were inaugurated by the new director T.J. Kiernan from 1936 but, as Maurice Gorham points out, there are serious difficulties in assessing the statistical information presented on the different types of musical material broadcast. Sponsored programmes, for example, were generally not included, as they were not technically produced by the station and all gramophone music was considered as 'light' music, a term which was not defined or distinguished in any way from 'serious' music. See Gorham, *Forty years*, p.97.

children received by means of a broadcast was 'not a type of education they get in school' and was thus the very reason for such broadcasting. 'Irish poetry and Gaelic songs, choir singing, plain chant, Irish history in ballad form, and band music from No.1 Army band, and so on – these are the types of things the children are fairly certain to appreciate.'<sup>149</sup> That this was also, according to the music profession, the type of musical education that should have been given in the music or 'singing' class in the primary schools in the first place was never mentioned.<sup>150</sup>

That the scheme was necessary and important in musical terms was not denied by any deputy in Dáil Éireann although James Dillon did advise the government not to get 'carried away' with educational broadcasting for children. He reminded the Dáil that about £3,500,000 was already being spent on primary education in the country and stated that it was 'not reasonable to take away from the licence-purchasing public hours of the day of entertainment' for which they were paying.<sup>151</sup> Oscar Traynor, replied that because educational programmes for children were being broadcast during school hours, between 2.30 and 3.00pm, they did not 'interfere with the ordinary broadcasting to the public'.<sup>152</sup>

There was, however, also criticism that the insufficient co-operation between the relevant state departments with Captain Sydney Basil Minch, the Fine Gael T.D. for Carlow-Kildare, in particular, claiming that apart from the intentional educational programmes for children, 'much greater use could be made of the wireless in this country as an educational medium'. The dichotomy between education and entertainment as functions as broadcasting was still in evidence here though with Minch stating that one of the things 'most conducive to self-contentment amongst our people, during the long, wet nights in country districts' was the entertainment provided by the broadcasting station. 'Nothing can be more useful or instructive than a first-class musical programme with a suitable number of variety items', he stated, 'we are all out for economy, I agree, but it should be economy in the right place. Here is certainly one direction in which I, and many others, believe more money could be expended with great national advantage.'<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1584 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>150</sup> See ch. 5.

<sup>151</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1571-2 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, lxx, 1257 (31 Mar. 1938).

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1258 and 1263.

As Marie McCarthy has observed though, these series of music programmes dedicated to educating children were very significant for they were successful 'in promoting a variety of Irish musical traditions, and in serving to mediate between official nationalist policy and the musical education of the nation's youth'.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, they also served to further familiarise young people with some of the musical ensembles recently established under state auspices, such as the army and Garda Síochána bands. However, the musically educative benefits of the programmes were limited for there was no provision on the school curriculum to incorporate the material heard on the wireless. Moreover, the scheme was limited to schools with access to a wireless set, which the department of education did not, and probably could not, provide.<sup>155</sup>

By 1938, there were about 400 primary schools, out of a total of about 5,100 schools, regularly availing the school's music programmes.<sup>156</sup> This number had risen to about 700 by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.<sup>157</sup> Because of the consequent unavailability of batteries and valves for wireless sets or car fuel for teachers to transport their sets to school, only 76 schools participated in 1941 and the programmes ceased.<sup>158</sup> Thus, an endeavour, which had the potential to form some basis for a national policy for music education, if not a national music policy, was short-lived and no such scheme would be revived for rest of the duration of the period in question here, although programmes specifically for children were often broadcast in the evenings.<sup>159</sup>

#### **4.8 'Irish traditional music'**

A year after Fianna Fáil had come into government, Gerald Boland, the minister for posts and telegraphs, announced to the Dáil that 'Irish traditional music' was being given a 'prominent place' in the programming.<sup>160</sup> Even though much of the music that was played under the administration of the Cumann na nGaedheal government was music that was recognised as being of the 'traditional' type, generally satisfying

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<sup>154</sup> Marie McCarthy, *Passing it on: the transmission of music in Irish culture* (Cork, 1999), pp 122-3 (hereafter cited as McCarthy, *Passing it on*).

<sup>155</sup> Contrast this to the situation in Northern Ireland where school broadcasts formed part of the school curriculum and the ministry of education bore part of the cost of purchasing wireless sets for schools.

<sup>156</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 1257 (31 Mar. 1938).

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxiv, 2486 (23 Mar. 1939).

<sup>158</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p.123.

<sup>159</sup> See Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, pp 153-4.

<sup>160</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1380 (27 June 1933).

the 'Irish-Ireland' interests in that regard, no such public discrimination had ever been made. Yet, complaints continued to be made about the broadcasting of this type of music by parliamentary representatives from around the country on behalf, purportedly, of their constituents.

Richard Anthony, an independent Labour T.D. for Cork Borough, for example, complained that while there were 'most elevating and interesting' lectures on Irish music given on the wireless by 'famous Irish musicians', there were very few competent exponents of it, with the same examples of 'Phil the fluter's ball', 'The walls of Limerick' and 'The blackbird' being played over and over again. Anthony claimed that not only was it 'an insult to Irish music to have to listen to "Phil the fluter's ball" every night', but that such 'tedious tameness' gave a bad impression of 'the resources of Irish music'.<sup>161</sup>

James Dillon, then the Centre Party deputy for Donegal, agreed suggesting that getting the 'No. 1 Army Band' in to play every week would be the easiest way to improve the musical quality of the station programmes. He also suggested that the minister for posts and telegraphs, Boland, see to it that more 'good traditional singing' be played on air, for there were in his opinion 'numbers of beautiful traditional singers in the country' who ought to be given 'an opportunity of broadcasting Irish music'.<sup>162</sup>

By the mid-1930s, it was now the explicitly stated policy of the department to 'encourage Irish traditional music and make it available through Radio Athlone [the high-power station] for the people of the country'.<sup>163</sup> However, the government was now accused of discouraging musicians from outside Dublin from travelling to the broadcasting studio in the city by paying them engagement fees which did not even cover their travelling expenses. It was James Dillon again who asked Boland, the posts and telegraphs minister, that 'with a view to encouraging exponents of traditional music to foster their art' the minister might increase the remuneration for such artists' particularly from his constituency in Donegal.<sup>164</sup>

Dillon said that it was 'obvious' to him that 'the most expert exponents' of 'traditional singing, traditional violin-playing and a variety of forms of traditional

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., col. 1383.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., lx, 29 (5 Feb. 1936).

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., col. 28-29.

music' were to be found in the Gaeltacht and the 'more remote rural parts' of the country. He stated:

It is an eminently desirable thing that the traditional music of this country should be incorporated frequently in our musical programmes; but I would like to make this suggestion, that we cannot afford to tolerate the same mediocrity in the presentation of traditional music that we might afford in the presentation of popular music....[W]hen you are broadcasting traditional music, with which a great many people in this country and abroad are not familiar, it should be broadcast as perfectly as it is possible to get it done.<sup>165</sup>

Dillon added that for the best exponents of that kind of music to travel to Dublin, expenses as well as an engagement fee should be offered to those travelling from such places as Donegal.<sup>166</sup>

Boland replied that fees were paid according both to the qualifications of the musicians and 'the programme value of their performances' and with due regard to travel expenses. He refused though, when pushed by Richard Mulcahy, to explain how the 'programme value' of a musician was rated.<sup>167</sup> However, Boland did add that regional broadcasting was being developed so that local musicians would not have to incur expense in travelling to the capital and so that the station would thereby not miss out on local musical talent. Local voluntary wireless committees and musical societies were then responsible for putting forward local musical talent to represent their local area. While Boland was not sure that there would be a very high standard of music in the beginning, he was confident that 'a very high standard of Irish music' would develop as the service grew.<sup>168</sup> In the year 1936/7, about 300 outside broadcasts were made, an increase of fifty per cent on the previous year, and a 'good deal of talent' was reported to have been discovered 'in the rural areas'.<sup>169</sup>

It is also interesting to note that once Fianna Fáil came to government, the department of posts and telegraphs no longer publicly blamed the finance department for the 'certain sameness and monotony' of the programmes broadcast. The reason for monotony was now given to 'the repeated appearance of the same artistes', which in turn was attributed by the finance minister, MacEntee, as 'due entirely to the relative scarcity of local talent with satisfactory qualifications for broadcasting'. MacEntee stated: 'We are a comparatively small community, and it is difficult to

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., lxi, 368-9 (26 March 1936).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., col. 369.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., lx, 29-30 (5 Feb. 1936).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., lxi, 398 (26 Mar. 1936).

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., lxvi, 1567 (22 Apr. 1937).

find a sufficient number of artistes to give a greater variety of programmes within it.' Significantly, he also stated that variety was particularly difficult with regard to 'the Irish items' in the programmes, for owing to the 'comparatively small quantity of Irish music which has been published for orchestral performance', the 'Irish side of the musical programmes' was largely confined to violin and pipe music and, even on these particular instruments, the number of artistes who were competent to perform and who were 'procurable' was 'extremely limited'.<sup>170</sup> Yet, perhaps in an attempt to justify the continued focus on this music, Boland reported that there was a 'growing demand', particularly in 'country districts' for more 'Irish music, particularly dance music, the céilidhe music broadcast nightly being specially appreciated'.<sup>171</sup>

Still complaints about the remarkable 'sameness' of the programmes, night after night, continued. Daniel Morrissey, a Fine Gael T.D. for Tipperary, stated that while he appreciated that it was impossible to please every musical taste, he felt that there was a 'very definite demand' for more 'traditional music', particularly from people in rural areas. He said that there were also 'very many people' who would enjoy more 'céilidhe music'. He added that it was important to be critical of the programmes broadcast on the Irish for these were 'supposed to represent the culture of the country' to the rest of the world.<sup>172</sup>

Morrissey's party colleague, Michael Brennan, a T.D. for Roscommon, agreed that it was time that the people of the nation realised that radio broadcasting had 'gone beyond the experimental stage' and had to be 'attacked boldly' in order to 'catch up with other countries'. Brennan, who termed himself a 'traditional performer', addressed the issue of 'traditional' music, claiming that there were many musicians playing such music on wind and stringed instruments on the radio but that they were 'not at all good exponents of traditional music'. He said that if 'the traditional music of this country' was to be popularised, it was 'worth doing well' with the 'very best performers' and less repetition of tunes like "The flogging reel", which he held was 'really disgusting people down the country'. Richard Corish, the Labour T.D. for Wexford, agreed that more variety was required with regard to traditional music for as it stood he believed that 2RN sounded 'more like a feis than

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<sup>170</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xvii, 721 (26 July 1933).

<sup>171</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, li, 1797 (12 Apr. 1934).

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, lvi, 1020-22 (15 May 1935).

anything else' with repeated performances, of varying degrees of quality, of test pieces.<sup>173</sup>

Gerard Boland responded by admitting that he was a 'non-musical man' and only 'listened-in' as a 'sort of duty' when he took over the portfolio for posts and telegraphs and with it responsibility for the output of the station. He stated that if he was not in charge of the station, he would not listen to any music on any broadcasting station at all. Thus, he advised people that if they wanted 'to get the best out of any broadcasting station, ours or any other, they ought to select what they are to listen to' for if they continually listened to the one station, they would naturally get disgusted with it, no matter the quality. This was something which he would repeat a number of times whilst minister, stating in 1936, for example: 'If people want to enjoy the radio my advice to them is to select the programmes they want to hear.'<sup>174</sup> He added, however, that he himself got 'an indescribable pain' when he heard 'the traditional music' not played well but reminded Dáil deputies that it was difficult to avoid sameness in musical choices when only so many musical artists were available for selection by the musical director as having the required musical and broadcasting standard.<sup>175</sup>

One method of alleviating musical monotony was the playing of gramophone records, not necessarily of the modern or popular kind scorned as 'jazz' by those who opposed 'sponsored' programming, but of orchestral and other works. This was advocated by James Dillon in 1937, when he claimed that the 'ordinary lay ear' rarely knew the difference between a live orchestral performance and a good recording anyway. Bearing in mind the difficulties in providing a live orchestral performance, the expense of relays from the B.B.C. or other European stations and the policy of musical appreciation advocated by the education department in the mid-1930s, Dillon said that 'good gramophone concerts' could 'easily' be given over the radio.<sup>176</sup>

Sydney Minch, the Fine Gael T.D. for Carlow-Kildare, supported this move pointing out that the broadcasting station should have a library of good recordings of complete operas and the like to be played as required.<sup>177</sup> This advice was clearly

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1030.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, lxi, 399 (26 Mar. 1936).

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, lvi, 1037-8 (15 May 1935).

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, lxvi, 1569-70 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1575.

taken for the following year, Boland's successor, Oscar Traynor was able to announce to the Dáil that a gramophone librarian had been appointed and that 'special gramophone recitals' were given on the radio at least once a week.<sup>178</sup>

In an address made to members of the Leinster Society of Organists at the R.I.A.M. in 1938, the station director, T.J. Kiernan, stated that while 'nation-planning' was the main aim of broadcasting in Ireland 'important new musical work' had to be undertaken in terms of musical composition in order to stimulate 'mental activity' of a particularly 'Irish' kind. He admitted that he received many letters complaining that there 'not enough of Irish music was broadcast' but that he had quickly come to realise that what correspondents always meant was 'the music of dancing – jigs, reels and hornpipes' rather than 'new Irish musical compositions'. He said that there was 'more crankiness than creativeness' regarding music in Ireland and believed that the future of Irish music and Irish music broadcasting would come from the schools broadcasting programmes initiated by his department the previous year. 'Wise-planning' would develop musical appreciation and decrease ignorance and 'the silly criticism by adults of today would be displaced'.<sup>179</sup>

Thereafter, a number of necessary musical changes identified by Kiernan were made including collaboration with the department of defence, as noted earlier, to procure a more permanent musical conductor and a further increase in the number of musicians in the station orchestra.<sup>180</sup> In terms of 'Irish' content periodic broadcasts of vocal and instrumental programmes under the title of 'Contemporary Irish composers', which featured the likes of John Larchet, Frederick May, Arthur Duff, Aloys Fleischmann, Harold White, Robert O'Dwyer, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, Michael Bowles and Hubert Rooney, were also instituted under Kiernan's directorate.<sup>181</sup>

#### **4.9 The projection of 'Irish' musical culture in the late 1930s**

However, deputies such as Dillon continued to complain about the image of 'traditional' music that was being portrayed by the national broadcasting station as a result of a departmental policy of insistence upon playing it each evening. Dillon said

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, lxx, 1256-7 (31 Mar. 1938).

<sup>179</sup> *I.T.*, 24 Jan. 1938. See also T. J. Kiernan, 'The developing power of broadcasting' in *JSSISI*, xv, no. 6 (1935/6), pp 37-51.

<sup>180</sup> See ch. 2 and Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 69-74 for details.

<sup>181</sup> Seamus O'Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ire.*, p.200.

that it was 'regrettable' that the half hour of 'gramophone céilidhe music' broadcast each night, which he felt was 'less than the very best', was broadcast as being 'typical of Irish music'. He pleaded:

If we desire to put out Irish music, let it not be wheezing céilidhe band records but rather the most distinguished exponents of traditional music that can be found.... We should bear in mind that many of these artists who have kept alive traditional music do not reap a very golden harvest for their trouble, and, therefore, any opportunity that presents itself ... of offering them encouragement and compensating them for their zeal should not be passed by.<sup>182</sup>

Richard Corish, Labour, Wexford, agreed that traditional music broadcast from Belfast was usually 'far and away better' than that broadcast from the Irish Free State. Corish added:

Music is a thing in regard to which we cannot afford to be one hundred per cent national. There ought to be such a thing as an international outlook so far as music is concerned. I am as fond of a céilidhe as anybody, but I cannot conceive anything more monotonous than céilidhe music lasting for an hour or more. It is merely a repetition. There are two or three bars of music and they are continued over and over again and I do not care how Irish anybody may be, he or she is bound to get tired of that. Surely there is more music and better music in Ireland than céilidhe music?<sup>183</sup>

James Dillon cited as 'quality traditional singing' a recent broadcast by B.B.C. Northern Ireland, as 2BE in Belfast was now known, of Marcella Hurley singing "Bean dubh a'ghleanna"<sup>184</sup> Concerted attempts made in the 1930s to make B.B.C. Northern Ireland, as well as the other B.B.C. stations, more 'regional' and to reflect the musical culture of the region. The Catholic and nationalist newspaper, the *Irish News*, reported in 1936, for example, that a group of musicians, including Norman Hay and Joan Trimble, had been commissioned by the B.B.C. to 'orchestrate the traditional music of the countryside' with the qualification for traditional Ulster music being, 'apart from its intrinsic merit...its adoption by the people of Ulster'.<sup>185</sup>

Céilidhthe were also staged by the B.B.C. Northern Ireland station, with the evolution by the late 1930s of the Irish Rhythms Orchestra, what Rex Cathcart termed, a 'sophisticated céilí band operation', under the direction of David Curry.

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<sup>182</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1570-71 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1579-80.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1570-71.

<sup>185</sup> *Irish News*, 13 Oct. 1936.

The Irish station would attempt, successfully, to emulate this operation through the medium of its light orchestra founded in 1947.<sup>186</sup> However, similar complaints were made in Northern Ireland to those made in the Irish Free State regarding the type and quality of such music broadcast from Belfast. Some people complained, as Cathcart pointed out, that there was not enough focus on regional styles and forms of traditional music while others complained that there was too much in the way of 'highbrow' or orchestral music.<sup>187</sup>

Interestingly, though, when it came to promoting the musical culture of the nation abroad, the Irish station, although it relied on traditional of folk airs for its musical output, did not necessarily present these in a 'traditional' manner. In 1938, for example, Radio Éireann, as the national broadcasting service and its Dublin station were now known following the 1937 re-constitution of the state, broadcast its St Patrick's Day programme to all European broadcasting services at the request of the International Broadcasting Union.

The programme consisted of a variety of orchestral arrangements based on traditional or popular airs played by the Radio Éireann Orchestra as well as a vocal quartet of soprano, contralto, tenor and baritone singing songs both accompanied and unaccompanied, both in unison and in parts and in both the Irish and English languages. The Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilidhe Band played a selection of dance music tunes whilst Leo Rowsome played some airs on the Irish or uilleann pipes.

The programme was well-received across Europe with the director-general of the Swiss broadcasting service, for example, which relayed the programme via its three national stations, commenting on the 'well-chosen melodies, full of freshness, and spontaneous originality'. The director-general admitted that although they had 'no idea about genuine Irish music', European people could now 'highly appreciate the richness and naturalness of your homely music'. He congratulated 'the soloists, the choir, the bag-pipers [sic], the orchestra, the céilidhe band and others' for the success of the Irish programme.<sup>188</sup>

On the other hand a public concert 'devoted entirely to Irish music' arranged in Dublin for St Patrick's Day the following year by the department of posts and

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<sup>186</sup> Cathcart, *Most contrary region*, pp 96-8.

<sup>187</sup> See *ibid.*, pp 27-8, 65-6 and 78 for various examples.

<sup>188</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 1279 (31 Mar. 1938). See Appendix G for details.

telegraphs was reported by Oscar Traynor, the minister responsible for the broadcasting service, as a failure. He stated that the attendance at the concert consisting of 'new compositions and arrangements by Irish composers, large choirs, a céilidhe band playing properly orchestrated Irish dance music, and augmented orchestra' was 'lamentably low and offered a very poor encouragement to those who initiated this development'.<sup>189</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain whether or not this 'failed' type of musical activity was a reflection of the lack of interest for such music in the capital city alone and to determine whether demands for the broadcasting of more music of the traditional kind were actually representative of more rural attitudes or were exaggerated by the parliamentary deputies for those areas, who in turn may have been influenced by personal and party attitudes regarding the identification of particular types of music with Irish nationality and Christian morality.

In March 1939, Erskine Childers, the Fianna Fáil T.D. for the Athlone-Longford constituency and himself a future minister for posts and telegraphs, argued that with regard to the development of 'Irish music', there should be more of an effort to consider the radio in terms of radio and 'make the people think, not merely of Irish music in the sense that they feel it has something to do with Irish culture, Irish folklore or part of an Irish revival, and not merely something to do with céilidhe music as such.' Childers added, however, that he found that most people outside of Ireland, particularly 'in the Manchester district' approved of all of the Irish music programmes and thereby most of the criticism was evidence of 'the old inferiority complex' within.<sup>190</sup>

Eamonn O'Neill, a Fine Gael T.D. for Cork West, agreed that Radio Éireann was 'trying to be realistically patriotic all the time, ultra-Irish in everything and in every piece of music and song'. This, he said, while it was not the 'proper' concept of wireless, was inevitable, considering the simple fact that the service was under the auspices of a government department. He argued that broadcasting was 'transmitting to the people what they want' – not dictating to people what they should be listening to.<sup>191</sup> These concerns were raised following the decision by the Fianna Fáil government, in the previous year 1937/8, to build a short-wave station which would

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., lxxiv, 2486 (23 Mar. 1939).

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., col. 2494.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., col. 2496-7.

transmit Irish programmes to the U.S.A. The idea had first been mooted following the official opening of the high-power station at Athlone in 1933 (although it had been functioning since 1932) as a means of disseminating 'Irish thought and culture to all parts, particularly to the exiled Gaels, all of whom would be delighted to get in touch with the old land'.<sup>192</sup>

However, the proposal was rejected due to lack of available funding.<sup>193</sup> Short wave transmission equipment was eventually imported and installed near the station at Athlone but trial transmissions conducted from 1939 proved too weak to be heard outside of Ireland. Thus, although the government sanctioned the improvement of the experimental station during 1939, the subsequent outbreak of the Second World War put that plan on hold due to the unavailability of equipment and the over-crowding of the air-waves as the war progressed.<sup>194</sup>

After the outbreak of the war, Oscar Traynor was posted to the defence department by de Valera and P. J. Little succeeded him as minister of posts and telegraphs. Little was, as Gorham notes, 'more of an enthusiast for radio than any of his predecessors' who was particularly interested in orchestral music and in using the wireless as a medium for bringing music to the people and creating an informed musical culture in Ireland.<sup>195</sup> Other changes in personnel occurred around this time too with Vincent O'Brien retiring as the station's musical director in 1941 and being replaced by Captain Michael Bowles, formerly of the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band. Incidentally, it was not until this time that the post of musical director was made a full-time permanent one, this despite the fact that music constituted fifty-four per cent of the total programming.<sup>196</sup>

The director, Kiernan, was also recalled by the department of external affairs to take up a post at the Irish legation in Berlin. His post as station director was filled by yet another civil servant, Seamus Ó Braonáin, formerly of the department of education. Ó Braonáin was a former all-Ireland footballer for Dublin and member of the Gaelic League who had been secretary to a commission on the use of the Irish

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<sup>192</sup> *I.T.*, 26 Feb. 1939.

<sup>193</sup> *I.T.*, 1 Dec. 1932.

<sup>194</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 1256 (31 Mar. 1938).

<sup>195</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, p.117.

<sup>196</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxxiii, 1499-1500 (4 June 1941).

language in the civil service and appears to have been influential in ensuring the 'national' ethos of the station through the 1940s.<sup>197</sup>

In 1941, P.J. Little claimed that because of Ireland's neutral status and because the 'impartial manner' with which news items were reportedly presented had attracted more listeners from other countries, the 'need for developing the purely Irish aspects of the programmes' was paramount. To this end, 'distinctive Irish features' such as 'special Irish musical programmes' were extended to feature nightly.<sup>198</sup> While many deputies continued to complain that there was too much of the same type of dance music or céilidhe music played on the radio, Eamon Kissane, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Kerry North, said that there was not enough in the way of 'slow, traditional, Irish airs' such as 'A Mháirín de Bharra' and 'Sliabh na mban'.<sup>199</sup>

The following year, Little again reminded Dáil deputies: 'The desirability of developing the distinctively Irish character of the programmes is constantly in mind'. He claimed that 'insufficient attention' was still being paid to 'the development of national music for radio purposes' and that there was 'a large quantity of Irish music that was practically unknown and not orchestrated'.<sup>200</sup> He said that 'in view of its great national importance' the development of 'Irish music' would 'in future receive special attention' for while there had been 'certain revival in respect of Irish compositions and arrangements' to meet the requirements of broadcasting, this had been 'inconsiderable in volume and too restricted in scope'. Little added that there was a considerable amount of 'national music' which was practically unknown.

The great bulk of the people are only acquainted with Irish music through the traditional fiddle, piano accordion, choirs and céilidhe bands. Arrangements for orchestral and small string and wind combinations are badly needed, and funds for that purpose are being provided experimentally.<sup>201</sup>

Little warned that this would be a slow process though 'because of the need for maintaining a high standard' and expressed the hope that the department of education would have the musical arrangements which were commissioned for broadcasting published and so made available for general use.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, p.118.

<sup>198</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxxiii, 1499-1500 (4 June 1941).

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1509.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxvii, 1149, 1151 (17 June 1942).

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxviii, 2576-7 (26 Nov. 1942)

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, xciii, 1405 (25 Apr. 1944).

Significantly, Little regarded the orchestration, as opposed to the traditional exposition of indigenous music, as the ‘bettering’ of such music.<sup>203</sup> However, as Peter Browne has observed, the perception of traditional music in the earlier decades of the twentieth century was rather different compared with contemporary appreciation, or at least had a different emphasis. Browne states that ‘traditional’ music appears to have generally been regarded as ‘a rich source of beautiful melody which was in abundance in a raw state waiting to be arranged or orchestrated and made suitable for the concert stage or for broadcast’.<sup>204</sup>

This was certainly the case with the general acceptance of the arrangements of traditional and popular airs that were orchestrated by Fritz Brase for the army bands, for example.<sup>205</sup> It was only in the later decades of the century, he argues, that a ‘recognition of folk music performance per se’, incorporating ‘an appreciation of such things as technique, style, regional variation and repertoire’, occurred as part of an international phenomenon.<sup>206</sup>

Whilst the apparent focus on the ‘national’ aspect of music broadcasting was generally welcomed in the Dáil, accusations were made by a minority of deputies that the government was attempting to dictate musical taste. James Dillon, now sitting as a Fine Gael T.D. for Monaghan, took particular exception to the fact that the department of posts and telegraphs ‘should endeavour to arrange’ for his music education by means of the radio. He said that there were great difficulties in ‘teaching us what our tastes should be’ and had no doubt that his musical taste was ‘as good as that of anybody else’: ‘I do not want my taste with regard to musical or other matters to be raised or depressed by anything that the minister or his department may decree. The business of education is a serious matter.’<sup>207</sup>

Dillon added that it was ‘an ignorant outrage’ that those who wished to hear any particular type of music, be it ‘concerto’, ‘céilidhe’, ‘jazz’ or ‘swing’ music, were ‘debarred from hearing it’ and that it was simply ‘ignorant narrow-minded bigotry’ for anyone to deny to anyone else the opportunity to hear a different type of music.

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., col. 1436 and 1440. Examples of such ‘bettering’ in musical broadcasting terms were programmes dedicated in 1943 to the likes of Edward Bunting, dubbed by Little as ‘the man who saved Ireland’s music’. See *ibid.*, col. 1407.

<sup>204</sup> Peter Browne, *Tuning the radio – the connection between Irish radio broadcasting and traditional music* (Cork, 2007), (The Irish Traditional Music Society series) p. 3

<sup>205</sup> See ch. 2.

<sup>206</sup> Browne, *Tuning the radio*, p.3.

<sup>207</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xci, 1789-90 (9 Nov. 1943).

Our minister for posts and telegraphs evidently takes the view that because he or his advisers do not like 'swing' music, or because the seagreen, incorruptible followers of Cathleen ní Houlihán do not like 'swing' music and are prepared to put up with the endless caterwaulings of certain céilidhe bands, other people must put up with it...it is ridiculous to thrust the one type of music down our throats all the time.<sup>208</sup>

Whilst most deputies ignored Dillon's comments in this regard, his party colleague, T.F. O'Higgins, sitting for Leix-Offaly, agreed that it was 'unreasonable' for the department of posts and telegraphs 'to decide exactly what type of music people will get, irrespective of taste, and what type of music they will not get.'<sup>209</sup>

However, Sir John Lymbrick Esmonde of Fine Gael and Richard Corish of Labour, both representing Wexford, complimented the minister for 'banishing partially' and 'cutting down...the jazzing and crooning music', claiming that the 'unanimous view' was that people wanted to hear 'more Irish music and more céilidhe music'.<sup>210</sup>

#### **4.10 Irland-Redaktion and the 'ban' on jazz music, 1943**

No documentary evidence of an official government or departmental ban on 'jazz' music in the early 1940s appears to exist.<sup>211</sup> There was most definitely a calculated 'cutting down' of any music that did not obviously fit with the explicit policy of encouraging 'Irish traditional music' during the war years.<sup>212</sup> This appears, however, to have been generally perceived as a formal official ban.

As P.J. Little pointed out there was a need for a neutral country like Ireland to assert its political independence and cultural identity through the medium of the radio particularly as the country was being targeted with radio propaganda by Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party in Germany. Whilst neutral countries and minorities within Allied territories were being targeted all over the world by this medium, the Irish situation was unique for its proximity as a 'backdoor' to Great Britain, and was thereby of considerable significance to Germany. Furthermore, the Nazi's radio propaganda service to Ireland, Irland-Redaktion, under the auspices of the German foreign office, attempted to target Irish communities in other countries, particularly in the U.S.A.,

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., col. 1792-3.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., col. 1804.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., xciii, 1415, 1410 (25 Apr. 1944).

<sup>211</sup> Information supplied by Mr Brian Lynch, R.T.É., P.A.

<sup>212</sup> As stated by Boland in *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lx, 29 (5 Feb. 1936).

where an estimated half a million people were already listening to German short-wave radio in 1939.<sup>213</sup>

For the first two years of the war, Irland-Redaktion broadcast talks in the Irish language twice weekly but in 1941 this was upgraded to a nightly bi-lingual service under the directorate of Adolf Mahr, an Austrian Nazi who had been the leader of the Nazi organisation in Ireland and had been appointed as the director of the National Museum in Dublin by de Valera in 1934. Mahr and a number of other Nazis in Ireland, most of whom were professionals or prominent civil servants invited to Ireland by de Valera's government to influence various developments and technological advances, had left to assist the German war effort in 1939.<sup>214</sup> The bi-lingual propaganda attempted to instil fear amongst Irish listeners that the defeat of Germany by Great Britain and its allies would lead to a triumph of communism. Regular features included 'flash-backs' to the war of independence and atrocities carried out by the British in Ireland over the centuries, as well as discussions about the 'injustice' of partition and suggestions of German assistance in the unification of the island in return for Irish support for the German war effort, all of which, as David O'Donoghue has claimed, amounted to 'a clarion call to the I.R.A. which at that time was being ruthlessly put down by de Valera's government'.<sup>215</sup>

In musical terms, each programme opened with an arrangement of the Irish jig "The frost is all over", by Fritz Brase, the director of the Irish army's school of music and another member of the Nazi Party in Ireland. Although the Irland-Redaktion programmes could not be heard all over Ireland, and if it was, parts of it, being in the Irish language, would not have been understood, the Irish army was constantly monitoring its output. According to their reports, the service played the same few songs over and over, including "The hills of Donegal", "Mother Machree", "Danny Boy", "Ireland, mother Ireland", "Kitty of Coleraine" and "Come back to Erin" due to the limited number of 'Irish' records available at the Rundfunkhaus, or radio centre, in Berlin.<sup>216</sup> Efforts were made to sound more Irish than the Irish

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<sup>213</sup> See David O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish voices: the story of German radio's wartime Irish service* (Belfast, 1998).

<sup>214</sup> See Gerry Mullins, *Dublin Nazi No. 1: the life of Adolf Mahr* (Dublin, 2007).

<sup>215</sup> O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish voices*, pp 59-60.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

themselves on special occasions, such as St Patrick's Day, when a German male voice choir was heard singing phonetically songs in the Irish language.<sup>217</sup>

The Fianna Fáil government, whose defence minister, Oscar Traynor, was kept fully informed about the Irland-Redaktion programmes, appear to have taken no obvious measures to counteract them. It appears to have been felt that any declarations by the government about the German programme might have drawn attention and increased listenership to the propaganda being broadcast, which was at the same anti-British and anti-neutral, pro-German and pro-I.R.A. This is evidenced by the fact that the one formal complaint which de Valera did lodge with the Nazi government via the Irish legation in Berlin about Irland-Redaktion was after the service advised Irish listeners to vote for Fianna Fáil, as opposed to Fine Gael, in the general election of 1943. De Valera feared that such calls might actually have opposite and negative effects on the government and the neutral status of the Irish state.<sup>218</sup>

There was no apparent ban or cutting down of German 'classical' music either. The notable reduction in the amount of jazz music played on the radio from 1943 appears, then, to have been largely an attempt to counteract the version of Irishness determinedly propagated by Nazi Germany. The focus on the cultivation of traditional Irish music would appear to have been a more subtle means of ensuring that Radio Éireann was *the* only voice of neutral Ireland. Yet there appears to have been little or no contemporary awareness of this and certainly no explicit statements of the government's position at any level. The 'ban' on jazz was interpreted, as the previous Gaelic League 'war on jazz' had been, solely as an attempt to ensure Christian morality and thereby one of Irish identity, something which may or may not have also contributed to its removal from Irish radio programmes, but which the government, by their silence, was complicit in.

Significantly though, there was still little or no consensus as to what that 'jazz', as heard in Ireland in the 1940s, did entail, and certainly less than what 'traditional' Irish music did not. This was not something unique to Ireland or Irish people. Even Sir Thomas Beecham, the founder of the London Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic orchestras, for example, was reported to have claimed in 1941 that 'jazz' and 'swing' music had 'ruined white prestige among the peoples of the

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>218</sup> See *ibid.*, pp 114-8.

Orient and the jungle'. The *Irish Times* newspaper which reported this, however, commented that such was extremely unlikely for one could not see 'what conceivable difference it would make to the average Zulu whether the white man adopts one type of music or the other'. It did agree with Beecham's sentiments towards jazz, though, stating that 'modern dancing' was 'decadent' and signalled 'the return to a primitive form of expression'.<sup>219</sup>

Yet this type of entertainment continued to garner such popularity in Ireland that by January 1943 the *Irish Times* could declare: 'Everybody's doing it.' This newspaper blamed those who had initially accepted the waltz as a respectable dance for having 'prepared the way for the new style of dancing' which had taken 'the young people of the world by storm, and from negro origins became the terpsichorean norm of the white nations'. It also reported that 'those eager traditionalists, the Irish abroad' had also succumbed to the 'onslaught', with chairman of the London board of the G.A.A., reportedly stating that 'no popular support might be expected for the board's céilidhes in London unless waltzes at least were included in the programme'. A survey of Dublin evening newspapers also taken by the *Irish Times* revealed that 'advertisements for functions featuring "swing" bands outnumbered by about three to one advertisements for "céilidhe and old-time dancing", and covered about ten times the space'.<sup>220</sup>

The 'cutting down' or apparent 'banning' of 'jazz', in its ragtime, swing, boogie and other forms in 1943, caused much controversy and was expressed in volumes of correspondence, both for and against the 'ban', to the daily newspapers, mostly by writers using pseudonyms. One particular letter to the *Evening Mail*, for example, charged all jazz music fans with being hypocritical. The writer stated that music was 'a branch of culture, and the culture of Ireland is to be Gaelic. Gaelic poems, stories, folk-lore and songs have been taught, perforce, to these dance fans. ...Compulsory Irish has won territorial freedom and so compulsory music will win intellectual freedom'.<sup>221</sup>

This attitude was criticised by the likes of Brian O'Nolan, writing as the intensely sarcastic 'Myles na gCopaleen' in the *Irish Times*, who commented that

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<sup>219</sup> *I.T.*, 18 Jan. 1941. The following year, the newspaper admitted that 'a few' of its music-loving journalists had been waging 'a war' against what it termed 'this highly-popular form of *unmusical* entertainment' - see *ibid.*, 3 Mar. 1942.

<sup>220</sup> *I.T.*, 28 Jan. 1943.

<sup>221</sup> *Evening Mail* 26 May 1943.

there was for 'our chauvinists' obviously some type of 'mystical relationship between the jig, the Irish language, abstinence from alcohol, morality and salvation', the 'assiduous devotion to the jig' being the criterion for attainment of the latter. He continued sardonically: 'You see Satan invents different devices from age to age in the attempts to destroy our holy native dances and souls. In your grandfather's grandfather's day it was the minuet...Between the jigs and the reels we will yet make Ireland a nation'.<sup>222</sup>

The general consensus, however, was similar to that expressed by one writer to the *Irish Times* who claimed that Radio Éireann could not seriously 'ban' jazz for it had never played 'real jazz', and thereby the supposed ban was simply a 'superfluous' one which, incidentally, would have to be applied also to the cinemas if it were to be taken seriously. The correspondent added:

If Radio Éireann wants to make really sure it is banning jazz, it may have to ban all music, light or serious, written within the last twenty-five years! If it wishes to stop the controversy it has aroused, let it ban that which is poorly played and broadcast a little of everything in music, whether it is jazz or chamber music...If this controversy is serving a useful purpose, it is that interest is being aroused in Irish radio.<sup>223</sup>

While controversy and interest in radio had certainly been aroused, it is also instructive to note that there was also voluble support for the playing of 'jazz' or 'modern' dance music and singers such as Vera Lynn and Bing Crosby. Numerous letters of protest at the 'ban' on 'jazz' from various types of people were printed in the newspapers, with factory workers and dance band musicians alike suggesting the setting up of various swing music appreciation societies, but it is unclear how widespread support for such music was. What is clear, though, is that the support for jazz music was far more vociferous than it had been during the 'war on jazz' initiated by the Gaelic League a decade earlier.<sup>224</sup>

Despite the controversy about the government's apparent dictation of the music to be played on the national broadcasting service in order to present it as being distinctively 'national', all such music that was generally held as 'jazz' and 'crooning' appears to have all but disappeared from Irish radio programmes by the end of the war. Much of this also had to do with the fact that sponsored programming, apart from the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes programme, had generally

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<sup>222</sup> *I.T.*, 15 Mar. 1943.

<sup>223</sup> *I.T.*, 25 May 1943.

<sup>224</sup> See *Evening Mail*, 21, 22 and 26 May 1943 for examples.

ceased on account of companies being unable to pay for advertisements. In 1947, Patrick Halliden, a Clann na Talmhúain T.D for Cork North and a national school teacher, praised the 'Irish' content on the radio claiming that 'were it not the radio, the grand old Irish songs and the music of our forefathers would be entirely forgotten and would pass out of mind and never be heard by the young people who hear in the dance halls and elsewhere so much jazz music...the radio counteracts the tendency of these young people to have a flair for modern dance music and jazz'.<sup>225</sup>

By 1949 though, sponsored programming was becoming popular again with cosmetics and female make-up products being advertised as respectable products. Advertisements could be made by any company registered anywhere on the Irish island. The Music Association of Ireland, while applauding the absence of what it termed 'the more inferior kinds of commercialised music' criticised this recent tendency 'to allow the station to be used by private commercial concerns for advertising purposes, in the form of "sponsored programmes"'. The M.A.I., composed of some of the foremost members of the music profession, stated: 'The resulting musical programmes may be and frequently are of low standard and of a degraded order of taste, and we believe that a national broadcasting station should not need to descend to this kind of commercialism nor put itself at the disposal of salesmen.'<sup>226</sup>

Despite the intentional cutting out of 'jazz' music which had occurred in 1943, Radio Éireann was already broadcasting a series by Brian Boydell, a member of the M.A.I., entitled 'In search of jazz', early in 1948.<sup>227</sup> This was even before Fianna Fáil were displaced by the inter-party government. It was not until 1951, however, that the *Irish Press* reported that the 'long-standing ban on that kind of music' had been breached in a 'pure, unrelieved way'.<sup>228</sup> These changes may well also have had some correlation with the fact that two prominent 'Irish-Irelanders' had retired from the Irish broadcasting service by 1948.

P.S. O'Hegarty, who retired as the secretary to the department of posts and telegraphs in 1945, had been virulently opposed to 'jazz' as a 'fatty degeneration of the morals, of the character, to inefficiency and extinction'. 'Jazz dancing', he had

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<sup>225</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cv, 1935 (1 May 1947).

<sup>226</sup> M.A.I, 'Music and the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 42

<sup>227</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, p. 184.

<sup>228</sup> *I.P.*, 14 May 1951.

claimed, 'never built a civilisation and never will build one.'<sup>229</sup> The Gaelic League member, Seamus Ó Braonáin, also had retired as station director in 1947 to be replaced by yet another civil servant, Robert Brennan. Although Brennan was, in turn, replaced on his retirement in 1948 by C. E. Kelly, the editor and principal cartoonist of the satirical *Dublin Opinion*, Brennan's short tenure was significant. He had been an active member of the Irish Volunteers and the I.R.B., had been the first general manager of the Fianna Fáil newspaper, the *Irish Press*, and Fianna Fáil director of elections. Most importantly, though, he had been the secretary to the Irish legation in Washington and became the first Irish minister in Washington, in which capacity he was closely involved with de Valera's successful efforts to retain Ireland's neutrality between 1939 and 1945.<sup>230</sup>

#### **4.11 The shortwave radio project, 1946-8**

Although the war had caused a considerable loss in revenue to the government as a result of a reduction in the numbers using wireless sets and renewing licences and the withdrawal of sponsorship for musical programmes, it also created a new atmosphere for the revival of the Irish short-wave radio project which had been abandoned in 1939. The medium of radio had assumed an importance during the war that it never had during peacetime and particularly in neutral Ireland which had been targeted with anti-British propaganda by the Nazis. Furthermore, the Irish department of posts and telegraphs was dependent on the British government and the B.B.C. for the security and maintenance of its internal communications whilst its external communications, with the U.S.A. for example, were conducted by telephone through the world-wide network of cables owned by British post office.

The soured relations between Ireland and Great Britain following de Valera's refusal to join the Allied side in the war against Germany and Winston Churchill's public attack on Ireland's neutral stance by means of the radio following the Allies' declaration of victory, and the ability of countries such as Germany to target Ireland with radio propaganda, prompted de Valera into launching an ambitious short-wave radio communications scheme that would not be reliant on British cables.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> P.S. O'Hegarty, *The victory of Sinn Féin: how it won and how it was used* (Dublin, 1924) (1998 reprint), p.130.

<sup>230</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, p. 165. See also Brennan's posthumously published memoir *Ireland standing firm and Éamon de Valera: a memoir* (Dublin, 2002).

<sup>231</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, pp 156-7.

Brennan's appointment as station director in 1947 was, therefore, a strategic one, for 'his wide diplomatic and press experience'. As P.J. Little remarked: 'He knows America...he knows the taste for Irish music and Irish cultural items in America.'<sup>232</sup>

Although the project had been originally intended as a separate and additional overseas service, it became after the war, an assimilated part of the Radio Éireann service. A substantial increase in funding for broadcasting, from £112,437 to £198,100, in the budgetary estimates of 1947 was intended to further the cause of short wave broadcasting. In addition to funding for short wave equipment, which was expected to cost about £30,000, investment was made available to improve the general standard of radio content to prepare for broadcasting on an international platform. The station orchestra was expanded, a second 'light' orchestra was formed, the Radio Éireann Players was founded and several new positions were created to strengthen news, features and outside broadcasting. Although significant representation to the Irish diaspora in the North America, Australia, Canada, South America, India and South Africa, would require multiple transmitters and several wavelengths, which in turn would require negotiation at international conferences, the government was committed to this project for its ambition in creating direct communication lines abroad.<sup>233</sup>

The primary political imperative that drove the project was to highlight the cultural independence and distinctiveness of the Irish nation and to draw attention, as the *Irland-Redaktion* had, to the issue of the partition of the island, in a manner acceptable to the Fianna Fáil government.<sup>234</sup> Little justified the expenditure on the station by calling to mind the amount of revenue, £2,804,381, which the customs duties on wireless materials, licence fees and advertisements had generated for the department of finance since 1925/6. He claimed that when the total expenditure of the wireless broadcasting service, since its establishment, was weighed up against this figure the service had actually created a profit of almost £800,000 for the state.<sup>235</sup> Customs duties on the importation of wireless materials had not been offset against broadcasting expenditure since the early 1930s, when Seán MacEntee, the minister for finance, had stated that they were to be considered as general revenue. But, with a greater political motive prevailing, the government was conveniently able

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<sup>232</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cv., 1626-7 (29 Apr. 1947).

<sup>233</sup> *I.T.*, 16 Jan. 1947

<sup>234</sup> *I.T.*, 9 Mar. 1946.

<sup>235</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cv, 1936-7 (1 May 1947).

to refer to that figure of almost £3 million to justify the expenditure on the short-wave radio project.

However, the proposed extension of the Irish broadcasting service to reach Irish people abroad caused a relatively lengthy debate which threw up a variety of musical issues. P.J. Little himself stated that because the intention was to 'reach the Irish race throughout the world', the standard of the programmes broadcasted had to be raised as much as possible, whilst showing at the same time that this standard was being drawn from 'the very rich deposits of our Irish culture, our Irish language, our literature, our folklore and our music'. He continued: 'We want in all these respects to indicate what Ireland has always stood for. All these things contribute to what might be called the civilisation that belongs to the smaller nations of Europe...Nobody will question the fact that we stand out as a distinguished nation in these matters.'<sup>236</sup>

While the extension of the orchestra, which was already well-regarded, was welcomed, general annoyance was expressed at the fact that listeners within the country were not going to derive any musical benefit from the station. There were concerns too about the musical image of Ireland which was to be portrayed abroad, particularly in the absence of some form of domestic censure. Brendan Corish, the Labour Party representative for Wexford, for example, stated that he hoped that Radio Éireann did not 'misrepresent the Irishman' as the stage Irishman, wearing 'green knee britches, waving a shillelagh and says "begob" and "begorra"' as he claimed was portrayed on the American and British stages as well as on the B.B.C.<sup>237</sup>

Still, Corish congratulated the minister for his plans to extend the orchestra to become 'a national orchestra'. He added, however, that there was a need for more 'middle-brow' music, meaning music which catered for the 'ordinary mass of the people'. He did not mean the 'la-da-di-dah or boo-boop-bi-doo' of jazz music but 'types of opera, musical comedies and overtures', as well as more use of the Irish army bands which he felt were comparable with any band 'anywhere in the world'.<sup>238</sup>

Maurice Edward Dockrell, a Fine Gael T.D for Dublin South, agreed, admitting that as a lover of symphony music he might not be representative of the

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., c, 2304 (1 May 1946)

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., cv, 1615 (29 Apr. 1947).

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., col. 1613.

'general public' but he was sure that the improvements proposed for the orchestra would be approved of by what he termed 'enlightened public opinion'. He expressed his own delight that 'the thoughtful section of the public' was being catered for: 'I am glad to say that the minister is realising the place classical music takes in any educated community.'<sup>239</sup>

Equipment was purchased from the Marconi Company and test transmissions had begun early in 1948. Before short-wave overseas broadcasting could begin in earnest, though, the new coalition government elected in 1948 chose to suspend investment in it for reasons of economy. Fine Gael's Patrick McGilligan, the new finance minister, who had been largely opposed to the project, in the first place, held that the service was 'neither an essential nor a necessary' one.<sup>240</sup> He suggested that it would be better if 'the authentic voice of Ireland' was tried out at home first and some listenership research conducted to determine the economic viability and 'reality' of the proposal. McGilligan stated that he suspected that the project had been just an 'artificial parade of prosperity' and Irish modernity that did not exist, on the part of the Fianna Fáil government and wondered if the station would tell listeners in the U.S.A. of the realities of poverty in and emigration from the country. He suggested that the reality might prove 'so grim in fact that we would rather have a little silence in respect of the whole thing for some time until we have a chance of getting on our feet again'.<sup>241</sup>

Former Fianna Fáil government ministers were infuriated by the decision, with P.J. Little calling the abandonment of the short-wave radio project 'sheer national sabotage'.<sup>242</sup> The former industry and commerce minister, Seán Lemass, called on the new government to consider the scheme in the 'national interests' and not to be influenced by 'what seems to be a prejudice against scheme initiated by their predecessors', thereby giving the 'impression of proceeding without reference to anything that has happened'.<sup>243</sup>

The former taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, also criticised the abandonment of the scheme as an exercise in 'national madness', particularly considering the thought and expenditure which had already gone into it. De Valera admitted that while he

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1894-5 (1 May 1947).

<sup>240</sup> *I.T.*, 7 May 1948.

<sup>241</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cv, 1626-7 (29 Apr. 1947).

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, cxvii, 519 (8 July 1949).

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, cxii, 856-63 and 867-69 (20 July 1948).

was aware of the financial considerations he felt it was a 'mistake' to disregard or postpone the establishment of an independent overseas service, which was considered as 'essential' in other countries, both in terms of education and 'national defence'. He argued that the international situation was not stable enough for Ireland to approach the 'national and economic problems here as if we were facing a period of peace'. He warned that further conflict could be inevitable but by then it would be 'too late' to get the necessary equipment to build a station to provide Irish propaganda from Ireland. He pleaded with the new government not to allow the 'narrow financial viewpoint' to prevail for this was, he said, 'not good financial policy' in the long-term.<sup>244</sup>

The new minister for posts and telegraphs, James Everett, pointed out that the project was only 'postponed' but argued that even if Ireland did have short-wave overseas service, it would easily be 'squeezed out' by more powerful stations in Germany and Russia during wartime because Ireland was unable to negotiate for stronger frequencies. Everett said that the new inter-party government was more concerned with providing social services, housing and increased old-age pensions, in order to relieve 'poverty and destitution in the country', than wasting money on making short-wave overseas transmissions that might never be heard. 'There are thousands of pounds that can be saved by the elimination of unnecessary expenditure or by postponing certain expenditure for a few years', he stated. 'That is the reason why we have postponed the building of the concert hall.'<sup>245</sup> Everett added, sarcastically, that once social services had been provided for people to live in 'frugal comfort', a short-wave radio station could then be built to inform those in New Zealand or the U.S.A. that the living conditions of their 'kith and kin' at home had been improved.<sup>246</sup>

The issue of verbal 'propaganda' was one which had not really been mentioned since the circuitous debates prior to the establishment of a national radio service in the 1920s, when wireless programming was wholly musical, but it was one which came to be discussed in greater detail after 1945. This was prompted by the Fianna Fáil government's intention that a short-wave station be used to inform the

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<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 879-88. Although Fianna Fáil would revive the project when they came back to power in 1951, the practical difficulties of negotiating transmission wavelengths, eliminating interference and acquiring more modern equipment could not be overcome and a dedicated short-wave overseas broadcasting service from Ireland never came into being.

<sup>245</sup> See ch. 6.

<sup>246</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxii, 893-4; 897-8 (20 July 1948). See ch. 5.

wider world about the problem of partition on the island. Some Dáil deputies considered such propaganda, which would be broadcast in the form of ‘talks’ or reports, to be ‘tiresome’ and ‘too obvious’. In 1950, for example, Patrick Cogan of Clann na Talmhúain suggested that music be used as a more subtle form of propaganda, particularly with the broadcasting of ‘national songs and music’. Cogan considered the late Count John McCormack as ‘one of the greatest propagandists on behalf of the Irish nation of his time’ for he conveyed ‘the Irish message far and wide throughout the world’. He said that people in the United States, in particular, needed to be told that the Irish Republic was a place of culture and progress, not a place where there were no industries or factories and illiterate people lived in ‘tumbled-down thatched cabins’.<sup>247</sup>

Although this was not explicitly stated as the intention of the department of posts and telegraphs and despite the focus on ‘traditional’ music in the creation of a distinctively ‘national’ service prior to and during the Second World War, the musical developments which accompanied the short-wave overseas service were intended to portray the Irish republic as a culturally progressive nation. Little’s successor Everett, assured Dáil Éireann that these musical improvements were ‘no less necessary for the proper presentation of programmes for our listeners at home’ than they were for those abroad and thereby their retention was deemed ‘imperative’.<sup>248</sup>

The influence that these musical developments had was significant for the role that the radio orchestras, and especially the symphony orchestra by virtue of its function as the only national symphony orchestra in Ireland, would play, not only on the radio, but also in the development of musical culture in Ireland.

#### **4.12 Towards a national symphony orchestra, 1932-51**

As early as July 1932, the *Irish Times* had called for a ‘first-class state, or semi-state orchestra’ to be formed immediately, the cost of which would not be great ‘if run in conjunction with the broadcasting service’, and which might thereby ‘be financed out of wireless revenue’. It was stated that while the musical efforts of amateur organisations such as the Dublin Symphony Orchestra had been significant for having ‘kept music alive in the city since the war’, Dublin was the only capital city in

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid., cxxi, 645-6 (25 May 1950)

<sup>248</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxii, 893-4; 897-8 (20 July 1948).

Europe lacking 'a permanent, professional orchestra'. A professional musical body, it advised, was preferable for there could be more regular rehearsals, less fluctuation in personnel and thereby the opportunity to develop the homogeneity which was deemed to be 'the essence of all fine ensembles'.<sup>249</sup>

Once Fianna Fáil came into government, the orchestra at the Dublin station had been increased from six to nineteen players. However, as Gorham pointed out, this was not really a sign of state 'devotion to the art of music' but rather a move to ensure that broadcasts heard outside of Ireland by way of the new high-power station at Athlone were creditable and 'good'.<sup>250</sup> MacEntee informed the Seanad that although it would cost about £5,000 per annum, it was, to his knowledge, 'a first-class combination' adequate for general musical requirements and which would be augmented 'to symphony orchestra strength for special programmes'.<sup>251</sup> Such special programmes included relays of public concerts held by the station using the tried formula of augmenting a basic instrumental nucleus, in the form of the 2RN ensemble, with string players, mainly from the R.I.A.M. and brass and woodwind, mainly from the Dublin Municipal School of Music or the military or police bands.

Vincent O'Brien, the musical director, had initiated the practice of holding public concerts, with priority seating given to the 'working classes', in 1927 and these were held until they were suspended in 1930 because of financial loss and poor attendances.<sup>252</sup> Further concerts by the augmented 2RN ensemble had been subsidised by the Irish National Music League (I.N.M.L.) in 1932 and 1933 but this co-operation ceased for, as Richard Pine points out, the I.N.M.L. were 'agitating for the provision of a concert hall in Dublin', an initiative which the Fianna Fáil government were 'unable' to support at the time.<sup>253</sup>

As well as relaying the performances of its own augmented orchestra, 2RN also relayed performance by other prominent musical organisations around the country, including almost all performances by the Dublin Philharmonic Society under the directorate of Fritz Brase.<sup>254</sup> In 1936, James Dillon suggested that the Irish broadcasting service might consider subsidising this orchestra, following the practice of many 'foreign' broadcasting stations of subsidising, or maintaining themselves, a

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<sup>249</sup> *I.T.*, 9 July, 1932.

<sup>250</sup> Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, pp 83-4.

<sup>251</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xvii, 719-20 (26 July 1933).

<sup>252</sup> Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 50-51; Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 45.

<sup>253</sup> Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, p.54. See chapter 6.

<sup>254</sup> See ch. 2.

philharmonic orchestra. The difficulty in Dublin was, according to Dillon, that there were 'not very many wealthy people knocking about', thereby making it very difficult for any such orchestra to develop with 'cohesion and a continuity of work'. Thus, he suggested that the Irish broadcasting service might undertake to pay even 'a regular annual fee in consideration of a certain number of performances before the microphone'.<sup>255</sup>

Boland, the posts and telegraphs minister at the time responded that the issue was being considered and he personally hoped that 'something' along the lines suggested by Dillon could be done.<sup>256</sup> By 1938 the station orchestra had been increased to twenty-eight members and the scheme of public concerts initiated by O'Brien revived.<sup>257</sup> Nine concerts were held in total but the attendances were found to be generally disappointing. Boland's successor as posts and telegraphs minister, Oscar Traynor, stated: 'To what extent these concerts can continue to be given in public in future seasons will be a matter for consideration at a later stage in light of the public interest taken in them'.<sup>258</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War meant that the concerts lapsed the following year and with a reduction in the number of broadcasting hours, an increase in recorded programmes and the use of gramophone records came a reduction in the numbers of live local musicians employed by the broadcasting service.<sup>259</sup> However, the public concerts were revived in 1941 on the initiative of Michael Bowles who had replaced O'Brien as musical director of the national broadcasting station. These provided some employment for the musicians of station orchestra and others and as well as the opportunity of working under a variety of eminent visiting conductors. Little reported that the audience, was, for the most part, 'composed of young people' which he took as evidence that 'a sound public taste' did exist 'for good things in music' which only required 'encouragement and opportunity to make itself apparent'.<sup>260</sup>

Little also justified the concerts by saying that while his initial attitude had been to reduce expenses on account of the war he had quickly realised, possibly under the influence of Bowles, that other countries were spending more money than

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<sup>255</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 369-70 (26 Mar. 1936)

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 402.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, lxvi, 1567 (22 Apr. 1937).

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, lxx, 1257 (31 Mar. 1938).

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxiii, 1499 (4 June 1941).

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxxvii, 1148 (17 June 1942).

ever on 'radio production – as if almost they regarded the expression of their national cultures as part of their defence programme and as part of their war propaganda'.<sup>261</sup> A scheme of programme improvements was thus drawn up in 1942 which included a further increase in the station orchestra from 28 to 40 members, the number Little personally regarded as 'the minimum necessary to secure an adequate standard of performance'. In addition, a radio choir of 24 members was established under the baton of Sir Hugh Robertson of the Glasgow Orpheus Choir for the purpose of providing opera, choral and orchestral works and miscellaneous part-singing in Irish and English by the station. Little believed that through the influence of the 'highly artistic and varied broadcasts' which would now become practicable, 'national musical effort and appreciation would be materially stimulated'.<sup>262</sup>

Here was, as Richard Pine has noted, another 'classic example of the congruence of, and confusion between, politically motivated decisions in cultural matters and the needs of a broadcasting orchestra'.<sup>263</sup> The fact that this initial expansion of the orchestra and revival of public orchestral concerts both occurred at the same time as the 'ban' on jazz, which was widely correlated with a narrow-minded and restrictive musical essentialism, is rather significant. Because 'jazz' correlated with music that was 'popular', 'modern' and itself came in various forms of uncertain hybrid origins played by 'uneducated' musicians, academic musicians generally considered it to be of inferior quality. The 'ban' on jazz points then, not only to a subtle attempt to counteract German representations of 'Irishness' by focusing on 'traditional' Irish music, but also to a desire to 'better' the quality of music played and produced by the station. Good quality music was regarded as that which required some level of academic education and understanding and generally referred to as 'classical' music.

Little warned budding broadcasting artists that, from 1942, any musician or singer who wished to be given an opportunity to audition to broadcast had to furnish 'evidence of training', such as a 'recommendation from a teacher of music' with their application.<sup>264</sup> This measure was designed to limit auditions to those who were likely to produce suitable broadcasting material, for talent alone was not considered to be enough. There is no evidence though of how this method applied to traditional

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., col. 1185.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., lxxxviii, 2574 (26 Nov. 1942).

<sup>263</sup> Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, p. 89.

<sup>264</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xci, 1756-7 (9 Nov. 1943).

musicians in particular where standardisation did not correlate with the ‘traditional’ ethos and methods of oral transmission. Nonetheless, the recent musical changes on Radio Éireann were all widely welcomed and improvements were noticed immediately. By 1946, Little was able to claim: ‘the public symphony concerts have by now become a part of the life of Dublin and, through the radio, of the country’.<sup>265</sup>

According to Little, the attendance at these concerts averaged at about 1,800 persons, over eighty per cent of the capacity of the Capitol Theatre in Dublin, and although the musical standard of the orchestra was never criticised, disapproval was regularly expressed about the ‘high-brow’ nature of the music played. Some deputies criticised the type of ‘classical music’ given over the radio as ‘a reflection of the minister’s own tastes’. Daniel Morrissey, a Fine Gael T.D. for Tipperary, for example, argued that and that this type of music was ‘over the heads’ of most listeners in rural areas although he added: ‘Perhaps it is natural that the majority of people want to get native music which, I suppose, they understand better than the other’.<sup>266</sup> John O’ Leary, a flour mill worker affiliated with National Labour in Wexford, agreed that it was ‘plain music, céilidhe music...and programmes like “Around the fire”’ that ‘the country people’ wanted, not the ‘highfalutin stuff’ that was played by the Radio Éireann Orchestra.<sup>267</sup>

P.J. Little responded that complaints of ‘highfalutin stuff’ being played were instructive for it meant that the standard of music broadcasting was actually good, adding that high standards of musical entertainment would ensure that the Irish nation would be ‘respected by all the nations’.<sup>268</sup> Little also held the opinion that national developments in ‘the art of music’ could not occur solely in Dublin: ‘It is not sufficient merely to give a lead in Dublin, the capital city, and expect the country will follow’, he stated. ‘The country clearly should make its own effort. If it does not do so, there can be no sound indication of the general direction of the Irish musical genius... [M]usic making in the country is of as great importance as music making in Dublin.’<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, c, 2153-4 (30 Apr. 1946).

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, cv, 1843 (30 Apr. 1947).

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1928-9 (1 May 1947). ‘Around the fire’ was what Gorham termed ‘a more native form of entertainment’ consisting of songs and story-telling as might have been heard in a country kitchen. Gorham, *Forty years*, p. 138.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, cxvii, 521-2 (8 July 1949).

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, xci, 1754-5 (9 Nov. 1943).

Thus, a policy was introduced to encourage local musical organisations around the country to arrange series of concerts with the best musicians available to be relayed by Radio Éireann. Despite the transport difficulties of the war, Radio Éireann travelled around the country broadcasting concerts held by musical societies such as the Musical Art Society, Dublin String Orchestra, Dublin Orchestral players, Cork University Arts Society, Newry Light Orchestra and choirs and orchestras from Cork Municipal School of Music. Other organisations which arranged concerts in collaboration with Radio Éireann as part of the decentralised broadcasting policy were Waterford Music Club, Cork University Graduates' Club, Sligo Operatic Society, Limerick Music Club, Waterford Theatre Guild and the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. In addition, Radio Éireann Orchestra musicians also assisted the Dublin Operatic Society and Dublin Grand Opera Society with their productions, which were also broadcast.<sup>270</sup>

Although the broadcasting service was effectively co-ordinating musical activity at a local level, the department of posts and telegraphs was quick to point out that whilst they were 'most anxious to give all possible assistance to every musical activity in the country', those musicians or groups who were broadcast were specifically chosen to serve a 'national' purpose in radiating a favourable 'cultural reputation' for the country. There was awareness that many young musicians used broadcasting engagements to further their musical careers and musical ensembles often used engagements as the sole reason for their existence.<sup>271</sup> Little added: 'It is the policy of the government to decentralise' and to 'use radio as a great national institution so that it will reflect really significant and interesting activities over the whole country'.<sup>272</sup>

The proposed short-wave project prompted the expansion of the radio orchestra to sixty players and the formation of a light orchestra of twenty-two in 1947. It was the intention, however, that both orchestras would be amalgamated from time to time to form 'a sort of national symphony orchestra capable of giving an adequate performance of the most important works' and of works outside the capacity of any orchestral combinations assembled hitherto. Little warned that while every effort would be made to secure musicians from within the country, it would be

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<sup>270</sup> See Gorham, *Irish broadcasting*, p.184 and 199.

<sup>271</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xci, 1757 (9 Nov. 1943).

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, xcvi, 627 (17 May 1945).

necessary to recruit musicians from outside of the country, something which, as already noted, caused some controversy amongst Irish musical interests.<sup>273</sup>

Each of the orchestras was also to have a first-class foreign conductor, the first being the French conductor, Jean Martinon. As already noted, the issues of importing foreign musicians and conductors and the inability and inexperience of Irish musicians in conducting a full-sized symphony orchestra was a contentious one with controversy arising out of the fact that the musical director of Radio Éireann, Michael Bowles, who also doubled as the station's orchestral conductor, was sent abroad to gain experience in conducting large symphony orchestras.<sup>274</sup> The lack of respect afforded to the foreign conductors by the department of posts and telegraphs though was criticised by the Music Association of Ireland (M.A.I.) in their memorandum written in 1949, a copy of which was sent, amongst other letters of protest, to the department of posts and telegraphs.<sup>275</sup> It stated that guest conductors from abroad often found themselves 'completely ignored'. 'When foreign politicians, and sometimes business men, visit this country, they are received with honour by members of the government; artistic emissaries in the persons of eminent conductors or composers should at least have some official attention paid to them.'<sup>276</sup>

The M.A.I. agreed with the department of posts and telegraphs, however, that the engagement of 'a certain number' of instrumentalists from abroad was necessary only so long as there was a shortage of 'first-class players' in Ireland. The association blamed the then shortage on the 'absence of opportunities for the great mass of the population of becoming acquainted with or aware of music in general, and of orchestral music in particular; to a lack of facilities for learning various instruments; and to the absence of prospects sufficiently encouraging to induce young people to take up an orchestral instrument or a musical career'. However, the M.A.I. also praised the 'notable advances' made by Radio Éireann orchestra, 'the only professional orchestra in the country and the only symphony orchestra maintained by public funds', in terms of the creation of a musical culture in Ireland, claiming that until there was 'some other national orchestra, that of Radio Éireann must be regarded as fulfilling the functions of one'.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid., cv, 1296-7 (23 Apr. 1947). See ch. 3.

<sup>274</sup> See ch. 2.

<sup>275</sup> See Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, pp 126-33.

<sup>276</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation'(N.L.I., MS 40,610), p.39

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., pp 45-6.

The association was quick to point out though that ‘only a few good instrumentalists should be imported’ with the ultimate aim ‘that eventually there may be enough good *Irish* players to form an *Irish* orchestra’ for foreign players ‘might prejudice the chances of Irish musicians entering the orchestra’. It added that remuneration for orchestral players should be sufficient enough so as ‘not to deter people from it or to persuade our best players to seek a living elsewhere’. ‘If it is worth having an orchestra, it is worth providing for it properly, and a mean and grudging policy will only invalidate to a large extent the good that would otherwise be achieved.’<sup>278</sup>

It was financial policy, however, which forced the inter-party government to stop, in 1948, not only the provision of a short-wave overseas service but also the public symphony concerts, which had been so popular and so successful and had made use of the newly expanded radio orchestra whilst providing its musicians with valuable musical experience. This move was widely condemned in the newspapers and in Dáil Éireann with numerous statements about the concerts being of enormous value as ‘an effective guide and effective judge’ and ‘a check upon the orchestra, on the conductors and on the organisation of Radio Éireann’.<sup>279</sup>

Everett did not give any response to these statements except to refer to the new direction being taken by the inter-party government in terms of prioritising the improvement of social services and housing over the projection of musical culture. Everett, like many of his predecessors, excluding P.J. Little, continually pleaded ignorance in matters of music, musical activity and quality and referred his policy to the advice of his department, the perfunctory broadcasting advisory committee, the station director and musical director. ‘I am only a lay-man’, he said, ‘I can only be guided by the officials who have been appointed specially to advise me’.<sup>280</sup> This was not to say that Everett actually took their advice.

Some of those advising him on musical matters were members of the M.A.I., an association which publicly ‘deplored’ the abolition of the public concerts as ‘a gesture unworthy of an enlightened and responsible government’. The association argued that unless ‘the people generally are given an opportunity to hear orchestral music at first hand we still remain in one very important respect a backward nation’.

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<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 46-9.

<sup>279</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxvii, 593-4 (12 July 1949).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 626.

An Irish symphony orchestra giving regular concerts, not only in Dublin but in provincial centres, should be regarded as a national necessity. No nation that aspires to take its place in European culture can afford to be without it. Nor can Irish music and musicians ever hope to thrive or to attain a level comparable with that of other countries in the absence of a good and properly directed orchestra'.<sup>281</sup>

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By the end of the period in question here, the broadcasting service had become, as the M.A.I. pointed out, 'the central organisation in national musical life'. The fact that it was run from within the civil service, though, meant that the political party in government, and in particular the minister of finance, could implicitly dictate what was produced by the station. However, the location of the service under the organisation of a government department also meant it that had the potential for the service to be used for 'national' purposes, had the government the will to do so.<sup>282</sup>

As Ronan Fanning has pointed out, despite the fact that there was a general acceptance of the need for economy in the newly independent Irish state, the establishment of the broadcasting service exemplifies a proposal that was important to 'the sense of national pride and prestige of a new state finding its feet'. It was also an example of expenditure 'which if relatively costly economically, was eminently desirable politically'.<sup>283</sup> Indeed, as was the case in relation to the finance initially granted to the army's school of music for example, the establishment of a music broadcasting service and the expansion of its musical facilities at certain key moments during the period in question here, illustrated the inability of the department of finance to resist expenditure on a service considered affecting national prestige were judged as paramount. However, this did not prevent the department from pleading economy on other occasions and effectively curbing the work which, however unwillingly, it had agreed to fund.

Although it was not originally conceived for the development of music in Ireland, the service used music as its primary medium and had, thereby, a significant enduring influence. In the absence of verbal political propaganda, music

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<sup>281</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), pp 45-6.

<sup>282</sup> Richard Pine 'The role of radio in building the Irish state', p.6 – unpublished paper presented at the American Conference of Irish Studies, University College Dublin, 2 July 1987 (available at the Radio Teilifís Éireann reference library).

<sup>283</sup> Fanning, *Irish department of finance*, pp 110-12.

broadcasting was an important implicit agent in the legitimating of the modern Irish state. In remaining almost solely a musical endeavour it did not engage in the political debate or give voice to any overtly political ideology and was therefore an essential element of cultural legitimisation and national integration. However, by promoting 'traditional' music, encouraging quality 'classical' music and dissuading 'jazz' at various stages, a more implicit form of Irish national propaganda was discernible. Despite being alerted to it by certain Dáil deputies in 1924, this potential only appears to have been realised by the Irish government from the late 1930s onwards, when the radio was being used for propaganda purposes on the European continent. Thus, state policy regarding the broadcasting of music and the consequent musical developments which occurred appear to have been invented by successive departmental ministers as the role of the radio as a relevant technological medium in the national context, and the potential of musical activity therein, became more apparent.

In 1949, the M.A.I. pointed out the music profession in Ireland was 'ultimately almost entirely dependent upon broadcasting' for apart from teaching and playing the organ in churches, where remuneration was found to be 'inadequate for a livelihood', Radio Éireann was 'the only regular source of employment for serious musicians'. The broadcasting service, according to the M.A.I., exercised a virtual monopoly in the field of the public performance of music, and was the only public body which sponsored and provided for 'Irish music and musicians'. Not only was the broadcasting deemed to exercise control 'over the survival and quality of the music profession in Ireland' and influence the 'musical standards, education and taste of the population', it was significant in reflecting the 'standards of Irish culture and the quality of Irish musical artists' abroad. There, in the role of establishing 'the prestige of the Irish nation and of Irish culture in other countries' lay, what the M.A.I. termed, 'the paramount importance of Radio Éireann'. Thus 'the musical organisation' of Radio Éireann was considered 'a matter of national concern' and the music director thereby in 'one of the most important and influential positions in the country'.<sup>284</sup>

The level of influence that music broadcasting had, intentionally or otherwise, on the development of musical culture in Ireland was appreciated at state

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<sup>284</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p.39

level, at the time, by P.J. Little. He commented in 1950 that 'foreign artists' would continue to be engaged until such time as 'we have brought our own people to such a standard of efficiency and perfect production that they can take their place in a first-class orchestra'. He added:

At one stage, the people in the musical trade used to say that Ireland cared only about Hottentot music. I think that situation has changed, because, whenever there is anything of a first-class musical kind being produced, there is actually black-marketing in tickets for the particular theatre, which shows a very considerable change has taken place in the musical taste of the country....A great deal has been done, but a great deal yet remains to be done from the point of view of responsibility which attaches to the broadcasting department.<sup>285</sup>

However, calls were being made at that time for broadcasting to be removed from government control and to be directed by an independent body. Eamonn O'Neill, a Fine Gael T.D. for Cork West, had been the first deputy to publicly make such a call in 1939. He held that because the station was then making a profit of about £20,000 per annum, such an amount of money could be used by an independent body for the development of 'Irish music'. O'Neill stated: 'in that way somebody in this country might be got to do for Irish music what Brahms did for Hungarian music. Then people would be got to listen to it as music, qua music, not as Irish music'.<sup>286</sup>

The M.A.I. also supported this idea, suggesting that the service be run by a radio administrative board or council, consisting of musical and cultural experts. This board would appoint the permanent officials of the station, who would be responsible to it, and to the government as a whole. The association admitted that with the 'existing conditions' their proposal bordered 'on the fantastic' but it really amounted 'to nothing more fantastic than the entrusting of matters concerning the nation's cultural and educational well-being and progress to the nation's leading men in these spheres'. 'Only thus shall we ever achieve a national broadcasting service in which we may take pride, and which will represent a reasonable reflection of the best that we as a nation can produce'.<sup>287</sup>

Notably, the M.A.I. was adamant that 'greater integrity of purpose' would not be achieved if the music broadcasting were a private enterprise: 'It should be possible under state management, if under any system; and it should be sufficiently

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<sup>285</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxxi, 616-7 (25 May 1950)

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxiv, 2498 (23 Mar. 1939).

<sup>287</sup> M.A.I., 'Music and the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), pp 75-6.

evident, from whatever point of view we look at it, that if we do not put efficiency and standard first we shall merely be discrediting not only that particular point of view, political or otherwise, but the whole nation'. The association concluded, in a rather depressing contemporary commentary on the treatment of music and musical activity under the auspices of a state-run endeavour:

It is obviously absurd that an organisation playing so important a part in the cultural life of the country, and in reflecting the standards of Irish culture abroad, should be constituted as a minor branch of the Post Office, and it argues a depressing failure on the part of successive Irish governments to recognise either the intrinsic worth of cultural and educational standards, or their value to the nation in terms of prestige – a value that has been well understood and exploited even by the totalitarian military and materialistic states.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid., pp 74-5.

## Chapter 5

### MUSIC, EDUCATION AND MUSIC EDUCATION

When John Larchet, made his 'plea for music' in 1923, the state agency that he chose to send it to was the education ministry. He held that whilst the state was usually blamed for the 'signal lack of musical culture' by failing to supply 'the necessary financial support', he felt that it was ultimately 'the apathy of the public' who had 'shown themselves indifferent to the efforts made on their behalf' by various musicians and musical groups, which was at fault.

Larchet attributed this, in turn, to what he perceived as the dismal treatment afforded to music in the education system. He said:

The real cause of the failure to appreciate good music...is that the people have never been taught to do so. Therein lies the cause of our apathy and our impoverished taste. Our system of musical education is not merely wrong; it is fundamentally unsound. Beginning with the primary and secondary schools, all the way up through the circuitous paths and by-ways of individual teaching and private endeavour, to the music institutions themselves, the whole mental attitude is at variance with common sense. It is not possible to foster a real love for music in our children and an ever developing taste, from a musical education that never aims at producing either.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst he also expressed scepticism about Ireland's perceived musical standing in view of the 'long record of failure' of every musical society which had appeared over the previous two hundred years, Larchet felt that the lack of durable musical culture had been inherited from the system of British administration in Ireland.

Larchet believed, though, that this could be rectified by the new education ministry for it could not be denied that Irish people had inherent musicality and ancient musical culture. In appealing to the education ministry, schools and teachers, in whose hands he personally saw the future development of music in Ireland, he alluded to a return to this age:

The children of Ireland are as sensitive to the appeal of good music as those of any other country. The spirit of the bards still lives in them. Here indeed is fertile soil for the sower of seed. The future of music in our country is in the hands of our education boards, our schools and our teachers.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will examine the extent to which developments in music and musical activity were effected within the state educational system in the period in question

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<sup>1</sup> Larchet, 'A plea for music' (N.A.I., FIN/1/2794) - see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

here. It will focus mainly on the area of primary education, for it was here that the relationship between state, nation and music was most in evidence. In this context, it will also highlight the prevalent level of uncertainty regarding the place and function of music within the education system and the very nature of music education itself.

### 5.1 State, music and the Irish education system, 1922

Among the 'education boards' that Larchet had referred to was the Board of National Education, which catered for primary school education. This board was disbanded once the provisional Irish government assumed responsibility for its affairs in February 1922 and an office of national education with a chief executive officer, Pádraig Ó Broilcháin, was established in its place.<sup>3</sup> This removed, as D.H. Akenson has observed 'the only independent forum whereby lay citizens could influence the formulation of educational policy', a forum that would not become available again until a 'council of education' was formed in 1950.<sup>4</sup> Responsibility for education rested then with the civil service, where the administrative procedures of the former United Kingdom prevailed. The ministers and secretaries act of 1924 incorporated the former boards of education of various levels under a single department of education with a cabinet minister, responsible for all levels of education including primary, secondary and university education, and 'vocational and technical training' which had previously been the responsibility of the department of agriculture.<sup>5</sup>

The education minister was Eoin MacNeill, a professor of early Irish history and Larchet's colleague at U.C.D., a former chief of staff of the Irish Volunteers and an active member of the Gaelic League. MacNeill held that 'the business and main functions of the department of education' were 'to conserve and to build up our nationality.'<sup>6</sup> 'The chief function of an Irish state', he said, and 'the principal duty of an Irish government in its educational policy is to subserve that work'.<sup>7</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>3</sup> Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne (eds), *Irish educational documents, ii: 1922-1991* (Dublin, 1992), p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> D.H. Akenson with Sean Farren and John Coolahan, 'Pre-university education, 1921-84' in Hill (ed.), *New history of Ire.*, vii, 721. See also *Report of the department of education for the year 1930/1*, p.18 (hereafter cited as *Report, dept of ed.*).

<sup>5</sup> 1924/16 (21 Apr. 1924). Under the terms of this act the 'national' schools were termed 'primary' schools and 'intermediate' schools as 'secondary' schools although this usage was in no way universal with both sets of terms being used synonymously right across the period in question here.

<sup>6</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiii, 187 (11 Nov. 1925).

<sup>7</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 17 Oct. 1925. Curiously, education had not been a priority of the first 'illegal' Dáil in 1919, which did not even provide for a ministry of education although it did provide for a specific ministry for the Irish language.

the constitution of the Irish Free State stipulated that all citizens had the right to free primary school education and, from 1926, all children under the age of fourteen years would be obliged to avail of it.<sup>8</sup>

However, the primary school programme as inherited from the former United Kingdom administration was deemed unsuitable for young Irish people, being 'destructive, both of the Christian spirit and of the free and profoundly human Gaelic spirit', by the new Irish Free State government. The inherited programme was held as machinery that had been 'shaped for the purposes of imperialism and the narrowly commercial ideal of the English governments' but had also been an 'unsuccessful attempt to de-nationalise the Irish people'. It was claimed to have 'sapped' Irish people of their 'initiative in education and everything else' whilst any creativity that might have been left was directed in a 'purely competitive system with a clanking paraphernalia' of prizes and exhibitions and 'material success as its be-all and end-all'.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the education ministry proposed to 'remove the most enslaving features of the English system' such as curricula and competitive examinations and allow 'a system of education based on Gaelic culture, and on a maximum of freedom of aim and curriculum, with proper standards'.<sup>10</sup> Ó Broilcháin proposed that the government 'work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music, and tradition of Ireland their natural place in the life of Irish schools'.<sup>11</sup> This was then, as John Coolahan points out, 'accepted as embodying the new government's view in regard to national school education policy'.<sup>12</sup>

How standards were to be determined or maintained in the absence of structures such as curricula and examinations was not revealed but there was confidence that it would 'restore to the nation the individuality and sense of beauty and creativeness that it has almost lost'. Interestingly though, it was also believed that this 'free' and creative system of education would assist the nation economically, for 'merely materialistic education' did not apparently produce initiative and had 'invariably bad economic results'. These general aims of the education ministry then constituted 'the great attempt' of the new Irish Free State

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<sup>8</sup> School Attendance Act, 1926 (1926/17, 27 May 1926).

<sup>9</sup> 'Free State schools: aims of the ministry of education' in *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, p.100.

<sup>12</sup> John Coolahan, *Irish education, history and structure* (Dublin, 1981), p.41.

government to 'recreate our Gaelic heritage' and to create a state that was 'Gaelic in speech and culture' and would allow the 'enabling of Irishmen to be better men and to be better Irishmen'.<sup>13</sup>

It was in this context then that the Irish language was to be used as the 'instrument of instruction' where possible and subjects such as science, needlework and nature studies were eliminated as 'formal obligatory subjects' of the primary school programme of the newly independent state. 'Singing', however, was instituted as an obligatory subject.<sup>14</sup> This, in itself, might have suggested that the teaching of 'music' in schools was intended to be technical instruction in 'vocal' music, rather than a general musically educative subject encompassing various aspects of musical literacy, history and musicianship. An increase in amateur musical activity in the nineteenth century, the age of the virtuoso, something which, as already noted, was not particular to Ireland had led to the establishment of conservatories and academies for the acquisition of technical musicality brilliance at the expense of these other aspects of musical education.

However, because there were no stated curricula for Irish teachers to follow in the teaching of the obligatory subjects on the Irish primary school programme, the 'singing' class was simply used by teachers to 'teach the pupils to sing individually and collectively as large a number of songs as possible'. 'Simple songs' were also to be used to connect the infant classes, who were to be taught solely in Irish, with their surroundings.<sup>15</sup> The primary practical rule which teachers were required to follow in their teaching was 'to act in a spirit of obedience to the law and loyalty of the state' whilst paying 'the strictest attention to the morals and general conduct of their pupils, and omit no opportunity of inculcating the principles of truth, honesty, temperance, unselfishness and politeness'.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, bearing in mind the stated intention of the new education ministry to strengthen the 'national fibre', the 'singing' class appears to have been primarily used by teachers to provide the pupil with a repertory of songs in the Irish language. It was, thus, intended to have less musical and more 'national' value in the restoration of a 'Gaelic heritage'. Music, then, within the Irish system of primary

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<sup>13</sup> *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923.

<sup>14</sup> *First national programme of primary instruction* (Dublin, 1922) cited in Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, pp 92-4

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 94-6.

<sup>16</sup> *Rules and regulations for national schools under the department of education* (Dublin, 1932), p. 68.

education was merely intended to serve the Irish language through song, a measure that was due in no small way to the particular, and often musically ill-advised, zealotry of the language revivalists Gaelic League in the shaping of educational policy.<sup>17</sup> George Moonan, a member of the Gaelic League, for example, stated that a recent 'loss of national education' and 'a lowering of our standard of culture' had been displayed by the fact that Irish people could 'appreciate Schumann and Mendelssohn and Gounod' yet were 'ignorant of our varied stores of thousands of delightful melodies' and unaware of the 'names of Rory Dall or Carolan, Bunting, or Petrie'. He added that the Gaelic League was not opposed 'to the appreciation of the great masters of art', but insisted upon such 'national treasures' as Irish music getting 'the due attention that would be paid to them were they possessed by any other nation of the world'.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it was, that the particular type of singing class specified for adoption in Irish primary schools was one which was intended, along with the Irish language, to 'create an Irish atmosphere for the pupil and to arouse in him a Gaelic spirit and outlook'.<sup>19</sup> Remarkably though, this limited, and rather insular approach to instruction in vocal music, let alone to music education, was not applied to the study of some subjects such as literature in the English language, for example. This subject was intentionally designed 'to bring pupils as far as possible into touch with European thought and culture' through the reading of 'the works of European authors, ancient and modern'.<sup>20</sup>

Curiously, the adaptation to Irish conditions of the singing class in Irish primary schools also reflected, to some extent, the particular heritage of that class in the Irish education system under the former United Kingdom administration.<sup>21</sup> Reforms made in 1900, which also applied to Irish schools, had reduced the focus of 'music' classes from basic tenets of musical education like literacy, sight-singing and ear-training to 'class singing and song repertory'. The aims of this 'vocal music'

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<sup>17</sup> See *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923. See also Akenson *et al.*, 'Pre-university education, 1921-84', pp 727-8; Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, p. 86; Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, pp 636-8.

<sup>18</sup> George Moonan, *Spirit of the Gaelic League* (Dublin, [n. d.]), (Gaelic League Pamphlets, xxx), p. 7, cited in Marie McCarthy, *Passing it on: the transmission of music in Irish culture* (Cork, 1999), p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1930/1, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> *First national programme of primary instruction*, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> See Bernarr Rainbow, *Mus. in ed. thought*, pp 233-44, 256-71 for an account of the development of music at the various levels of the British education system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a discussion of the workings of that system in the Irish context see McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 45-107. See also Frank Heneghan, 'Music in Irish education' in Gillen & White (eds) *Irish Mus. St.*, iii, 157-71.

class were to provide 'recreation and amusement' for pupils, to cultivate their aesthetic facilities, to afford 'training in morals' and 'patriotism,' through the words of songs learned, to train pupils 'in the distinctness of articulation' and healthy pulmonary exercise and to provide them with discipline in the submission to the direction of the choral conductor.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, technical proficiency in 'vocal' music would be taught with great difficulty solely as a class endeavour, as it was in Irish schools, due to the various levels of technical competence naturally present in any one primary school class. John Larchet held the view, however, that the 'singing class' was vital at all levels of education, not for its 'national' or recreational functions, or even for its potential to cultivate competent vocal performers, but because it formed the most accessible 'basis of all musical culture' and was 'indispensable to further progress' in musical development. Thus, he insisted that the singing class should embody:

The teaching of the foundations of everything in music, namely ear training – a systematic development of the pitch sense and rhythmic sense – sight singing and theory. The theory of music (though it may sound a paradox) must be taught as practical music, that is through the medium of time and tune. Music that is not taught through sound is not music at all. In addition, there should be cultivated voice production, and the singing of songs in unison and parts.<sup>23</sup>

In 1925, George Wolfe, the Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Kildare, commented that money spent on teaching 'music' in schools was money 'well spent' because of the 'elevating tendency on the mind' and because children, particularly in urban areas, had opportunities to 'make use of their knowledge of music by joining choirs and so forth'.<sup>24</sup>

However, evidence provided by reports compiled by state inspectors examining the teaching of the various subjects in primary schools, under the provisions of the ministries and secretaries act of 1924, shows that children did not appear to have gained much in the way of 'knowledge of music', either in a technical or generally educative sense, through the compulsory singing class. Moreover, 'music' as a primary school subject would be referred to variably as 'singing', 'vocal music' or 'music', in these annual reports, in official correspondence, by successive

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<sup>22</sup> G. Collar and C. W. Cook, *School management* (London, 1900), pp 317-8 cited in Rainbow, *Mus. in ed. thought*, pp 256-7.

<sup>23</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>24</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xiii, 280 (12 Nov. 1925).

ministers of education and by deputies in Dáil Éireann throughout the period in question here, each term implying something of a different musical character.

What adds further complexity to any examination of the relationship between state, nation and music in the education system, was the inconsistent manner in which the school inspectors criticised the singing class. Some viewed it, as Larchet did, as a combined academic and practical subject intended to raise the general musical literacy and awareness but others viewed it in the nineteenth-century ethos, as a technical subject aimed at improving vocal proficiency in all schoolchildren. School inspectors employed by the new department of education, from 1924, to report on various aspects of schooling within seven designated areas of the state, were opposed to viewing the singing class as an exercise solely in the mechanical instruction of pupils in Irish songs. This was, however, what the state's free and 'Gaelic' school curriculum and the general training of teachers inculcated.

## **5.2 'Singing' and musicality in Irish primary schools, 1920s**

It was reported in 1924/5, for example, that in schools in more northern areas of the Irish Free State, such as Cavan and Monaghan along with parts of Leitrim, Meath, Longford, Westmeath and Louth, the subject of 'singing' was only successfully dealt with where teachers themselves were competent, but that even where this happened, the technical aspects of the instruction such as 'sight-singing' and 'ear tests' were 'not practised frequently enough'.<sup>25</sup> While the singing of 'the most beautiful' of songs in the Irish language by primary school pupils at the competitive level of the feiseanna in Dublin was given as evidence of the 'high standard' which schools in that area had attained in the singing of 'traditional songs in Irish', adequate attention was not found to have been given to the technical aspect of 'voice-training'.<sup>26</sup>

Even where the rendering of songs was said to have been 'surprisingly fine' in certain urban schools in more southern areas such as Cork, Waterford and parts of Kilkenny and Wexford, the lack of 'musical theory' taught and the lack of 'preliminary study of the words' of songs was criticised.<sup>27</sup> Where 'artistic feeling and appreciation' were expressed, there was generally a more 'mechanical' performance of songs in terms of 'time and tune' and a definite lack of 'expression and clear

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<sup>25</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1924/5, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1925/6/7, p.34

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924/5, p. 79.

enunciation'.<sup>28</sup> Rhythmic and timing exercises were neglected except by teachers who had 'a natural aptitude for teaching the subject' and appreciated the importance of such exercises as the 'foundation for progress'.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, it appears then that the school inspectors were more concerned that the 'singing' class provide a basic technical competence in vocal production and an incidental knowledge of musical rudiments.

This focus on 'singing' in primary education, which had largely been inherited from the former British administration, might have suggested that Irish people were competent singers with a certain degree of basic musicality, even by the time that the Irish Free State came into being in 1922. However, Adelio G. Viani, an Italian singer and professor of singing at the R.I.A.M., wrote, as early as 1924, that although there was 'an unmistakable tradition of music in Ireland', much of this manifested in the development of popular songs at the expense of 'the study of the more elevated forms of music'. Viani claimed that most teachers who taught 'singing' were not qualified to do so, explaining that it could not be taught correctly, except 'on scientific principles' of vocal production, breath and muscle control.<sup>30</sup>

Viani stated that few Irish people appreciated 'the time necessary to master the art of singing' without doing 'grave harm' to their own vocal chords. Whereas it was generally accepted that eight or ten years of study were required to master the piano as a musical instrument, it was assumed that six months of study sufficed for vocal music: 'The human instrument, like any other, possesses its own mechanism, which must be studied very deeply if the singer is to give pleasure to his audience without doing injury to himself'.<sup>31</sup> Viani added that vocal music in Irish schools amounted to children singing too loudly in order 'to be heard above their neighbours' and 'too much in chorus', forcing their voices into unnatural registers, and straining their throats in the process.

In order to remedy these deficiencies, he proposed: 'More scientific teaching, more constancy on the part of the pupils, more experience in the conduct of children's classes, less nicotine, a better realisation of the fact that the study of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1925/6/7, p. 30.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1924/5, p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Adelio G. Viani, 'Singing in Ireland' in Fitzgerald (ed.), *The voice of Ire.*, pp 512-3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 514. Newspapers such as the *Irish Times* regularly reported comments about nasality or excessive vibrato in singing or bad diction and control of breathing that were often made by adjudicators at Feis Ceoil competitions, the majority of which were singing competitions (see Appendix B) – see *I.T.*, 16 May 1924 for example.

singing is long and difficult'.<sup>32</sup> However, these recommendations were more applicable to a technical singing class in a system that was intentionally training teachers to teach children how to sing, but this was not really the case in Irish schools. Thus as the 1920s progressed, the inspectors' reports became increasingly negative about the proficiency of pupils in 'the art of music' with serious 'doubt' expressed about the standards being achieved by teachers.<sup>33</sup> The singing class was 'not often taught with high success in the rural schools' and in more northern schools musicality was reported to be 'declining' with one inspector discovering it 'unusual to find anything more than mediocre teaching of the intervals of the common chords of the scale or a knowledge of the various kinds of measures and pulses'.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, in some cases, inspectors reported that 'only a limited number of the pupils' actually took part in singing classes and in such cases the teachers were found to be following 'the line of least resistance' where only 'born singers' received attention, while those 'gifted in a more minor degree' were simply neglected.<sup>35</sup> This was evidence of the disadvantages of a class endeavour centred on technical proficiency, which, in itself, required individual instruction. The inspectors generally agreed though that where musically competent teachers existed, the singing of songs was 'well done', particularly in 'the convent schools' but because most schools did not have such teachers, attention to the theory of the music, to ear and sight tests, and to voice production continued to be neglected.<sup>36</sup>

As a result, it was increasingly found that pupils were so musically unaware and incompetent that they could not be 'as a rule, put in the position to learn an air for themselves' from music notation or even to 'note down a simple air when heard for the first time'.<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, this was something which, in 1927, one school inspector also related to the fact that pupils were afraid to 'come out of themselves' as a result of not being taught or permitted to be self-reliant in their abilities by the Irish national education system.<sup>38</sup>

It would seem then that although the British 'payment-by-results' scheme of education had been supplanted before 1922 the pedestrian pedagogy of teaching a

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 514-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1925/6/7, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929/30, p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17 (English translation of p.28).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.217 (English translation of p. 38); *ibid.*, 1930/1, p.22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1925/6/7, p. 31.

minimum number of set songs by rote which the British system had inculcated had been carried through by more experienced teachers.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, one inspector remarked that 'the minimum number of songs is as a rule the achievement in this subject for the school year'.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, younger teachers were deemed to have been 'generally more competent' in the teaching of the technical mechanics of singing well and of singing in Irish than those 'of twenty or more years' service'.<sup>41</sup> This was despite the fact that the teaching of music in the primary teacher-training colleges did not appear to have been afforded the same consideration or standard as other subjects, for even the entrance to the five main teacher-training colleges was based on a competitive written exam which did not include music or 'singing'.<sup>42</sup>

Thus primary school teachers did not have specific musical qualifications, having had to show similar proficiency in music as other subjects on the curriculum in order to qualify. Seán Neeson, a former Cork Corporation lecturer in Irish music at U.C.C., and a department of education music examiner for secondary schools held, in 1951, that while the provision for music in the training colleges remained 'lamentably inadequate', 'good work' in the teaching of music in primary schools was dependent 'on the calibre of the teacher – who, being a G. P., cannot (save as an exception) be expected to have the specialist's equipment'.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, the importance of teaching music as a general subject, let alone the specific area of vocal music, in primary schools was not universally recognised in Ireland in the 1920s, even at parliamentary level. In Dáil Éireann in 1928, for example, John Joseph Byrne, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Dublin North, questioned his party colleague, and Eoin MacNeill's successor as education minister, John Marcus O'Sullivan, as to why 'music' was a compulsory subject in the entrance examination of all candidates for training as national school teachers. Byrne expressed concern that failure to pass music as a subject involved forfeiture of the entire teaching examination and wondered why 'such over-riding importance' was

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<sup>39</sup> See Rainbow, *Mus. in ed. thought*, pp 233-5 for a description of the British 'payments-by-results' system in relation to music and singing classes. See Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, pp 649-50 regarding the system of capitation grants paid to school by the government from the 1920s.

<sup>40</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1929/30, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1924/5, p. 68.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 1923/4. The five principal training colleges were St. Patrick's College & De La Salle (males only), Our Lady of Mercy & Mary Immaculate (females only) and Church of Ireland (mixed).

<sup>43</sup> Seán Neeson, 'The place of Irish music in education', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 55.

attached to music that 'complete disqualification' was considered necessary in case of failure to pass in that subject.<sup>44</sup>

It is significant to note that although no trainee primary school teacher could qualify if they failed examinations in any primary school subject, objections to this policy were only raised in connection with the music. Larchet had anticipated a response to this point of view when he wrote in 1923:

The same objection applies with equal force to every subject which is not frankly and solely utilitarian, and if there be any value in a classical or literary education, music is of equal importance with every other factor, and is entitled to its rightful place of the programme. The question may also be raised as to the unmusical child, the child who hath no music in his soul. The answer is that such a child does not exist. It is a truism that the aesthetic sense is born in everybody, and only lies dormant, waiting to be cultivated; and the musical, (in some form or other), is all but universal.<sup>45</sup>

The new education minister, John Marcus O'Sullivan, however, countered any potential parliamentary opposition to the teaching of music in primary schools by stating that all candidates had to pass what he termed 'vocal music', as this was an obligatory subject on the national school curriculum and it was therefore simply necessary that 'the great majority of teachers should be competent to teach it'.<sup>46</sup>

However, many teachers were not musically literate or competent themselves and about eight per cent of 522,090 Irish primary school pupils were not receiving any instruction in music, vocal or otherwise, within the state education system in 1928/9.<sup>47</sup> There was then not only inconsistency between the government's view of the singing-class and the views espoused by John Larchet and the primary school inspectors about the nature of such a class, but also disparity between the skills that were required of teachers to make pupils musically literate on a basic technical level and to sing songs in a musically competent manner and those that were imparted to teachers in the teacher-training colleges.

Moreover, not only was there little appreciation of the potential of the school 'vocal music' class to function as a facet of musical education, rather than another facet of an Irish-language class, or even to serve as a location for the cultivation of competent vocal performers, but there was simply fundamental uncertainty regarding the nature and function of music as it was assumed within the Irish education system.

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<sup>44</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 1063 (9 May 1928).

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>46</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 1063 (9 May 1928).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix, 488 (17 Apr. 1929).

The repeated technical references to musical theory and literacy suggested that the inspectors did indeed expect teachers to teach 'singing' as a more academic than technical subject intended to raise the general musical literacy and awareness as opposed to instructing pupils in the mechanical repetition of words to Irish songs.

### 5.3 'Irish' songs and singing in independent Ireland

Even at this rudimentary level though, the compulsory singing class did not appear to have a positive pedagogical influence. The mechanical performance of songs in the Irish language did not reflect the ability of the pupil to converse generally or indeed the teacher to teach, in that language, nor did it reflect that pupils had engaged with any form of patriotic or 'national' spirit, both as intended by the Cumann na nGaedheal government.

The school inspectors' reports, which were themselves a combination of both the English and Irish languages depending on the proficiency of their author, revealed that while singing was generally in the Irish language as required, there were some 'elderly' teachers calling for the teaching 'of an English song or two' to be sanctioned. These teachers, who were to be found in more southern schools of the independent state, were reported as having 'high musical qualifications' and a good record of singing teaching, but little knowledge of the Irish language.<sup>48</sup>

In the absence of official school textbooks, the usual resources used by teachers for the teaching of songs in Irish schools in the 1920s were the numerous song collections published by various agencies in the years prior to political independence as well as drawing on their own personal knowledge. As Marie McCarthy has outlined, this amounted to mixed collection of 'Anglo-Irish' ballads and Irish language translations, such as *The Irish minstrel* published in 1907, and of hymns in the English language, such as 'I'll sing a hymn to Mary', 'Sweet heart of Jesus' and 'Hail glorious, Saint Patrick'.<sup>49</sup>

Songs in the English language such as the *Irish melodies* collection arranged by Thomas Moore and published between 1808 and 1834 had played a significant role in the music classes of various types of schools in the mid-nineteenth century. The Christian Brothers' and convent schools had adopted them as, so Marie McCarthy observed, 'a genre suitable for developing national sentiments' above

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<sup>48</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1924/5, p. 68.

<sup>49</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 88-9.

other forms with 'explicit political biases' such as 'political ballads'. Whilst the notated musical arrangements of Moore's 'melodies' with harmonic accompaniments lent themselves to the teaching of 'art' music of the European aesthetic, the romantic nationalism suggested by the poetical lyrics and the particular social identification of the lyricist himself imbued the melodies with a sense of respectability and 'culture' which had been seized upon in the Catholic schools in particular.<sup>50</sup>

The agenda of school teachers in the nineteenth-century might have been the stimulation of cultural awareness, the cultivation of moral development and the inspiration of a 'respectable', or what Frank Heneghan termed 'anaemic', national sentiment using a wide variety of rather innocuous songs in the English language.<sup>51</sup> That of the successive administrations of the newly independent Irish state in the twentieth century, however, was solely concerned with strengthening 'the national fibre' and reconnecting with the 'Gaelic soul' using the Irish language. To accommodate this more prescriptive agenda, the English language repertory epitomised by Moore's melodies was, as R. V. Comerford has noted, 'implicitly downgraded' in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>52</sup>

Even where more songs in the Irish language appear to have been taught, particularly in the more northerly counties of the Irish Free State, the instruction in music and singing was 'as a rule' given in the English language.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the teaching of the words of Irish songs in Irish and the rest, including 'an cheoil féin [the music itself]', through English appears to have been general practice with forty three per cent of the 483,025 pupils attending primary schools, where vocal music was actually taught, receiving their instruction through a combination of English and Irish in 1929.<sup>54</sup>

Schools in so-called 'Gaeltacht' areas did not seem to have been any more successful either in teaching songs in Irish in a meaningful way or educating pupils in a musical way, for where teachers and students proved proficient in the Irish language they generally had 'no musical qualifications' and where teachers were

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp 66-71.

<sup>51</sup> Heneghan, 'Mus. in Ir. ed.' pp 166-7. Refer also to Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, xxii, 619-20 regarding parallel trends elsewhere in Europe.

<sup>52</sup> Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 198.

<sup>53</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1924/5, p. 47.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 81; *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxix, 488 (17 Apr. 1929).

musically competent they taught the subject in English.<sup>55</sup> The absence of any coherent parallel social and economic policy for the Gaeltacht areas, which might have provided an impetus for the adoption of the Irish language as the vernacular in the homes of pupils and the encouragement and opportunity for the regular use of the language in the wider community, confined the learning of Irish to the schools.

Indeed, as with music so with the Irish language, for what Brown terms 'basic practical problems' such as the existence of several dialects and the need to standardise spelling, grammar and even script for the written language, which the inconsistent presentation of the education department's own annual reports ironically attests to, were not resolutely addressed by the Cumann na nGaedheal government.<sup>56</sup> Singing in the Irish language might have indicated the adoption of the sean-nós or 'old-style' of 'traditional' singing performed by native Irish speakers but the very nature of this solo, unaccompanied, oral tradition, which also varied from region to region, did not lend itself to collective literary instruction.<sup>57</sup>

As Seán Neeson, the former U.C.C. lecturer in Irish music, pointed out in 1951, 'the Irish speaker knew nothing of music, and the musician was ignorant of all things Irish. In the schools, an exceptional zealot might teach as a Gaelic song such a bastard form as Dr MacHale's translation of "The last rose of summer"'.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, while the compulsory singing of songs in Irish was reported to have led to primary school pupils being acquainted with 'gems of songs' which were rendered 'so tastefully as to merit the approval of the most competent critics' in Dublin, Wicklow and parts of Wexford, pupils in other areas were found not to understand at all the sentiments conveyed by the Irish words of the songs they sang.<sup>59</sup> Thus, although the national school system did not attempt to foster the sean-nós or any other musical tradition it could be argued that it contrived a 'new' tradition of Irish-language singing. However, this new form neither increased national pride or musicality nor was actually based on any extant facet, 'traditional' or otherwise, of what Douglas

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<sup>55</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1928/9, p. 221; See also Lyons, *Ire. since the famine*, p. 640. As Lyons points out the actual geographical definition of the 'Gaeltacht' was not arrived at until about 1956.

<sup>56</sup> Brown, *Ire., social & cultural hist.*, pp 40-52; See also Neil Buttimer, 'The Irish language, 1921-84' in *N.H.I.*, vii, 567-9; Lee, *Ire., 1912-1985*, pp 132-36.

<sup>57</sup> See Vallely (ed.), *Irish trad. music*, pp 336-45.

<sup>58</sup> Neeson, 'The place of Irish mus. in ed.', p. 58. Neeson is referring here to the publication in 1842 of a translation of the lyrics of a selection of Thomas Moore's *Irish melodies* into the Irish language by Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam, which had been intended to minimise, what Marie McCarthy termed, 'the social distance and aesthetic differences between art and folk music'. See McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 61.

<sup>59</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1924/5, p. 53.

Hyde had termed music, Ireland's 'most valuable and most characteristic possession'.<sup>60</sup>

It was increasingly found towards the end of the 1920s that as a result of the mechanical learning of songs with Irish words, not only was the 'musical' aspect of singing not being attended to, but the 'national' aspect, that being the background stories of the songs and the expressive connotations of the Irish song-words were not actually being taught to the pupils either. An inspector for the southern region of the country advised that the historical setting of each song be explained and the reason for the composition of the song given, together with some information about the poet. In fact, this inspector felt that many teachers were not choosing suitable songs which had some connection with the locality and to which pupils might thereby relate.

He remarked: 'I was myself in a certain school in the southern part of county Tipperary where neither "Sean Ó Duibhir an ghleanna", "Caoineadh Cille Cáis", or "Bán-chnuic Éireann óighe" had been taught.' He added: 'When new songs are learned, the old ones are allowed to be neglected and are soon forgotten. If they were practised from time to time, a pupil leaving the school at 14 years of age would have a stock of something like thirty Irish songs.'<sup>61</sup> The concerns expressed here centred on the poet, the words, their history and their local relevance as opposed to the composer, the music, its history and local relevance, highlighting that the text of songs held more importance than the actual music, tune or air employed.

Whilst this in itself might have emphasised what Frank Heneghan termed the 'questionable nature of song as a purely musical experience',<sup>62</sup> it was, however, in keeping with the romantic antiquarianism purveyed by the Gaelic League and by certain contemporary Irish musicians and academic commentators.<sup>63</sup> Dr Richard Henebry, professor of Irish at U.C.C. and a prominent member of the Irish Folk Song Society, wrote in 1928, for example, that 'natural music' was 'human' vocal music. Because this was the 'natural expression of certain subjective conditions by means of vocal sounds', rudimentary musical elements such pitch, notes, tone and rhythms

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<sup>60</sup> Douglas Hyde, 'The necessity for de-anglicising Ireland [1892 ]' in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.), *Language, lore, and lyrics* (Dublin, 1986), p. 167; See McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 118; Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 198.

<sup>61</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1929/30, p. 38; English translation on p. 217.

<sup>62</sup> Heneghan, 'Music in Ir. ed.', p. 168.

<sup>63</sup> White, *The keeper's recital*, pp 62-3. See also Emma Costello, 'Paradigms of Irish music history' (M.A. thesis, N.U.I. Maynooth, 1998), *passim*, for an investigation of the types of models used to describe Irish music and recount its origins in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

were originally instinctual expressions of subjectivity untainted by 'conscious or rational intervention'. For Henebry, 'natural' music was not always accompanied by language and words but these were usually accompanied by human music, for the musical elements of the spoken word such as pitch and tone imbued words with their expressive meaning, thereby songs and song-words merely predicated for a more intellectual, but not necessarily better or more 'pure', musical expression.

Henebry disparaged composers who were 'instrumentalists', who, he said, could 'see in the material only the preconceptions in which they have been bred' and who spent 'their time in trying to find the modern scale in folk songs' something he called 'a purely scientific abstraction that was never there'. He added that it was 'utterly vain to imagine for it a determining force at the very beginnings of music' for even 'primitive man' had expressed himself in a musical way and 'sang without waiting for the discovery of the modern scale...a modern and artificial product'.

Henebry criticised the 'modern educational system' for enforcing upon 'defenceless youngsters whatever fad happens to be uppermost at the time, to the exclusion of all others' and which had through its emphasis on 'voice production' forced the human voice to 'imitate' the mechanical musical instrument, yielding its 'rich, red, warm colour' to 'the white and dead tones of the modern opera singer'.<sup>64</sup> This was, of course, generally contested by the likes of Adelio Viani, who stated that not only did the educational system fail to ensure proper 'voice production' but that those who believed that 'one must sing like the birds' failed to remember that birds sang because that was their language, whereas the human voice 'was given by nature not certainly for singing but for speaking'.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, Henebry claimed that 'the highest class' of innate and natural music produced in Ireland was the 'folk' song 'in the common possession of the older speakers of Irish, but the younger generation, who speak more English cannot attempt it at all'.<sup>66</sup> Henebry's colleague at U.C.C., Seán Neeson, also held, in an article that capriciously used the terms 'folk', 'Gaelic' and 'Irish' to, presumably, determine the same type of music, that:

The place of Irish music in our educational system is then, in our schools, in all our schools; its function, to work as a leaven, a vitalising influence. A study of our folk song should be an essential part of our education in all its

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Henebry, *A handbook of Irish music* (Cork, 1928), pp 1-57.

<sup>65</sup> Viani, 'Singing in Ire.', p. 514.

<sup>66</sup> Henebry, *Handbook of Ir. mus.*, p.

branches and at all its stages. Folk song has vitalised the music of every country which, during the past century, turned to this native wealth. If we are to have any significant music, it will spring only from these native roots.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, the issue of song choices and the use of 'folk' songs by schools in the Irish state mirrored much of the debate in Britain brought about because of influential work done by an English school inspector, Cecil Sharp, in that field, since the introduction of the compulsory vocal music subject by the administration of the United Kingdom in 1900.<sup>68</sup>

#### 5.4 Fostering musicality and national sentiment from the 1930s

Although criticism from within the department of education concerned the failure of the system to foster both general musicality and historical awareness or national sentiment, that aimed at the Cumann na nGaedheal government by the opposition in Dáil Éireann towards the end of its administration centred primarily on the latter. In 1931, for example, P.J. Little, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Waterford who would later serve as the Fianna Fáil minister for posts and telegraphs, claimed that the government's national educational policy was lacking 'that kind of national passion which sprang out of certain German educationists and which gave the German education such a high place in the world'.<sup>69</sup>

Whilst Denmark's recent political and cultural history was often used as an example by Irish politicians and state officials in the early 1920s to highlight the economic success of a small country 'on the basis of their cultural national movement',<sup>70</sup> the example of Germany was increasingly regarded as the epitome of a great cultural nation imbued with a very strong sense of nationality, especially by the music profession. Larchet, for instance, held Germany as one of 'the great musical nations of Europe', who paid 'as much attention to music and the fine arts in general' as to 'scientific research', viewing 'both as equally necessary for the development of her people'.<sup>71</sup>

In 1931, P. J. Little advised that the Irish government might look to Germany where the individual felt it 'worth his while getting all the education he could, not

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<sup>67</sup> Neeson, 'The place of Ir. mus. in ed.', p. 58.

<sup>68</sup> See McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 233, for details of numerous articles dealing with this issue prior to 1922; see also Rainbow, *Music in ed. thought*, pp 257-58.

<sup>69</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 1826-8 (22 May 1931).

<sup>70</sup> See *F.J.* (I. F. S. supp.), 13 Aug. 1923 for example.

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix K.

purely for an individual purpose or because he was the slave of any system' but because 'he was a citizen in a great nation'. This type of 'ideal feeling', he said, was 'lacking as a motive in the Irish education system'. He added that rather than acting like a 'mutual admiration society' in congratulating the education minister, the Cumann na nGaedheal party might seriously consider the reports of the inspectors of the education department itself. He hoped that these would continue to be 'as unbiased and as fair' as they had been in 'pointing out matters on which progress should be made' rather than giving Irish primary school teachers 'an opportunity for self-satisfaction'.<sup>72</sup>

When the Fianna Fáil party came to power itself in February 1932 and took over the department administering the national school system of primary education, the reports did continue to criticise the position of music in the schools. The department's inspectors continued to report the same musical shortcomings namely that music theory, sight-reading and ear-tests were still not being taught satisfactorily and that children were not able to learn or note down melodies for themselves.<sup>73</sup> Singing in the sean-nós was not found in any school while part-singing was not found in most schools, except some of the convent schools, and there it was only usually in two-parts - although it reportedly had been in three and four parts 'suim bliadhan ó shoin [a number of years ago]'.<sup>74</sup>

It was also continually found that pupils who did not display 'féith' or 'talent' for music were sidelined while the teachers focused on those who displayed virtuosity, although inspectors believed, as did Larchet, that good teaching would awaken the inherent musicality in any pupil: 'Músglóchadh deagh-mhúineadh an fhéith sin ionntu'.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, inspectors believed that while music provided young people with mental and cultural stimulus, ['is mór an t-árdú meanman agus spreagadh culturdha don aos óg é'], they pointed out that there were still 'scoltacha ann nach múintear aon ceol ionnta toisc gan na hoidí bheith oilte ar an adhbhar [schools where no music was taught due to the teachers not being trained in the

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<sup>72</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 1826-8 (22 May 1931).

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, *Report, dept of ed.*, 1932/3, p. 26; *ibid.*, 1937/8, pp 20-21.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 1932/3, p 26; *ibid.*, 1933/4, p. 23.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1935/6, p. 26.

subject]’.<sup>76</sup> Certainly about four per cent of over 500,000 pupils attending the primary schools were not receiving any musical instruction in the 1930s.<sup>77</sup>

Two measures were introduced by the department of education to remedy this in the 1930s. Donnchadh O Braoin, a teacher from Cork, was employed as an organising inspector of music in primary education. He later claimed that ‘music’ as an academic subject had ‘almost disappeared’ from the curriculum by 1932 because of the general educational dislocation created by the ‘concentration on Irish’. Furthermore, he added that between twenty and ninety per cent of children in schools in ‘country districts’ were ‘non-singers’ as a result of ‘the proportion of teachers leaving the training colleges incapable of teaching music’, which he put at about twenty-five per cent.<sup>78</sup>

In order to remedy this then and to re-train teachers in the teaching of music in Irish, ‘courses of instruction for national teachers in the methods of teaching music’ were held in various centres around the country each summer from 1939 under O Braoin’s direction.<sup>79</sup> The numbers of teachers who attended these courses fluctuated dramatically from about 700 in the first year to 432 in the summer of 1943, and from 505 in 1944 to 101 in 1946, with the numbers averaging out at about 400 each year for the rest of the period in question.<sup>80</sup> Despite the fluctuating attendance, the standard of musical education, as opposed to mere singing in the Irish language, being taught by primary school teachers who had attended the courses, which O Braoin estimated at ‘about one-third of the whole body of primary teachers’, had notably improved all over the country.<sup>81</sup>

From 1944, the reports of the school inspectors were generally more positive about the increase in general musicality of Irish children and noted many improvements in the musical aspects of the music class, especially in modulator exercises and voice production.<sup>82</sup> In fact, the inspectors were generally ‘sásta leis an mbail atá ar cheol [happy with the state of music]’ in the schools,<sup>83</sup> ‘de bharr an deigh-stiúrúcháin a tugadh ins an adhbhar sin ins na cúrsaí samhraidh le bliadhanta beaga anuas [due to the good direction given in the subject at the summer courses in

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 1936/7, p.19.

<sup>77</sup> Calculated from figures presented in *Report, dept of ed.* for the 1930s.

<sup>78</sup> O Braoin, ‘Music in the primary schools’ in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 37.

<sup>79</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1940/1, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> See reports of the dept of ed. for each of the years between 1938/9 and 1950/1.

<sup>81</sup> O Braoin, ‘Mus. in the primary schools’, p. 38.

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., *Report, dept of ed.*, 1943/4, p. 17; *ibid.*, 1946/7, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 1944/5, p. 19.

the last few years]'.<sup>84</sup> Of course, this probably had some correlation with a general, if slight, improvement in Irish musical culture by this time owing to the increased opportunities for hearing various forms of music in the cinemas and variety theatres, by means of public concerts and gramophone records and of course owing to the influence of the national broadcasting service. However, criticism continued to be made regarding the concentration on singing songs with Irish words. It was reported in 1947 for example:

D'fhéadfaí tuiscint níos fearr i bhfocla na n-amhrán a shaothrú; dá ndéantaí amhlaidh is minicí a cloisfí an t-aos óg ag gabháil na n-amhrán nGaelach lasmuigh den scoil [Better understanding of the words of the songs ought to be cultivated; if this were done the young people could be heard singing Irish songs outside of school more often].<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, of the ninety-six per cent 'under instruction' in music in 1932, forty-two per cent of those were taught through a combination of English and Irish or through the English language alone, a percentage only marginally lower than it had been in the 1920s. It is significant to note, though, that whilst a greater proportion of the total number of pupils studying music or singing were taught through English and Irish or through the English language alone, the proportion decreased as the standard and ages of the children increased so that there were, in numerical terms, fewer children taught singing through Irish alone in the higher standards than in the infant classes.<sup>86</sup>

This pattern had changed somewhat by 1934, for although a significant proportion of students were still taught singing in English and Irish or English alone (thirty-two per cent as opposed to forty-two per cent in 1932), the actual numbers of those in the fourth class and higher were not greater than those being instructed solely in Irish, as they had been in 1932. The percentage of the total number of students on the school rolls receiving their singing instruction in Irish alone had increased from fifty-eight per cent in 1932 to sixty-eight per cent by 1934.<sup>87</sup> This might be seen as a result of concerted efforts made by the Fianna Fáil party to tackle the 'language' issue in Irish education more vigorously than their predecessors in government.<sup>88</sup> In fact, shortly after his appointment, the new Fianna Fáil minister for

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 1943/4, p. 17.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 1946/7, p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 1931/2, pp 92-4.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 1933/4, pp 126-7.

<sup>88</sup> Hoppen, *Ire. since 1800*, p. 243; See also Akenson *et al.*, 'Pre-university ed.', pp 726-31.

education, Thomas Derrig, announced that the responsibility for the revival of the Irish language rested with the schools, particularly those at primary level. He contended that:

The heart and core of all our work in the creation of a nation state must be the revival of the national language as the spoken language of the people, for in the Irish language lies enshrined for us the genius of our race. If we lose our language, we lose our national heritage. In its songs, its prayers and its proverbs are expressed the Gaelic soul of our people.<sup>89</sup>

In an attempt to aid primary school pupils in finding their 'Gaelic soul', the school curriculum was further diluted 'to make for more rapid progress and more effective work in the teaching of Irish and in the development of teaching through Irish'.<sup>90</sup>

Another practical measure to eliminate the teaching of music in the English language, and even bilingual teaching, in all primary schools was the publication of *Tearmaí ceoil (Musical terms)* by the publications section of the education department, known as An Gúm. Whilst the Cumann na nGaedheal government had been producing such translations of general technical terminologies for various subjects since 1926, it was not until 1933 that one for music was published. However, this did not address the broader issue of teaching children in a language which was not the vernacular of the wider society. School inspectors reported that because a minimum of four new Irish songs had to be taught each year, this alone was being done but those accumulated each year were not stored up in the children's memories for they were not practised.<sup>91</sup> The inspectors blamed the song choices which were held simply as 'ro-mhall agus leadránach [too slow and boring]'<sup>92</sup> and claimed it was 'a pity' that teachers did not chose 'amhráin mheidhreacha', more lively songs, to encourage their use outside of the classroom.<sup>93</sup>

That songs in the Irish language learned in the schools were not generally sung outside the schools in the 1930s was attested to even at parliamentary level. In 1933, Cormac Breathnach, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Dublin North, for example, remarked that he was surprised him at the fact that although 'music' was being taught in the schools for about ten years, children were not generally heard singing 'amhráin Ghaedhilge [Irish songs]'. He personally blamed 'the jazz' music: 'Tá

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<sup>89</sup> *Irish School Weekly*, 2 Apr. 1932, cited in McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 117.

<sup>90</sup> *Revised programme of primary instruction* (1934) cited in Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed.*, p. 114.

<sup>91</sup> See, e.g., *Report, dept of ed.*, 1932/3, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 1937/8, pp 20-1.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 1932/3, p. 26.

comhacht éigin ag an “jazz” sa chathair seo agus ní thuigim cén fath. Tá an “jazz” in uachtar [“Jazz” has some kind of power in this city and I don’t understand why. “Jazz” has prominence].<sup>94</sup>

However, teachers were continuing to argue for the restoration of the English language repertory to the primary school curriculum by the end of the 1930s. Inspectors also suggested that such songs be taught because there was a demand for them and because the concentration on teaching songs in the Irish language had actually created a ‘peculiar’ situation whereby many primary school children had ‘never heard any of Moore’s melodies’.<sup>95</sup> Whilst these comments referred to the realities of contemporary life, deferential ‘nationalist’ calls, intended to resonate, to little avail, with the government agenda, were also made by way of appeals for the ‘old ballads, written in English’ which could not be forgotten, for they had ‘kept the national spirit intact through dark and hopeless years’.<sup>96</sup> While the annual reports showed that a greater percentage of children were being taught music through Irish by the late 1930s than hitherto, the mechanical performance of songs in the Irish language simply did not encourage the use of the language in song or speech outside of the schools any more than had been done under the Cumann na nGaedheal administration.

Indeed, the limitations of the educational policy of ‘freedom of aim and curriculum’, inherited by Fianna Fáil, were recognised as early as 1936 by Cumann Gaedhealach na hÉireann. This organisation, which lobbied for the advancement of the Irish language, offered a number of suggestions to rectify the policy in a very detailed memorandum sent to the government and considered by a number of departments over the following two years. Only one particular suggestion involving music, that being the intentional ‘co-operation of state machinery’, including the school singing class, with the organisation ‘to select twenty or thirty Irish songs, national and humorous, to be taught in every school’ was made and considered.<sup>97</sup> Of course, the proposal to structure the curriculum with regard to singing was explicitly for the purposes of ‘advancement of the Irish language’ and not for the advancement of vocal proficiency, musical literacy or general musical education.

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<sup>94</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 2500-1 (6 Apr. 1933). See ch. 3 and 4 for more on the issue of ‘jazz’.

<sup>95</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1929/30, p. 29.

<sup>96</sup> *Irish School Weekly*, 12 Oct. 1940 cited in McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 119.

<sup>97</sup> Department of finance memo, ‘Observations of departments on the memorandum from Cumann Gaedhealach na hÉireann on the subject of the advancement of the Irish language’, 1 Dec. 1938 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S9193).

Whilst the education department considered that ‘no great difficulty would be experienced’ in carrying out this suggestion as far as national schools were concerned, this proposal was viewed by P. S. O’Hegarty, of the department of posts and telegraphs, as ‘a good way to make everybody hate those songs’.<sup>98</sup> No action was taken, however, to extend the influence of the national agenda and the language revival on music education from singing songs in Irish, chosen by the individual teacher usually without regard for the musical element, to an exact dictation of those songs.

### 5.5 Instrumental music in primary education

Quite apart from the emphasis on singing in Irish, in the ‘almost total absence of musical instruments’ reported in Irish primary schools, many school children never actually heard instrumental music and were wholly reliant on the often limited vocal proficiency of their teachers as a musical resource. This was mainly as a result of the heavy cost of instruments which, as previously mentioned, was in turn due to taxation imposed by the successive government administrations in the hope of encouraging a native industry in instrument-making. This (non-)policy was deemed by the school inspectors to be ‘a serious hindrance to the development of musical taste’.<sup>99</sup>

One method of remedying this anomaly inherent in the teaching of music and singing in primary schools suggested by a number of school inspectors on a number of occasions was the utilisation of the gramophone. The educational value of the gramophone in the teaching of musical education and appreciation was already well-established in the U.S.A. and was also beginning to be recognised as such in Great Britain with the appearance of books like William Johnson’s *The gramophone in education* published in London in 1936. The H. M .V. company, which had its own education department, had also published a booklet entitled *Learning to listen* designed to aid teachers in presenting recorded music to the best effect in British schools.<sup>100</sup>

John Larchet also encouraged Irish teachers to make ‘full use of the gramophone’, by which he said Irish schoolchildren could be taught

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1929/30, p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> Rainbow, *Music in ed. thought*, pp 277-8.

the real scope of the art, and the full amount of pleasure to be extracted from it. A living knowledge of the works of the great masters, an intelligent survey of the progress of music and its development through the ages, is the only means by which an individual appreciation of good music can be developed, and the general musical taste of the community raised to the level at which it should stand.<sup>101</sup>

The school inspectors agreed that the gramophone 'would be a most valuable addition to the school equipment' particularly in some rural schools where singing was 'not often taught with high success'.<sup>102</sup> As long as care was taken to choose proper pieces, it was viewed as an important aid in 'developing the pupils' musical taste'.<sup>103</sup>

However, most schools could not afford a gramophone or records in the 1920s and pupils continued to rely solely on their teachers for their musical edification and to provide competent renditions of the songs they needed to learn. In 1933, the inspectors reported:

Ní cloistear ceol maith de ghnáth sna scoltacha – ceol a sheinneas an t-oidé ar phiano nó ar fheidil, nó ceol gramafóinn nó ceol craolacháin. Is annamh aon ghléas ceoil i sgoil. Dá bhrígh sin, go fiú oidí a bhfuil dúil aca féin sa gceol is deacair dóibh an dúil sin a chothú sna páistí [Good music is not usually heard in the schools – music played by the teacher on the piano or the fiddle, or music played on the gramophone or on the radio. Any musical instrument is a rarity in a school. Therefore, even with teachers who are themselves interested in music, it is difficult for them to nourish such a liking in the children].<sup>104</sup>

As already noted, the education department was very reluctant to sanction the utilisation of modern technology, including the recently established broadcasting service, for the purposes of nourishing musical appreciation until the late 1930s when it was persuaded to support a programmes of broadcasts for schools by the department of posts and telegraphs. However, the endeavour was short-lived following the inability of the department to supply financial support to schools to purchase wireless sets and restrictions on sets and supplies during the Second World War.<sup>105</sup>

Still, another method of bringing to some primary school children music other than that produced by their teacher's voice was initiated under the Fianna Fáil

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<sup>101</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>102</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1928/9, p. 66.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929/30, p. 42.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 1932/3, p. 26.

<sup>105</sup> See ch. 4.

administration, which involved ‘the hearty approval and co-operation’ of the education and the defence departments.<sup>106</sup> The initiative itself was the brainchild of none other than Fritz Brase who, as has been discussed, was engaging himself in other projects outside of the routine performances prescribed to the army school of music after a revision of the original intentions for the school by the defence department in the mid-1920s.<sup>107</sup> A programme of concerts given free of charge by the Army School of Music, No. 1 Band, for children in the fourth standard and upwards in schools around the area of Dublin city, was inaugurated in November 1932.

The main objectives of this scheme, which the *Irish Independent* hoped would ‘be a permanent feature of the Dublin school child’s life’, were to ‘advance the cause of musical culture in general’, to ‘assist in the development of musical culture in the schools and to endeavour to create a taste for good music in children’, many of whom had ‘normally very little opportunity of hearing such music’.<sup>108</sup> Three series of twenty one-hour concerts were held each year in the Mansion House, each concert attended by about 1,000 children, each child attending the three series, so that approximately 20,000 primary school children in the Dublin area benefited annually until the Second World War.<sup>109</sup> The instrumental works ‘were carefully selected having due regard to the capacity of the children, and provided for the playing of pieces which, while of a classical standard, were such as would be enjoyable and interesting to children’. Brase also explained the structure and design of the various orchestral instruments and ‘the history of the pieces played’ to the children.<sup>110</sup>

Brase’s ‘energy and enthusiasm’ were credited for the success of the scheme and was even praised in Dáil Éireann by the likes of Cormac Breathnach of Fianna Fáil, who said: ‘Tá moladh tuillte aige de bharr na hoibre atá déanta aige ar son an cheóil Ghaedhealaigh i mBaile Atha Cliath [He deserves praise for the work that he has done in Dublin for the sake of Irish music]’.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, although it was no longer the policy of the department of defence, Brase was also fulfilling, to some extent, the objectives of Richard Mulcahy and John Larchet that bands created by the army

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<sup>106</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1931/2, p. 17.

<sup>107</sup> See ch. 2.

<sup>108</sup> *I.I.*, 19 Nov. 1932.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Mar. 1933.

<sup>110</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1931/2, p. 18.

<sup>111</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 2501 (6 Apr. 1933).

school of music would serve to bring ‘music of a good standard’ to the people on a more local level, in this case to primary school children.<sup>112</sup> The primary school organising music inspector, Donnchadh O Braoin, claimed:

It will not be possible for years yet to judge the real value of these concerts; but there can be little doubt that the sub-conscious effect of listening to good music well performed will have a real and lasting effect in forming the future taste of the children, and in influencing their outlook on culture in later life – even though they may be personally quite unconscious of the fact.<sup>113</sup>

It is worth noting that it was a military band, as the only permanent and fully-equipped professional musical ensemble in the state, that functioned in Ireland, not only to augment other amateur orchestras but also in place of the symphony or local orchestras which had been doing similar work in Britain and particularly in the U.S.A., for example, since the late 1800s.<sup>114</sup> The most enduring of the children’s concerts in Britain were those organised and financed by Sir Robert and Lady Dorothy Mayer from 1923 so that by the time the Irish education department initiated their concerts, about sixty Mayer concerts were being held annually in twenty-five different towns and cities.<sup>115</sup>

There were, of course, some key differences between such concerts held in Ireland and those in Britain and the U.S.A. One was the element of private sponsorship for such musical endeavours by wealthy private individuals, or by industries or companies. Patronage of this sort had been a feature of ‘the days of the British occupation’, according to the singer Joseph O’Neill, but even then, with the exception of a number of R.I.A.M. governors like Sir Stanley Cochrane, Dermot O’Brien and members of the Griffith family, there appears to have been ‘few members of the then existing “society” who were prepared to give financial backing to any musical venture’.<sup>116</sup> Those musical ventures that did receive such patronage generally failed due to the lack of public support which was often caused, not alone

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<sup>112</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1932/3, p. 34.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 1934/5, p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, xxii, 620-21.

<sup>115</sup> Rainbow, *Music in ed. thought*, pp 278-9. Lady Dorothy Mayer, herself a professional singer, also played a very important role in the development of music in Ireland after the period in question here. She set up Ceol Chumann na nÓg to organise regular orchestral concerts in collaboration with Radio Éireann & the Arts Council from 1952, and the Dorothy Mayer Foundation in 1958, to fund various musical projects in Ireland, particularly in rural areas.

<sup>116</sup> Joseph O’Neill, ‘Music in Dublin’ in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 260. Sir Stanley Cochrane, for example, was a wealthy industrialist who founded a music publishing business in collaboration with Michele Esposito in 1915 and built a concert hall at his Woodbrook estate in Bray, Co. Wicklow, where the London Symphony Orchestra played in 1930 - see Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, p. 201, 505.

by musical apathy but also musical and cultural disaffection. Wealthy persons often invested in grand musical statements which tended to alienate rather than induce practical involvement or personal investment by ordinary people, as opposed to musicians *per se*, in their own musical culture or entertainment.<sup>117</sup>

By the 1920s, Dublin, unlike other capital cities in Europe, had, after the political and military instability surrounding the declaration and acquisition of political independence in Ireland, few such 'wealthy industrialists' and even fewer willingly to 'spend lavishly in patronage of the arts' in the newly independent state. In 1924, Adelio Viani had claimed that one of the main general deficiencies of musical life in Ireland was the absence of what he called 'a good musical atmosphere'. He stated that in Italy, for example, privately-sponsored societies called 'Umanitaria' existed solely for the purpose of diffusing music 'amongst the masses in such a way as to elevate them and to make them familiar with the purer musical forms', by means of lectures and free concerts.

Viani believed that such societies could be founded in Ireland, or at least in Dublin: 'Why should we not find in Dublin musical apostles who, putting aside commercialism and fixing their attention only on ideals, would dedicate their energies to a mission so noble?'<sup>118</sup> However, this did not happen to any great extent in the period in question here and even in 1951, Donnchadh O Braoin, as the former organising inspector of music of the department of education, had to concede that unlike in England and 'continental countries' where the 'musical impulse came from the outside, not inside the schools', the Irish public still had, an 'obvious indifference' to musical education and artistic activity, evidenced by the small number of ordinary 'industrial choirs' in the country. He added:

If music held the place it should in the plain man's mind we ought to have not three or four, but twenty or thirty such choirs. Also, we ought to have army choirs, Garda choirs, industrial corps choirs – in fact a choir in every government institution embracing twenty or more students. Until this is done, primary school music is nothing more than a temporary recreation from routine boredom, when it should be a permanent foundation for post-school life, and a preparation for self-education in the real sense of the word...the work now being done in our primary schools will be in vain if the general public outside does not nourish it to full fructification.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> See Ita Hogan, *Anglo-Irish music 1780-1830* (Cork, 1966), *passim* for numerous examples.

<sup>118</sup> Viani, 'Singing in Ire.', p. 515.

<sup>119</sup> O Braoin, 'Mus. in the primary schools', pp 43-4.

However, Ó Braoin, in an obvious defence of his previous position as a departmental music inspector, maintained that the primary schools were ‘playing the part which they ought to play in laying a foundation for that community culture which had been lacking for three hundred years’ and that music itself was becoming the source of ‘self-expression which it should be in a civilised community’. He insisted, though, that musical responsibility for the community could not ‘rest with the schools’ alone.<sup>120</sup>

While Larchet insisted that the poverty of musical culture in Ireland was a reflection of the way that music was taught in the schools, Ó Braoin held the consistent view that the opposite was true. Even prior to his appointment by the department in 1932, he had written that the position of music in the primary schools mirrored ‘the national indifference to and contempt for music’ and advocated that a national music policy be implemented to counter such attitudes, which he said resulted from ‘historical circumstances’, and to complement and encourage the work done in schools.<sup>121</sup>

It was in this context that in schools in some areas, like Garryhill in county Carlow, did establish successful instrumental ensembles, based on the popular military and civilian band models, in the 1940s. The instruments used in these bands were tin-whistles and simple percussive instruments, which were less expensive to acquire than others, and the repertory usually consisted of simple arrangements of Irish airs, marches and dance tunes.<sup>122</sup>

## 5.6 ‘A nation of singers’?

By 1951, Joseph O’Neill could declare that ‘in default of private patrons’, the music profession had had to ‘rely completely upon the government of the country to supply the subsidy necessary for the development of music’ since the foundation of the independent state.<sup>123</sup> Whilst this did not manifest practically in the foundation of choirs in government institutions or the army as Ó Braoin had suggested might happen, the army band concerts for primary schools was an enterprising sharing of state resources conceived by Brase and sanctioned by the Fianna Fáil government,

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.44

<sup>121</sup> Denis Breen [Donnchadh Ó Braoin], ‘School-music: its place in the national life’, in *The Irish School Weekly*, 1 May 1926 & 15 May 1926 cited in McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 114.

<sup>122</sup> *I.P.*, 12 Nov. 1949.

<sup>123</sup> O’Neill, ‘Mus. in Dublin’, p. 253, 260.

the government itself did not directly subsidise it for Brase and the band gave their services free of charge, as part of their army work.

Owing to the lack of genuine musical patronage then, private or otherwise, any musical enterprise that was actually initiated in the newly independent state was confined to the capital city or larger urban centres such as Cork, unlike the 'nation-wide' scheme of concerts held, by the likes of the Mayers, in other countries. The Irish education department were, however, acutely aware of this urban-centricity in relation to the army band concerts for primary schools but stated:

It would, indeed, be a great boon if this or a similar scheme could be extended to districts other than Dublin, but the cost of and difficulty of getting children together in scattered areas, the cost of transport of the band, the many other engagements which the band normally has, etc., would, it is feared, render this impossible.<sup>124</sup>

The fact that the army had other regional bands besides the 'No. 1 Band' or that the department could easily subsidise some of the better amateur orchestras in other urban centres in order to encourage their development and provide the same opportunities to children outside of Dublin city at a cheaper rate than the nationwide transportation of a professional military band, was apparently not considered.

However, it was considered by orchestral societies in Cork and Waterford who provided a similar scheme of concerts to primary schools in those cities for a number of years after.<sup>125</sup> The broadcasting service, as already noted, would also found a similar scheme in the late 1930s whereby regional committees were responsible for organising representative local musical talent to contribute to the national musical programme.<sup>126</sup> Whilst Fritz Brase's work was thus pioneering, in the Irish musical context, and at very least provided children around Dublin city with opportunities to see orchestral instruments and hear live instrumental music, these opportunities were still not being afforded to schools around the rest of the country, particularly those in rural areas where children did not have access to relevant radio stations or suitable gramophone records.

This point was raised in Dáil Éireann by James Dillon, of the National Centre Party and later of Fine Gael, who, in 1935, asked the education minister to supplement the primary school 'singing programme' with 'good music' which he

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<sup>124</sup> *Report, dept of ed.*, 1931/2, p. 18.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 1934/5, p. 28; McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 123-4.

<sup>126</sup> See ch. 4.

said would have ‘a beneficial effect on the people of the country’. Dillon, who had also been relatively vocal in his opposition to taxation on imported gramophone records during the 1930s and very vocal about the apparent proscriptions by the Fianna Fáil government on acceptable musical taste in the 1940s, explained that he was opposed to any further adoption of ‘the insular view so common in this country, that any music is good only if it is dispensed by the fiddle, the harp, or the bagpipes’. Rather, he espoused the introduction to primary schools of ‘good German music, good Italian music or good Polish music, and, horror of horrors...even English music’.<sup>127</sup> Dillon, like Bryan Cooper in the 1920s, was less disposed to take the narrow-minded, essentialist view that many of his parliamentary colleagues did, not only in the musical realm, but also in the political.<sup>128</sup>

Dillon also claimed that if ‘small children’ in particular were familiarised with ‘good’ music played on the radio, the gramophone or by live orchestra, the majority of them would retain that ‘taste’ for the rest of their lives. He pointed out that if people only ever heard music of ‘the tin-can variety’ heard in the cinemas or played by dance-bands, then that set their standard of musical appreciation and taste. Although he added that he had no objection to people enjoying whatever sort of music they wished he felt that it would be ‘a useful educational development’ if ‘good music’ were to be introduced through the Irish primary schools system.<sup>129</sup> This concern was particularly noteworthy for the fact that it echoed Larchet’s claim ten years previously that people only knew and supported whatever types of music they were exposed to, in the schools or otherwise.

The concentration on the teaching of singing in the primary school system then was, most likely, a very significant factor in accounting for the widespread support for what Larchet identified as the hybrid ‘ballad-opera’ type of music in the 1920s, for if the general public only encountered music in school through singing songs in class then songs ‘and nothing else but songs’ was what they knew and continued to ‘enjoy’ and support.<sup>130</sup> This was attested by Aloys Fleischmann, who wrote in 1951 that ‘the untimely end’ of many of Cork’s orchestral and musical societies was due to the fact that the people simply preferred ‘chunes’ to instrumental music, and that his mother, the pianist Tilly Fleischmann, had been

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<sup>127</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lv, 1993-4 (4 Apr. 1935).

<sup>128</sup> See Maurice Manning, *James Dillon: a biography* (Dublin, 2000).

<sup>129</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lv, 1993-4 (4 April 1935).

<sup>130</sup> Appendix A.

often warned that giving solo piano recitals 'would not attract a Cork audience without the help of a supporting vocalist or other performer'.<sup>131</sup>

However, in 1951, he attempted to rationalise the part he had played in implementing the department's policy, which he admitted appeared to have 'whittled down' music to singing alone – something which remained unchanged for the entire period in question. Ó Braoin, insisted that 'pure vocal music' held 'unassailable superiority' as an art form its own right, and 'the only really *democratic* art' which any child could easily master with 'a minimum of technique' and which did not demand 'specialist teachers or a long and arduous period of training'.<sup>132</sup>

A similar view was expressed by Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, the musical director of the state-controlled broadcasting service from 1948, who concurred that choral singing was more accessible than instrumental music-making for the 'average citizen' who had 'neither the time nor the ability to master a musical instrument well enough to take part in concerted work'. Ó hAnnracháin deemed that the 'preparatory work' to gain access to this means of music-making was 'naturally' to be done in the primary schools, which he viewed as 'the nucleus from which choral singing in the country must develop'.<sup>133</sup>

There were, of course, contemporary theories supporting a concentration, within the education system, on vocal music, particularly that in the Irish-language, as opposed to instrumental music of the 'modern' harmonic art, espoused by such commentators as Richard Henebry. Henebry, as mentioned above, considered that the only true or 'natural' music was that produced by the human voice and that 'modern music' was 'merely instrumentalism run riot' and had 'completely dominated and absorbed all vocal tradition. He criticised the 'entirely imaginary value attributed to modern music' by modern musicians who placed instrumental music higher up in the evolutionary chain of musical endeavour and assumed 'the form of the modern instrumental scale as its point of highest development', despite the fact that musical instruments were 'artificial and machined' products incapable of musical expression in themselves.

Henebry conceded though that instrumental music, such as 'the bagpipe or the fiddle in proper hands', was 'a help to music', as long as it 'maintained a place

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<sup>131</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'Music in Cork' in idem (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 268, p.272.

<sup>132</sup> Ó Braoin, 'Mus. in the primary schools', pp 39-40 (his emphasis).

<sup>133</sup> Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral singing in Ireland' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 232.

ancillary to vocal music' and did not 'pretend to be the only music'. Properly rendered instrumental music would not make a 'pretence to be the singing version' and was to be acknowledged by the musician as a mere instrumentation of a vocally-conceived composition, which Henebry held all musical compositions should be, being the subjective expressions of a human being.<sup>134</sup>

Ó Braoin, on the other hand, conceded that even if he, or the department of education, had wished to implement instrumental music into the primary school curriculum in the 1930s and 1940s, it could not have been, nor would it be, done for two reasons. Firstly, whilst the musical standards of the general public remained 'deplorably mediocre', and with the 'scarcity of competent teachers' that there was, the department could not have been expected to initiate instrumental music classes within the education system and conduct them at 'the normal European level'. Secondly, resources for teaching instrumental music were simply not available during this period, with pianos only available in about five per cent of schools and those 'mostly in a condition of decrepitude', and gramophones or wireless sets not generally found at all.<sup>135</sup>

There were, however, public concerns and debate about the effects of the wireless on the teaching of 'singing' or 'vocal music' in schools. Richard Corish, the Labour T.D. for Wexford, stated that young singers, teachers and pupils alike, were now 'crooning' every song because 'crooning' was what they heard on the radio. Interestingly though, Timothy Linehan of Fine Gael disagreed with this saying that while such a thing may have been happening in Wexford, 'the pernicious effect of crooning' was not felt in his constituency of Cork North. He warned that it was very 'easy to overrate evil influences like that' saying that his experience was that there was 'a pretty fair appreciation of good music' amongst the young people of Ireland, particularly in the towns. Here he said that people had 'a broader outlook on their own enjoyment' having access to choral unions and dramatic societies which eliminated any need 'to take the slightest notice of what comes over the radio'. People in rural areas had, according to Linehan, more 'reason to appreciate what comes over the radio', not having the same opportunities of hearing 'good instrumental music' as he felt that the 'native music' did not 'lend itself very well for

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<sup>134</sup> Henebry, *Handbook of Ir. mus.*, pp 46-58.

<sup>135</sup> Ó Braoin, 'Mus. in the primary schools', p.42.

instrumental purposes'. Thus, he urged that there be no proscription on the 'very fine instrumental music' broadcast from stations in central European in particular.<sup>136</sup>

The opinion of the Fianna Fáil leader, Eamon de Valera, regarding 'music', or 'singing', as it was still being variably termed, as a subject within the national primary school system, were not elucidated in Dáil Éireann until 1940 when he was the acting minister for education for some time during the Second World War. Suggestions were made in 1940 by Richard Mulcahy, the instigator of the army school of music whilst minister of defence in the Cumann na nGaedheal government and the education minister of the future inter-party government, that, in light of continued unsatisfactory school inspectors' reports about the teaching of certain subjects, such as music, there be established a commission 'of first-class people' who were 'technical experts in transmitting information to primary students, people who had shown by their work that they were the foremost men or women in this important work' to ensure that 'these various subjects are brought to the highest standard to which we are able to bring them'.<sup>137</sup> This was something similar to that which the broadcasting advisory committee for example was supposed to achieve in the area of music broadcasting, but had ceased to function as such under the Fianna Fáil administration.

De Valera replied that he felt that Irish people were generally faddists and while 'one person wanted music, another person wants drawing', adding: 'If those particular subjects are not taught they each imagine that the whole system is wrong and unsound'. Therefore, he felt that it was possible only to teach 'a selection of the things that are most generally useful' at primary or any other level of education, these 'useful' things being the 'the three R's' in both English and Irish as well as history and geography.<sup>138</sup> Whilst he realised that it was not 'fair' to call subjects such as rural science, drawing and algebra 'trimmings' he did so regard them when compared to 'the other things of fundamental value'. Significantly though, he did view 'vocal music' as an exception, for he supposed it was 'just one of those cultural things in life' which, as well being educational, could 'get people to enjoy that particular side upon which music touches'. And although he admitted that he did not know anything about music himself he said:

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<sup>136</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxxiii, 1153-4 (28 May 1941).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, lxxx, 1584-5 (6 June 1940).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1627-28.

If I were going to add to the fundamental subjects, the one I should like to add would be vocal music. I think it is a good thing to get people these days to sing rather than growl. If we became a nation of singers rather than a nation of fault-finders, we would be much better off. It would enable us to look at the bright side of things at a time when there are so many dark sides to the picture.<sup>139</sup>

Of course, that 'vocal music' as taught in Irish primary schools was not actually designed to teach vocal proficiency but would continue to be determined by the proficiency of individual primary school teachers and subservient to the language policy was not mentioned for the rest of the period in question here.

Moreover, although 'singing' remained obligatory in the primary schools, no measures were introduced to include 'singing' or vocal music as one of the matriculation subjects for primary school certification to give it real parity with other subjects such as English, Irish and arithmetic which were examined for the primary school certificate. In fact, not only that but in 1943, de Valera's government actually made the certificate, which had been optional since 1925, compulsory for all in these subjects, thus ensuring that the energies of teachers would be focused on English, Irish and arithmetic at the expense of all others.<sup>140</sup>

### 5.7 Catholicism and music in primary schools

Whilst the national primary school system largely failed in fostering nationality through music and singing or musicality itself between the 1920s and the 1940s, what it does appear to have attempted to foster was a closer relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. There was, what J.H. Whyte termed 'a tradition of aloofness between church and state', attributable to the historical circumstances.<sup>141</sup>

This official 'aloofness' was indeed sustained after independence with the constitution of the Irish Free State prohibiting any legal endowment or preference towards any particular denomination and guaranteeing 'freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion' subject to 'public order and morality'.<sup>142</sup> However, there was an important interdependency between the institutions of the church and the state, particularly in the area of education. As Whyte highlights, the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., col. 1638.

<sup>140</sup> See Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, pp 109-11.

<sup>141</sup> J. H. Whyte, *Church and state in modern Ireland, 1923-1970* (Dublin, 1971), pp 14-5.

<sup>142</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 694-5 (25 Sept. 1922). While the 1937 constitution of the state would acknowledge the 'special position' of the Catholic Church, this, as J.H. Whyte notes, did not alter its juridical position in any way.

international policy of the Catholic Church determined that although all states had the right to determine educative standards, it was the right of parents to lay down the conditions of education for their children, conditions indirectly dictated, of course, by the church.<sup>143</sup>

This policy was particularly effective in Ireland for it suited the state departments of finance and education that the church provided school buildings, appointed the teachers and the school manager, usually a parish cleric, who administered it. Yet, the state did keep a certain amount of control over the educational system, paying teachers' salaries and a variety of grants and holding the power to inspect schools and conduct examinations to ensure acceptable returns for its investment.<sup>144</sup> In terms of designated religious instruction, the object of the system of national education in Ireland, even prior to 1922, had been: 'to afford *combined* literary and moral, and *separate* religious instruction, to children of all persuasions, as far as possible, in the same school, upon the fundamental principle that no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils'.<sup>145</sup>

This idea was largely sustained by the education department of the Irish Free State, whose departmental regulations, in keeping with the constitutional declaration that there would be no discrimination for or against any particular denomination, stipulated that whilst religious instruction, of any (Christian) denomination, was 'a fundamental part of the school course' there would be a non-interventionist policy in that regard. The teacher though, while being careful 'not to touch on matters of controversy', was advised to 'constantly inculcate in his pupils the practice of the moral virtues and keep before their minds the importance of fulfilling their duty to God, to their neighbour, and generally to the community' for it was stipulated that 'a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school'.<sup>146</sup>

The census of 1911 showed that in the area of the Irish Free State in 1926, 89.6 per cent of the population was Catholic. This proportion had risen to 92.6 per

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<sup>143</sup> Whyte, *Church & state*, p.16.

<sup>144</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 64-9, 81-3, considers music education in denominational schools prior to 1922. See also Sadie (ed.), *New Grove dictionary*, xxii, 619; Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 114.

<sup>145</sup> *Official rules and regulations of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, 1898* (London, 1898), p.11. The exact template of this publication, with many clauses containing exactly the same wording, was maintained by the ministry of education after 1922.

<sup>146</sup> *Rules and regulations for national schools under the department of education* (Dublin, 1932), p.40.

cent in 1926, 93.4 per cent in 1936 and stood at 94.2 per cent by 1946.<sup>147</sup> Hence because the denomination of the school's managers and teachers determined the type of religious instruction and because the majority of the population and thereby the schools were Catholic, Catholic hymns in the English and Irish languages were taught in most schools in the newly independent Ireland. Indeed some of the obligatory liturgical parts of the mass, to which Gregorian chant had been prescribed, such as the 'kyrie', 'gloria' and 'credo', were also taught. James Delany, the organist and choirmaster at St. Kevin's Church in Dublin, commented in 1951, for instance, that there were, by the 1950s, 'few people in Ireland under thirty years of age completely unfamiliar with a "credo"'.<sup>148</sup>

The primary school singing class was viewed, then, as a prime location for the cultivation of a taste and knowledge for ecclesiastical music in particular and served as the 'chief target' of church music reform in the period. The primary schools music inspector, Donnchadh Ó Braoin, in justifying the apparent focus on vocal music and singing had also considered that one of the main arguments for teaching vocal music in schools was to ensure that the music for 'church services' was performed 'with the dignity and reverence which it demands', as urged by Pope Pius XI in his *Apostolic constitution on liturgical music* of 1928.<sup>149</sup>

O Braoin believed that such music could 'have been specially evolved' for countries like Ireland, where he said church organs were 'rare and generally inferior', and technical ability 'still undeveloped'. He cited as proof that this had already occurred, to some extent, 'the beautiful singing of the "Missa de Angelis" by the children of Dublin primary schools' during the Eucharistic Congress of 1932. He felt that it could be easily repeated every Sunday if a national restoration of the use of Gregorian chant, 'the proper official music of the Church', was actively encouraged in primary schools.<sup>150</sup> One of the most influential persons consulted in the creation of the primary school programme was Rev. Dr Timothy Corcoran, professor of education at U.C.D. and a language revivalist who advocated the union of music,

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<sup>147</sup> *Census of population*, 1946.

<sup>148</sup> James Delany, 'Church music reform' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 156.

<sup>149</sup> This was an updated version of *Motu Proprio (The juridical code of sacred music)* of Pope Pius X which had been published in 1903. See Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 138-44, 154-9 for details.

<sup>150</sup> O Braoin, 'Mus. in the primary schools', p. 41.

language and religion, with music serving the purpose of enhancing both of the latter elements.<sup>151</sup>

Therefore, the archetypal 'Irish civilisation' or 'nationality' incidentally defined by the practice of the state's educational policy regarding 'music' was Irish speaking and Catholic.<sup>152</sup> Despite the fact that the education department held that 'nationality' was the form of civilisation developed by 'a particular people and distinctive of that people',<sup>153</sup> the language-centred education policy of the government clearly did not encourage the development of any distinctive music practised by any particular group of people in the state for the purposes of defining 'Irish' nationality. Yet, the teaching of hymns and plainchant in national schools, the majority of which were under Catholic boards of management, was intended to connect children with the Catholic spirit and outlook, in the way that Irish song-words were intended to connect children with the 'Gaelic spirit and outlook' both at the expense, though, of the development of musical literacy and musicality.<sup>154</sup>

Indeed, the Eucharistic Congress had contributed, as Marie McCarthy observed, to the founding of liturgical festivals all around the country in the 1930s and 1940s at which numerous choirs of children participated.<sup>155</sup> These festivals were however, like the Feis Ceoil or other competitive platforms and even music teaching and examination, an end in themselves, with the competitive element providing the sole motivation for the teaching of, in this case, plainchant and religious songs. Thus, whilst the prevalence of such liturgical festivals might suggest a vibrant communal musical religiosity in independent Ireland by the end of the period in question here, it was clear that there had not been the congregational participation at Catholic masses in Ireland that it was hoped the restoration of plainchant and singing of hymns in primary schools would encourage. A number of prominent members of the music profession concerned with the development of musical activity in Ireland,

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<sup>151</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 109.

<sup>152</sup> Comerford, *Ireland*, p. 143, hypothesizes further as to why these two aspects of 'Irishness' resonated rather well with each other. See also Marie McCarthy, 'Changing culture landscapes: the co-existence of musical genres in Irish culture and education' in *Irish Studies Review*, xii, 1 (2004), p.52.

<sup>153</sup> *Ir. Statesman*, 17 Oct. 1925.

<sup>154</sup> Of incidental interest about the relationship between Catholicism and music in the national schools, is the lack of reference to it at state level, particularly in the official reports of the education department and even in the course of parliamentary discussions about the nature of music as a school subject, right across the period in question here. This was presumably paying piety to the non-denominational character of the system officially decreed by the Irish Free State constitution of 1922 and later affirmed by the Irish constitution of 1937.

<sup>155</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 120-21.

particularly in the churches, expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching of music by means of religious music and hymns as a method of inculcating either religiosity or musicality in young people within the educational system.

The professor of plainchant at the R.I.A.M., Hubert Rooney, for instance, claimed that it was, in 1951, more the exception than the rule to hear in any 'town or country church a weekly 'Missa cantata' with the congregation exercising their proper function of singing the "ordinary" of the mass'.<sup>156</sup> Donnchadh Ó Braoin claimed that while 'fine church music', in the form of plainchant and 'Palestrina's music', which together formed what he called 'the most perfect consecration of art to community devotion ever achieved', was 'readily available' in Ireland the 'very name of Palestrina' was 'barely known and his music almost unheard' by the end of the period in question here.<sup>157</sup>

The organist and choirmaster James Delany also commented that, despite the fact that there were few who did not know the 'credo' of the mass, there were fewer who had the opportunity to sing those parts of the mass they may have learned in school at weekly mass. He added rather insightfully:

The country was organised satisfactorily in 1932 to co-operate in the music of the Eucharistic Congress. How eagerly young and old learned the programme! Clergy throughout the country have often since alluded with regret to the fact that congregations had few opportunities to use again what they learned so eagerly, and have since forgotten. The musical programme of the congress would appear now to have been a window display to the world of something we did not regularly stock.<sup>158</sup>

This claim could be applied to many of the 'national' endeavours staged by successive governments in independent Ireland in the period in question here. It was in this context too that Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, a choral conductor and the musical director of the Radio Éireann in 1951, claimed that 'the state of music' in Irish churches could be regarded 'as a barometer' indicating the generally inadequate state of music and musical activity in the country.<sup>159</sup>

Indeed, the reasons for such inadequacy given by those who commented on the state of plainchant and musicality in the Catholic Church, in particular, were similar to those that beset other aspects of musical development. Hubert Rooney

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<sup>156</sup> Hubert Rooney, 'The plainchant movement', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 219.

<sup>157</sup> Ó Braoin, 'Mus. in the primary schools', p. 41.

<sup>158</sup> Delany, 'Ch. music reform' pp 156, 158-9.

<sup>159</sup> Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral singing in Ire.', p. 238.

summed those up as the lack of ‘a united front among teachers and propagators’ of plainchant, the lack of ‘co-operation between ecclesiastical and educational authorities’, the lack of ‘ecclesiastical guidance’ for musicians and the lack of cooperation ‘of musicians with their clergy’ regarding the adoption of authoritative methods or agreed standardised procedures.<sup>160</sup> In fact, what is particularly striking about this ‘Catholic-nationalist synthesis’, as Harry White terms it, which appeared to exist in the educational domain after 1922, is the fact that no such synthesis actually existed with regard to any form of ‘Irish’ music within the religious domain.<sup>161</sup>

Yet, despite the failure to teach singing effectively enough in primary schools to ensure a supply and demand for weekly participation in the musical parts of the Catholic mass, up until the 1950s, the music profession insisted that the primary school was the correct location for this work. Donnchadh Ó Braoin, for instance, claimed:

Our primary schools could and should, in time, supply parish choirs all over the country. And they could, and should have an immense effect by sending to the seminaries and thence to Maynooth young men to whom music no longer seems a contemptible dissipation fit only for frivolous girls, but an impassioned expression of the deepest and most profound feelings of human life, and of true religious feeling.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, Ó Braoin believed that the teaching of plainchant in primary schools would eliminate errors of musical judgment on the part of musicians of the future. An example of what he considered as such an error was the decision to include music of such ‘saccharine glucosity’ as César Franck’s ‘Panis Angelicus’, sung by John McCormack, in a Palestrina mass held in the Phoenix Park during the Eucharistic Congress of 1932, music which he claimed ‘violently and barbarously intruded’ upon the ‘serene glory’ of the mass.<sup>163</sup>

Delany, on the other hand, proposed the compilation of a comprehensive book of hymns and chants for congregational participation, based on the extant *Holy Ghost Hymnal* published in 1911, but extended to include seasonal hymns in Irish and English, ‘good modern unison music’, as well as ‘a well-chosen selection of

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<sup>160</sup> Rooney, ‘The plainchant movement’, pp 220-21.

<sup>161</sup> White, *The keeper’s recital*, pp 92-3.

<sup>162</sup> Ó Braoin, ‘Mus. in the primary schools’, p.41.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* See ch.1 for details of the Eucharistic Congress of 1932 and more positive reactions to McCormack’s rendering of ‘Panis Angelicus’.

simple modern masses and motets' for unison, two, three or four parts. Although he did not specify whether the Catholic Church itself or the department of education might be responsible for the publication of this hymnal, Delaney intended that it would 'become a comprehensive national manual of sacred music for use in every church and school'.<sup>164</sup> In the interim, the primary school would remain, according to Delaney, the 'chief target of reform'.<sup>165</sup>

Whilst Hubert Rooney, concurred with this view, he advocated that plainchant be taught only according to the methods employed by him at the R.I.A.M., which had also been adopted at U.C.D where he also taught. Rooney's methods followed those employed by the Benedictine order at Solesmes, in France, the monks who were responsible for the restoration of the chants in the nineteenth century.<sup>166</sup> This in itself is significant because it was advocating, in fact, the adoption of an art that was not only an antique musical form, but was of an explicitly non-Irish heritage, yet appears to have been acceptable because, presumably, of its religious function.

Furthermore, Rooney actually stated that to adhere rigorously to his methods, which involved the reading of music from plainchant or staff notation, could hinder the participation of the Irish congregation for, as he himself noted, Irish people generally sang 'by ear or not at all'. He thought it better that 'ordinary folk should sing the chant moderately well' than 'a few eclectics should gather together and give thanks that they do not sing as other men'.<sup>167</sup> Singing 'by ear' was, of course, the manner in which many primary school pupils were taught and learned music in schools and was the 'traditional' manner of learning music and songs. It was, however, contrary to the teaching of the musical rudiments which the state's school inspectors, following Larchet, insisted were essential for an improvement in general musical education and vocal ability.

## **5.8 Music and vocational education**

In the area of technical or vocational education, music functioned very much as it did in the primary schools, although there appears to have been more progress in musical activity if not in music education. Whilst much of this activity served in connection

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<sup>164</sup> Delany, 'Ch. music reform', p. 156.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>166</sup> Rooney, 'The plainchant movement', p. 220.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

with the Irish language, the establishment of choirs in particular contributed to an increase in musical activity at a local level.

Prior to 1930, technical education was a form of post-primary education which consisted mainly of evening classes or whole-time instruction prior to employment. Most of the instruction centred on classes in manual subjects for males and aspects of domestic life for girls and the number of students enrolled in technical schools prior between 1924 and 1930 rose by thirty-six per cent from 21,808 to 29,649.<sup>168</sup> Due to the steady increase in interest in such education, a state commission was established in 1926 'to enquire into and advise upon the system of technical education in Saorstát Éireann in relation to the requirements of trade and industry'. The primary finding of this commission was that although technical education was useful it had little relation to the technical and industrial needs of the future of the Irish Free State and its recommendations formed the basis of the Vocational Education Act, 1930.<sup>169</sup>

This act succeeded the various Technical Instruction Acts which had been applied from 1889 and although the administration of the act was to be left in the hands of the local statutory rating authorities as they had been established under the British administration, technical instruction committees were to be replaced by Vocational Education Committees (V.E.C.s) in urban districts, county borough and country areas. It was the duty of V.E.C.s to maintain 'technical education' and establish a suitable system of 'continuation education' in its area by building schools. Two distinct elements of education were thus incorporated, 'technical education' meaning 'education pertaining to trades, manufacturing, commerce and other industrial pursuits' and 'continuation education' meaning 'education to continue and supplement education provided in elementary schools', generally for fourteen to sixteen year olds, and included 'general and practical training'.<sup>170</sup> Therefore where 'music' existed as a subject in continuation vocational education, it was, as in primary schools, essentially vocal music or more specifically choral singing, intended to further use of the Irish language.

In December 1931, Proinnsias Ó Fathaigh of the Gaelic League and a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Galway, asked the Cumann na nGaedheal minister for education, J.M.

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<sup>168</sup> *Report, dept of ed., 1930-1*, p. 167.

<sup>169</sup> 1930/29 (21 July 1930)

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

O'Sullivan, to state if 'music (or Irish singing)' ranked as a subject to qualify one as a full-time teacher under the vocational education scheme. If so, Ó Fathaigh wondered, what types of specific qualifications were requisite. He also requested the minister to state how many teachers were, in 1931, actually qualified to teach music or singing, what these qualifications were and where these people were employed. J.M. O'Sullivan responded that 'the qualifications which might entitle a person to recognition as a teacher of one or more of the many branches of music are so numerous and varied that it would not be possible to state them in the space of a reply to a question of this nature'. He did however say that 'the qualifications of applicants for recognition are considered on their individual merits' but that 'outside the county boroughs of Dublin and Cork, there are no teachers in vocational schools holding recognised qualifications to teach music'.<sup>171</sup>

In order to train teachers for the teaching of vocal music to older pupils then, the department of education organised summer courses for teachers at the Dublin Municipal School of Music (D.M.S.M.) in the 1930s. There was no obligation on V.E.C.s to implement the scheme of choral singing addressed at these courses though and consequently it was not adopted throughout the country as a whole - although where it was adopted very successfully in places such as Dublin city and county, Cork city and county, Wexford, Roscommon and Sligo.<sup>172</sup> While the programme of instruction was based as far as possible on that of the primary schools and included ear training, notation sight-reading, unison and part-singing in the Irish language, in reality the level of instruction depended on the ability of the pupils and the teacher.

From 1942, however, vocational education was fixed to correlate with the twin agendas of religion and the Irish language revival fostered in the primary schools, which it was felt, by the Catholic hierarchy in particular, that the secular, non-denominational schools run by local authorities were actively neglecting.<sup>173</sup> *Memorandum v.40* published by the department of education specified the inclusion of religious courses and a greater emphasis on the Irish language and 'other distinctive features of Irish life' in vocational schools. Classes in cultural studies,

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<sup>171</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xl, 2595 (9 Dec 1931).

<sup>172</sup> See *Report, dept of ed.* 1943/4 and 1944/5 for reports of such progress.

<sup>173</sup> See Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, pp 214-22.

choral singing and dance became more centralised with the aim of furthering the use of Irish language and engaging in the national spirit.<sup>174</sup>

After 1942, then, branches of Claisceadal, an organisation which promoted community singing in the Irish language, were founded in many vocational schools around the country and were responsible for organising local feiseanna and céilidhe a move which was supported and encouraged by departmental inspectors, not for the purposes of fostering musicality but of fostering use of the Irish language.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, from 1944, teachers who wished to teach the Irish language at vocational school level were required to attend a course for special certification, the teastas timthre gaedhilge, for the purposes of full-time employment. The course did not only concentrate on methodologies for teaching in the Irish language but also incorporated practical ways in which the language could be used. Most of these centred on music, singing and drama.<sup>176</sup>

Another innovative method of improving the level of musical activity was also introduced in Dublin, and later in Cork, whereby 'commercial' or 'industrial' choirs were established. Companies willing to organise a choral society amongst its employees were provided with music and a competent choral conductor who was paid on a part-time basis by the local V.E.C. and official attendance registers were kept for the education department. Many firms such as Jacobs, New Ireland Assurance Company, Brown Thomas and Independent Newspapers availed of this opportunity, envisaged by the likes of Adelio Viani, although many others did not survive.<sup>177</sup> Stimulus was also given to the endeavour when the organisers of the *Feis Ceoil* established a special competition for industrial choirs in the 1940s. More ambitious work was possible with these adult choirs for they met regularly for the purposes of practising singing together, with many undertaking public and radio performances.

Significantly though, the impetus was local and voluntary. Indeed, Bernard Curtis, director of the Cork Municipal School of Music, stated that the widespread success of choirs in the vocational schools and the cooperation of large companies in the two main cities, by the end of the period in question here, showed that the future for communal music making was optimistic:

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<sup>174</sup> *An roinn oideachais: memorandum v.40* (1942) cited in McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 133.

<sup>175</sup> See report of the dept. of ed. between 1941/2 and 1950/1 for various examples.

<sup>176</sup> See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xciv, 365-7 (19 Oct. 1944).

<sup>177</sup> Bernard B. Curtis 'Music in the Vocational schools' in Fleischmann (ed.) *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 45-46

Every sizable firm could sponsor its own choral society, not only for its social value but for its undoubted publicity value. Indeed, there is no reason why individual trades choirs should not exist – a carpenters' choir, a bakers' choir, a masons' choir, choirs formed from any group of allied trades that foregather in a club or headquarters. It is not too fantastic to visualise a lawyers' choir, or a doctors' choir.<sup>178</sup>

Curtis warned, however, that the cities should not have the monopoly over musical education as they did not have the monopoly of musical talent.

A considerable contribution to the nation's music-making would result if the new facilities were availed of generally, and if every town and village within easy access of a vocational school were to benefit by a scheme of organised tuition. In England valuable work is done by rural music schools; a similar scheme, with the emphasis on stringed instruments, is surely possible, and as urgent here.<sup>179</sup>

Thus vocational education was not only viewed for the purposes of educating young people in the Irish language and fostering aspects of nationality but also for the purpose of providing communal cultural activities in local areas which, as Richard Mulcahy stated in 1949, was to be encouraged as 'a contribution towards the brightening of rural life'.<sup>180</sup>

Although music in vocational schools was serving the national agenda, particularly after 1942, and was thereby a 'continuation' of the primary school in terms of philosophy and the element of singing, an anomalous position existed, however, with regard to the municipal schools of music, in Dublin and Cork. These schools had been established in 1878 and 1890 respectively, and were funded by rates struck by the local municipal authority.<sup>181</sup> Following a number of private representations,<sup>182</sup> and questions from members of Dáil Éireann in this regard, the education minister J.M. O'Sullivan undertook to consider how the vocational education bill did actually affect those two schools and whether or not the work of the schools qualified as 'continuation' or 'technical' work.

The fact that these were established *technical* schools raised the question of their work in the 'continuation' scheme of music and singing promoted by the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 46

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 47

<sup>180</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxv, 342 (3 May 1949).

<sup>181</sup> See Cook, *College of music and Bernard B. Curtis, Centenary of the Cork School of Music: progress of the school 1878-1978* (Cork, 1978) for details on the establishment and progress of these two institutions.

<sup>182</sup> Curtis, *Cork School of Music*, pp 39-41

government in the primary schools in 1930 and added further confusion to the distinction between musical education and musical instruction.

Richard Sidney Anthony, the Labour T.D. for Cork Borough, for example was concerned that the bill, which by its nature dealt with science and art as applicable to industrial and commercial pursuits, would negatively affect the 'excellent schools of music' in Cork, which was in his constituency, and Dublin and called for special provision to be made. O'Sullivan assured him that if, upon reconsideration, it was found that the bill was not allowing for the two schools, he would be 'prepared to legislate for them separately'.<sup>183</sup> Thus, when the bill was next presented to the Dáil for consideration, it had been amended to specifically include 'music' in the 'county boroughs of Dublin and Cork' as 'technical' education, that being education pertaining to 'trades, manufactures, commerce, and other industrial pursuits'. Whilst the bill passed through Dáil Éireann, without comment on this amendment, some objections were raised in Seanad Éireann.

Thomas Johnson, for example, felt that the inclusion of the words 'in the county boroughs of Dublin and Cork, music' was 'an unwise limitation in definition' confining music as one of the subjects that could be brought within the scheme of the county boroughs of Dublin and Cork. If music were to be part of any scheme of technical education, Johnson stated: 'the privilege should not be confined to county boroughs'. J.M. O'Sullivan, the education minister, clarified that had not two schools of music, as distinct from 'the ordinary technical instruction schools', already existed in Dublin and Cork, that particular distinction would not have been made. He added that there was no limitation on music as far as continuation education was concerned, although, as already noted, this was limited in itself by its subjection to the national agenda.

However, O'Sullivan added that the question of whether or not music was a technical subject, 'a subject of professional school music', had also been considered and it had been decided that it was 'on the whole wiser' to 'exclude' music totally from the definition of technical education except where it was already being dealt with in Dublin and Cork. He stated: 'We considered there would be a wastage of effort if it were allowed to stand in the definition of technical education. I think that musical education under this bill would be sufficiently catered for under section

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<sup>183</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb*, xxxv, 232-3 (29 May 1930).

three, which deals with continuation education. The undesirability of scattering our resources and scattering our efforts was apparent to us'.<sup>184</sup> Therefore, the teaching of music as a technical instrumental subject was confined to the extant technical schools of music in Dublin and Cork.

Johnson countered that there were quite a number of people earning their living by the playing of musical instruments who were probably as interested in the technical side of their art in respect of music as would be other branches of various arts. He said that although he had 'no great anxiety in the matter' he did not see any justice in legislating that technical schools in Waterford or Limerick could not teach music while those in Cork and Dublin could. O'Sullivan reiterated that any V.E.C. could elect to teach music as continuation education and made it clear that no special provision would have been made for the cities of Dublin and Cork but for the existence of the separate schools of music.<sup>185</sup> Therefore whilst music could be taught as a continuation subject, meaning singing, in technical schools, separate technical schools of music could not be established in any other towns until well after the period in question here.

### **5.9 The department of education summer school of music, 1946-51**

The distinction between 'technical' and 'continuation', in terms of music, essentially amounted to differences in the teaching of music, as a technical and instrumental subject in the two biggest cities and as choral singing in V.E.C. schools elsewhere. On the one hand this served to recognise the efforts of the two schools in Cork and Dublin. Indeed the former director of the Cork School of Music, Bernard Curtis stated in 1978, that it was only from 1930 that the school could really begin to carry out its objectives in earnest: 'First, the increase of musical knowledge, second the elevation of musical taste in Cork.'<sup>186</sup>

Ironically, however, the distinction, affording the established municipal schools 'technical' status, frustrated efforts of committees in other towns to engage in the teaching of instrumental music until 1949 when Richard Mulcahy made amendments to the vocational education act to make provisions for this.<sup>187</sup> Nonetheless, whilst music education had essentially been narrowed down to

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<sup>184</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xiii, 1925 (2 July 1930)

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1925-6.

<sup>186</sup> Curtis, *Cork School of Music*, pp 41-48.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 40-41. See also *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxxiii, 1110-2 (22 Nov. 1950).

communal, and usually unison, singing of Irish-language songs and hymns, there was still a need for competent teachers and conductors in this narrow field. This led to the undertaking of one very significant musical initiative by the Fianna Fáil government in the late 1940s.

In May 1946, the minister for education, Thomas Derrig announced that £1,500 was being put aside by his department for ‘cursaí samhraidh árd-teagaisc i gceol gotha agus i gceol gléas’ [advanced summer courses in vocal and instrumental music].<sup>188</sup> Significantly, applications to attend the summer school were considered from musicians and teachers alike, although choral and orchestral training classes were confined to conductors of school or adult choirs, orchestras and musical societies whilst the instrumental courses in piano and violin were confined to ‘advanced performers’. No fees were charged, travel expenses were granted to those who attended and the majority of students at the summer school attended more than one course.<sup>189</sup>

This move was welcomed by members of the music profession and by members of Dáil Éireann alike as a practical move for improving the condition of musical activity. However, the main concern raised was not in connection with the standard of the courses or the types of music studied but the issue of the need for foreign leaders in Irish musical activity, something which had also been raised in connection with the army school of music and the national broadcasting service. Richard Corish, the Labour T.D. for Wexford, for example, requested that the education minister, Thomas Derrig, state how many of the number of conductors engaged to conduct the several courses at the 1946 summer school of music were ‘non-nationals’, what efforts ‘to secure Irish conductors for all the courses’ had been made and on what grounds decisions on non-national being engaged were taken.

Derrig responded that six conductors were engaged to conduct course in 1946 and that none of them were Irish nationals. He explained that on the advice of an ‘advisory committee composed almost entirely of distinguished Irish musicians’ the department had considered it desirable that those partaking in the initial series of course, at least, be given the opportunity to experience at first-hand ‘the aims and methods of musical instruction elsewhere as expounded by distinguished

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<sup>188</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ci, 536 (22 May 1946).

<sup>189</sup> See Appendix J for details.

choirmasters, orchestral conductors, composers and instrumental performers from other countries'.<sup>190</sup>

The majority of attendees at the summer of schools of music were primary school teachers who wished to improve their teaching and conducting skills whilst working with some of the best conductors in the world and having practical demonstrations made to them by the Radio Éireann and D.M.S.M. orchestras. However, some of the best young musicians and composers were also afforded opportunities, in the form of free master classes with international musical experts, which they would never otherwise have received.

Fears were expressed in 1948 that the new inter party government would suspend the summer school of music, because it had been an innovation of the Fianna Fáil government and because, as already noted, the new administration had adopted a vigorous policy of economy which had resulted in the suspension of public concerts provided by the Radio Éireann orchestras.<sup>191</sup> However, the new minister for education, Richard Mulcahy, allayed these fears by pointing out that the summer school of music would continue as these had proved 'highly popular and useful'. He added that they would still be conducted by 'musicians of high repute from Great Britain and the Continent' be attended not only by professional musicians but also by members of the public 'attracted by the lectures on musical appreciation'.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, from 1948, an attempt to make the public more musically aware and appreciative was made with the introduction of public lectures on a variety of musical topics.<sup>193</sup>

P.J. Little, the former posts and telegraphs minister, expressed his satisfaction that in spite the inter-party government's decision to suspend Radio Éireann concerts, it was continuing the his policy with regard to 'the development of music'. He said that the summer schools which had been initiated under Fianna Fáil had undoubtedly increased musical proficiency for those who were in any way musically capable had been brought to that proficiency by 'the best men in Europe'. He hoped: 'in time we shall have as good musicians here as to be found in any country. That will render it unnecessary for us to bring in people from outside in the future.'<sup>194</sup> This was a significant and understated effort on the part of the department of

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<sup>190</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cii, 470 (10 July 1946).

<sup>191</sup> See ch.4.

<sup>192</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxv, 345-46 (3 May 1949)

<sup>193</sup> See Appendix J.

<sup>194</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxv, 346 (3 May 1949)

education to effect improvements and developments in musical activity, which had the cooperation of the department of posts and telegraphs.

Yet, as the M.A.I. pointed out in 1949, 'a short course of two weeks in the year, however, can do little to supply the kind of musical education that is needed'. The M.A.I., which sent the relevant sections of its 1949 memorandum on the state of music in the nation to the education department, also complained that 'fully representative musical opinion was not consulted at the outset'. The M.A.I. felt that the school of music had been presented as 'a fait accompli' and while *it* appreciated the 'good' that had been done for music, *it* did not believe that the summer school represented: 'The most economical and satisfactory step that could have been taken, considered in the light of a planned development of music as a whole. Moreover, the M.A.I. stated:

It [the summer school of music] does suggest however that the department of education is willing to spend money on music, and if it were also willing to consult musicians on how it might best be spent and did not share with other government departments that peculiar tendency to avoid expert and responsible advice, there would be an encouraging project for the future.<sup>195</sup>

### **5.10 Music and secondary education**

Almost all of the secondary schools in the newly independent Ireland were private denominational institutions located in urban areas and maintained in part by tuition fees and part by the state. Second-level education was largely seen, in the period in question here, as the preserve of the professional and merchant classes of towns and of established tenant farmers.<sup>196</sup> Because of the geographical imbalance in the location of schools in the state, boarding schools became so strongly established in the period that by 1944, almost half of all secondary schools were single-sex boarding schools catering for about one-third of all persons availing of second level education in the state.<sup>197</sup>

However, as D.H. Akenson has highlighted, the secondary school system in independent Ireland was 'a polished and venerable antique' of the Victorian era where any changes that occurred after 1922 were more apparent than real.<sup>198</sup> By

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<sup>195</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p.73.

<sup>196</sup> Coolahan, *Irish ed.*, p. 55; Akenson *et al.* 'Pre-university ed.', p.726.

<sup>197</sup> Coolahan, *Irish ed.*, p. 56.

<sup>198</sup> D.H. Akenson, *A mirror to Kathleen's face: education in independent Ireland 1922-60* (Montreal & London, 1971), p. 73.

comparison with the primary school system the subjects studied for the two new 'intermediate' and 'leaving' certificate examinations were strictly regulated by a state-determined syllabus. This, and limited economic incentives such as scholarships for further schooling at third level, meant that an overall system intended to emancipate the Gaelic mind from the slavish cramming of the British system had no such effect at secondary level. Music, with the largest proportion of marks being awarded for the practical element, was usually taken only by pupils regarded as technically proficient in a particular musical instrument and intending to study or teach music at university, seems to have been somewhat uniquely affected in this system.<sup>199</sup>

Although Larchet's 'plea for music' had been rejected by the department of finance owing to the financial conditions in 1923, Larchet himself was appointed as the director of practical music examinations in secondary schools for the department of education, which meant that although he could not necessarily determine the school curriculum in music, he was in the best possible position to assess its shortcomings as an academic subject. In 1923, he claimed that music was 'the Cinderella of the curriculum' and that secondary school children were 'lucky' if the time allowed for music was not 'filched from their recreation', the result being that musical talent was being 'systematically stultified, and in the case of the boys, very successfully crushed'.<sup>200</sup> Larchet continued:

A glance at the labours of the average fifteen year old girl, (who is usually better off than her brother), will fully illustrate the point. The whole of the scholastic year is devoted to the mastery, more or less, of the few unpretentious pieces she and her companions are trying to sing, or struggling to play on some instrument, and perhaps to, the parrot-like acquisition of some barren formulae, some sterile facts, totally unrelated to each other, ironically known as 'theory'. During the whole of that period she never hears any real music worth hearing, never learns any of the thousand and one interesting things about the lives and music of the great composers, which alone can give vitality to the subject, and make it really appeal to her as a living art.<sup>201</sup>

A new feature of the programme for secondary schools in the Irish Free State was the 'open course' where the department prescribed the general content for each subject

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<sup>199</sup> See Appendix H, tables 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. Note the disparity, between the sexes, in the numbers taking second level music examinations. See also McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 94-5 regarding the context gender bias in music education in independent Ireland.

<sup>201</sup> Appendix A.

and requirements for examination. The school itself could decide its own course methodology and text-books, until the early 1940s when prescribed texts for the study of literature and language in Irish, English, Latin, Greek and modern continental languages were introduced. This was not the case for music, though.

Whilst there were no prescribed texts for the study of the written theory examinations, set musical pieces, and even the particular editions of these pieces, for presentation at practical musical examinations were in existence from the outset.<sup>202</sup> These pieces selected by the department of education did not point to any attempt to inculcate the national agenda with classical selections in the designated musical instruments, piano, violin, 'cello, harp and, later, organ, the instruments which generally featured at competitive festivals such as Feis Ceoil. Moreover, an examination of these pieces reveals that the set pieces for piano, violin and cello were altered slightly each year with a work by one composer substituted by another similar one or a choice of a different selection or movement within a work given.

However, there was no change at all in the test pieces for the harp or the organ across the period in question. The amount of choice in the selections given for piano and violin, in particular, also reflects both their popularity and the wider availability of published music for these two instruments in the country. This is compounded by the fact that the choices of test pieces for 'cello had doubled by the 1940s, owing, presumably, to the fact that the cello was more prevalently used in amateur musical ensembles, dance orchestras and in the national broadcasting orchestra.<sup>203</sup>

The 1940s also saw a substantial increase in the choice of musical pieces written by Irish composers such as Larchet and Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, particularly for the violin. Whilst many of these had Irish language titles and were based on 'traditional' idioms and motifs, this might correlate to the general insularity surrounding the promulgation and projection of musical culture by the national broadcasting station, for instance, during the Second World War. It also points to the greater availability of such musical publications, as will be discussed, by this time.<sup>204</sup> Curiously though, there was no facility for taking an individual examination in solo

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<sup>202</sup> See *Regulations regarding curricula, certificates, examinations and scholarships with programme for the year 1929-30; Secondary schools' programme, 1941/2, 1942/3; Rules and regulations for secondary schools (including programme of courses) 1944-5; Rules and programme for secondary schools, 1946/7 to 1950/1.*

<sup>203</sup> See Appendix H 'Secondary school music examination programme, 1929/30'.

<sup>204</sup> See ch. 6.

singing at either intermediate or leaving certificate level, in spite of its popularity in the Feis Ceoil, for example, and the nationalising function that singing generally served at primary school level.

In addition, the majority of the secondary schools that offered music as a subject were convent schools, which accounted, to some extent, for the very high proportion of music teachers that were single females.<sup>205</sup> Marie McCarthy has concluded that at the turn of the twentieth century, religious communities in Ireland 'typically had trained musicians among their members', were 'rooted in or influenced by continental social and cultural ideals' and thereby were more concerned for the 'all-round fulfilment of the child' and cultural respectability than instilling patriotic ideas regarding music.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, as will also be seen, the convent schools also facilitated the holding of local centres music examinations by music examination boards such as the R.I.A.M.<sup>207</sup> Presumably then, music in the secondary schools was less intended to serve the national, or even the religious, agenda than in the primary schools and more directed towards the attainment of cultural finesse by a particular social grouping.

Indeed, even in 1949, the M.A.I. were of the opinion that if 'average people' entertained themselves 'by playing music, as they did once...we should have a higher level of society than we have now'. The M.A.I. also claimed that while the development of aesthetic sensibility was 'not necessarily dependent on executive ability', playing instrumental music, particularly in an ensemble, had advantages such as quickness of response and teamwork. The association disagreed, however, with the place that instrumental performance held in the individual music examinations for it was felt that the object of self-expression was 'defeated': 'A musical approach is contradicted when it is made the subject of constant competitive examinations and feiseanna, where pieces are made to serve every purpose except that for which they were written.' The acquisition of a habit of 'mechanically rattling off music' for such competitive purposes by secondary school children was believed to make 'for shallow minds' and the M.A.I. called for 'a much wider range of music

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<sup>205</sup> See Appendix I, table 5.

<sup>206</sup> Marie McCarthy, 'Music education and the quest for cultural identity in Ireland, 1831-1989' (PhD thesis, Michigan, 1990), pp 128-30 cited in Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, p. 298; see also McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 64-6.

<sup>207</sup> See ch. 6.

than is usually found in these syllabuses' so as to prevent the creation in children of 'a permanent distaste for music'.<sup>208</sup>

Larchet believed that while musical instrumentation such as the piano, violin, viola or 'cello, should be available to children in school, 'at least up to a certain standard', and taught by competent teachers, this should not 'under any circumstances be subtracted from the compulsory and all-important singing and appreciation classes'. These, he held were, the tenets of a sound general music education for they encompassed aspects of musical and compositional history, learned listening and appreciation, and general understanding of the foundations and theory of music. Larchet claimed that the function of music was to portray 'the range of human thought and human emotion, not to afford an opportunity for a more or less imperfect display of vocal gymnastics and finger dexterity'. It was not intended to afford an opportunity to acquire 'something of the technique of one of its minor branches, but to learn how to enjoy and appreciate, as far as possible, the masterpieces of its great immortals'.

To attain this end music had to occupy a more 'dignified' position on the school curriculum and the first step to achieving this was a compulsory 'singing class', 'graded and standardised like any other subject' and 'the basis of all musical culture...indispensable to further progress'. Larchet proposed that the singing class be attended by the entire school for they were the personnel who would form the 'choirs and choral societies of the next generation'. It was through the medium of the music appreciation class that Larchet advocated, as he did for primary level education, that the 'future music supporting public' would be created. A weekly one-hour lecture on music to the entire school, he believed, would 'create a real love of music in our children' more than any other form of musical study in secondary schools:

If the faculty of appreciation is strengthened and cultivated on proper lines, the boy or girl leaving school, at the age of say sixteen, has a good general knowledge of form in music, of the construction of melodies and of the outlines of history ; and after a course of judicious selections from the great masters, showing the development of music through the different periods, he has become an intelligent listener, and possesses a general acquaintance with the symphonies and chamber music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Best of all he has acquired a genuine love of music, based on its understanding, and a sympathy with the art which is of inestimable value to the community.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), pp 19-20.

<sup>209</sup> Appendix A.

Interestingly enough then, from 1924, and possibly owing to the influence of Larchet, the revised programme for secondary schools in the Irish Free State also comprised a separate and distinct section of examinations for choirs and orchestras.<sup>210</sup> Choirs in two, three or four parts and junior, intermediate and senior orchestras were eligible for entry and these had to undergo an unaccompanied sight-singing test and oral questions on the rudiments of music.<sup>211</sup>

Here, the repertoire was influenced to some extent by the essentialist ethos and the language revival movement. Larchet claimed, in 1951, that 'Irish music and the names of Irish composers' were very much in evidence and that many new settings of Irish songs were being performed in school choirs, thereby giving 'a definite impetus...to the knowledge and appreciation of our native music'. Amongst the names of Irish composers to appear on the examination programme for both choirs and orchestras, from the late 1930s, were: Larchet, C.V. Stanford, Charles Wood, Vincent O'Brien, Carl Hardebeck, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, Michael Bowles, Harold White, Liam de Noraidh, Moylneux Palmer, Hubert Rooney, Robert O'Dwyer, Ernset de Regge, George P. Hewson, and Máiread Ní Phógóid.<sup>212</sup>

The study of music for group examination purposes was also hindered to a large degree by the fact that schools that entered students for music examinations were obliged to pay an extra 10s. 6d. per student in examination fees to the department of education.<sup>213</sup> This was countered to some extent by the granting of bonuses to schools in respect of choirs and orchestras organised in the schools. The level of bonus was dependent on the level and complement of the orchestra or choir, but this was assessed by means of examination, for which the school had to pay. Significantly, the amount of money paid in music bonuses to schools by the department of education doubled from around £1,000 to almost £2,000 during the period in question here. This might indicate that there was twice as much musical activity in secondary by 1951 than there at been in 1922.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> See Appendix H, table 1 for details of the total numbers taking music as an individual or group subject in the secondary schools between 1931 and 1951.

<sup>211</sup> John Larchet, 'Music in the secondary schools' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 32-3.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>213</sup> See *Regulations regarding curricula, certificates, examinations and scholarships with programme for the year 1929-30*, for example.

<sup>214</sup> See Appendix H, table 5d.

### 5.11 Music, teachers and university education

In terms of creating a musical culture and standard, Larchet stated, in 1951, that a seventy percent pass rate was required in the sight-reading element in order to pass the choral and orchestral examinations, regardless of the quality of performance but because 'so few choirs' failed to reach this percentage, this was an 'indication of the progress which had been made' in the secondary schools.<sup>215</sup>

Incidentally, the M.A.I. recommended, in 1949, that whilst it was 'not necessary to read music in order to enjoy it in listening; on the other hand the ability to read leads eventually to a much fuller appreciation and a vastly wider field of musical experience'. This organisation felt that 'it should never be forgotten however that listening to and enjoying music comes first, and that all technique should be taught in conjunction with this' and added:

Sight-singing should be taught as the means of arriving at the exhilarating experience and fascinating results of reading and singing good music. ... This is the basis of all further musical study and the ability to master and hear harmonies and any of the more complex combinations and scores will follow on naturally once we can immediately hear any melodic interval from a given note... sight-singing should be practised in connection with music rather than exercises, and the music used must be good *as music*... unaccompanied choral music, rounds and catches, chorale tunes with their harmonisations.<sup>216</sup>

In any case, where only 73 choirs and 25 orchestras had presented for examination in the year 1924/5, this had almost doubled to 113 choirs and 45 orchestras by 1949.<sup>217</sup> It is unclear though whether this increase was merely encouraged by the granting of financial bonuses for achievement in examinations or if it correlated with general improvements in musical culture attributable to broadcasting. Still the overall number of schools that presented for these examinations was very small, and the majority of these were located in county Dublin.<sup>218</sup> Larchet could state in 1951 that while progress could be reported in many schools, 'far too large a number are without music instruction of any kind'.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Larchet, 'Mus. in the secondary schools', p. 33.

<sup>216</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation', pp 17-8

<sup>217</sup> Larchet, 'Mus. in the secondary schools', p. 34.

<sup>218</sup> Appendix H, table 5a, 5b and 5c for a breakdown of the numbers of schools in each county in independent Ireland in receipt of musical bonuses in the years between 1924/5 and 1931/2, for example. Compare with Appendix I, tables 2a and 2b, regarding the concentration of music teachers in urban areas.

<sup>219</sup> Larchet, 'Mus. in secondary schools', p. 34.

Even the education minister of the inter-party government and the instigator of the army school of music, Richard Mulcahy, commented in 1948 that while the increase in numbers taking choral and orchestral examinations were gratifying for his department, he personally thought that music still needed to be 'more widely cultivated in the schools'. An inspector of music for the secondary schools, Peadar Ó Cillín, was thus appointed for the first time to assist in achieving this and Mulcahy expected that a more 'special inspection' could be devoted to music, 'this very important subject'. Furthermore, in recognition of its 'cultural value in education' and in an effort to encourage the study of music Mulcahy also arranged that from 1949 the marks allocated to music, along with some other subjects such as modern languages, at second level certificate examinations be increased.<sup>220</sup>

Still, according to Larchet, 'music', for most secondary school children, meant 'practising day after day the same dreary pieces, for no end but the annual examination', be it the individual or ensemble, which resulted in children not being taught music but 'only learning to dislike it'.<sup>221</sup> This was also decried by the M.A.I. who viewed that music as a pedagogical subject controlled by examinations only encouraged 'bad teachers to aim solely at examination results and to ignore everything but a mechanical and parrot-like injection of the barest necessary data'. Music examinations were, they stated, 'generally so far from being tests of musicality that they are positively unmusical or anti-musical, and form an obstacle to the child's acquiring a genuine interest and talent'.<sup>222</sup>

The type of music and musical instruments taught and the musical bodies or examining academies which certified those teaching music in the secondary school is not discernable from departmental or census information but Larchet did remark as early as 1923: 'It is obvious that we must cultivate a superior type of teacher, one who will be an enthusiastic progressive music student.'<sup>223</sup> In 1951, he reiterated this, stating that 'one of the chief difficulties' still facing progress regarding musical education in secondary schools was 'the insufficiency of inadequately trained teachers'.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxv, 334 (3 May 1949)

<sup>221</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>222</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40, 610), pp 13-4.

<sup>223</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>224</sup> Larchet, 'Mus. in secondary schools', pp 34-5.

The 1926 census of population indicated that the number of those in Ireland who stated their occupation as 'teachers of music'— which is very markedly distinguished from general 'teachers (not music teachers)' in the census publications - stood at 748.<sup>225</sup> It is difficult to discern the numbers of music teachers employed in secondary schools recognised by the department of education because the numbers are not detailed separately. When the numbers of those working in particular industries or services are examined, however, it is revealed that 99 male and 563 female 'teachers of music' were classified as being employed under the category of 'education (not government or local authority)' in 1926.

According to the census information then, 89 per cent of music teachers were employed in secondary schools recognised by the department education in addition to those in musical institutions such as the R.I.A.M., or in a private, individual capacity. In correlation with increases in the numbers of choirs and orchestras being developed in schools, the proportion of music teachers employed in a private capacity, in musical institutions and in secondary schools had also increased to 94 per cent by 1936. This proportion decreased to 91 per cent by 1946 and to 84 per cent by 1951.<sup>226</sup> It must be remembered though that the overall number of music teachers in the country also decreased by about 24 per cent from 748 to 569 between 1926 and 1951.<sup>227</sup> Moreover, the vast majority of music teachers were self-employed in a private capacity and this majority had risen from 68 per cent in 1926 to 71 percent by 1946.<sup>228</sup> Thus, it can be deduced that only about 30 per cent of music teachers were employed within the second level education system.

Aloys Fleischmann pointed out in 1935, however, that the department of education ignored or were 'obviously indifferent' to 'the existence, or non-existence, of whole-time, not to say part-time, teachers of music on the schools staffs'. Qualifications, he said, were 'immaterial and as a result not generally possessed' and he added: 'In the convents, particularly, where the number of music students is often large, the incapacity of the music-teachers is a fact too well-known to need much comment'.<sup>229</sup> Comparing the situation in the Irish Free State with other countries, he found that music was generally recognised on the programme of secondary schools,

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<sup>225</sup> Appendix I, table 1.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, table 3.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, table 1.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, table 4.

<sup>229</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'The outlook of music in Ireland', in *Studies*, no. 24 (Mar. 1935), p. 128.

'not as an art, perhaps, so much as a cultural force demanding and producing a valuable type of mental discipline' and measures usually taken to secure 'an efficient body of teachers'. He stated that in Scotland, for example, a secondary school music-teaching certificate of qualification was only granted to those already in possession of a university diploma or degree in music. In Northern Germany, trainee music teachers were required to complete two years of musical study at the state school of music, two years of study at university level, one year of practical music-teaching experience and an obligatory state examination in music before qualifying.

Fleischmann added that based on a rough survey which he had conducted himself, he had discovered that of 63 music teachers in 19 secondary schools in Dublin and 7 schools in Cork in 1934/5, only 2 had university degrees in music, 32 possessed a music diploma of some kind and 29 were 'without any specific musical qualification'. He said that in view of the fact that university degrees were required of all teachers of all other subjects in the secondary schools, there was 'no reason why the same should not be required of teachers of music'.<sup>230</sup> He concluded that if any serious developments were to take place in music in Ireland, it had to begin with the teachers, the children and the schools: 'No new state of things may be expected until there is a change over to a new policy. But the first step lies with the department of education.'<sup>231</sup>

That no such steps were taken though, is evidenced by the reiteration by M.A.I., of which Fleischmann was a member, of some of the points he had made in 1935. The M.A.I. recommended that the department of education establish a council of education to standardise and regulate teaching, not only in the interest of music as 'an isolated reform, demanded merely in the interests of musicians' but as something applicable to other subjects also.<sup>232</sup> They also criticised the abilities of teachers to teach aspects of music other than technical proficiency stating: 'It cannot be said that the history of music is taught at all at present.' 'All teaching', they added, 'is the teaching of history, all knowledge and philosophy the theory of history, and education a recapitulation of the historical process. The history of music is as much and more the history of Europe as the succession of events and ideas in any other category'.

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>232</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 12.

According to the M.A.I., the result of teachers ignoring music history, and teaching musical appreciation, aesthetics and interpretation, 'those aspects directly concerned with cultural and artistic value', badly, was not and never would be 'the production of a large number of competent sight-singers or intelligent and discriminating music-lovers'. Rather, it was 'that even those who become professional musicians are frequently lacking in musical qualities and in a proper understanding and appreciation of their art'.<sup>233</sup>

In 1951, Larchet proposed that the department of education, rather than the schools themselves be responsible for the employment of properly certified teachers. Although a university degree in music and a higher diploma in education were the qualifications required for registration and full payment as a secondary school music teacher, only four out of all the music teachers in Irish secondary schools actually held those qualifications by 1951. Thus most of those actually teaching music to individuals and, particularly, to school choirs were, as Fleischmann put it, 'unqualified members' of 'religious communities'.<sup>234</sup> Indeed, Larchet had also proposed in 1923 that the universities and music academies could help in the cultivation of proper music teachers 'by rearranging their syllabuses to meet our requirements'.<sup>235</sup> This was one area wherein Larchet, himself, although it was not until 1944 that his own position was actually made full-time position, could have a direct impact on educational and musical developments, being the professor of music at U.C.D.

Four-year degrees in music were offered there as well as a number of certificate and diploma courses for those wishing to become secondary school music teachers.<sup>236</sup> At U.C.C. a three-year degree in music was offered but no music teaching diplomas and St Patrick's College at Maynooth offered no specific degree in music (although music was available as a subject for a general arts) being largely concerned with Gregorian chant and ecclesiastical music. T.C.D., on the other hand, was largely an examination board for music, providing no lectures but granting degrees in music based on examinations in history, harmony and counterpoint. However, during the tenure of the organist George P. Hewson who acceded to the chair of music in 1935, music became a subject for the B.A. degree and lectures were

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>234</sup> Aloys Fleischmann 'The organization of the profession' in idem (ed.), *Mus. in Ire*, p. 82;

<sup>235</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>236</sup> Larchet, 'Music in the universities' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 18-9.

provided in the history of music. However, a degree in music did not necessarily constitute a qualification in the teaching of music.<sup>237</sup>

In order to remedy this Larchet and Fleishmann both wrote that negotiations were in progress, in 1951, with regard to the recognition of those holding at least a 'reputable music teaching diploma' as secondary teachers, to ensure that those teaching music actually had some form of teaching qualification.<sup>238</sup> Some members of the music profession had already realised the role that music teachers could play in remedying the state of musical culture in independent Ireland and had founded the Music Teachers' Association in Cork in 1936 'to further and protect the interests of the musical profession, and to encourage a higher standard of musical education in general'. Significantly, only such teachers as possessed a recognised university degree in music, or a diploma of the standard of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music in London or the Cork Municipal School of Music were accepted as members.<sup>239</sup>

Incidentally, music at third level was rarely a topic of debate in Dáil Éireann apart from on one occasion, when Eamon de Valera presented his proposal for the Institute for Advanced Studies in 1940. This institute was to serve as an independent centre for advanced research in 'Celtic studies', phonetics, linguistics and the editing and publication of Irish language manuscripts and dictionaries, which would cooperate with the universities and the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. There was also provision for a school of theoretical physics and mathematics, a subject in which de Valera had a personal interest, which raised much parliamentary opposition, in addition to the issues of financial cost and the possibility that it might undermine or duplicate similar work already happening in Irish universities.<sup>240</sup>

James Dillon, now a Fine Gael Party T.D. for Monaghan and the only deputy to protest against the bill with music in mind, wondered if research into 'Irish music' would be included in the schedule of subjects which the institute proposed to deal with in connection with Celtic studies. Although he questioned whether an Institute of Advanced Studies was the 'appropriate arena for that kind of work', he did support it as a branch of learning in which there was 'ample scope for considerable

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<sup>237</sup> 'The music departments of the universities' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 23-31.

<sup>238</sup> Fleischmann 'The organization of the profession', p.82; Larchet, 'Mus. in secondary schools', p. 35. See also ch.6.

<sup>239</sup> 'The professional organizations' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 99-100.

<sup>240</sup> Coolahan, 'Pre-university ed.', p.770.

development'. He appreciated that while research in music might well be 'more expeditiously and effectively' by 'other machinery', some agency was urgently required to deal with the 'immense mass of native music' within the country. Because, Dillon claimed, this 'native music' was 'practically unknown' to the vast majority of Irish people, 'Irish music' was generally taken to mean 'the intolerable tedium of the slip jig, the four-hand reel and the squealing fiddle which harass the ear!' For Dillon, 'real Irish music' meant 'Irish airs' that were 'delightfully produced' and not that produced by 'the céilidhe band' on Radio Éireann, which he felt was inferior and unrepresentative.<sup>241</sup>

However, no response was made by de Valera to Dillon's speech, except to say that other schools and aspects of research could be added to the institute 'when the best opportunity presented itself'.<sup>242</sup> The proposal passed successfully into legislation as the Institute for Advanced Studies Act, 1940.<sup>243</sup> Music, then, would continue to be an exclusive and minority subject, which, as Marie McCarthy highlighted, 'discriminated against boys' participation, and it was locked into the conservatory type of music education that stressed theoretical knowledge and evaluation by examination'.<sup>244</sup> Until this changed, music would remain in a 'lamentable' position in the secondary schools, where if it was taught at all it was taught with the aim of producing virtuosi instead of training intelligent listeners.<sup>245</sup>

### 5.12 Music, education and music education

There were, as Theodore Hoppen notes, 'few overall changes' in the education system in independent Ireland under the Cumann na nGaedheal or the Fianna Fáil administrations.<sup>246</sup> Apart from establishing a department of education in 1924 to coordinate primary, secondary and technical education, the inherited pattern of administration, financing and control remained very much as it had been under the British regime. However, the new independent state did yield a vast change in one area of education, that being the attempted revival of the Irish language.

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<sup>241</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxix, 1098-99 (10 April 1940).

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 1107.

<sup>243</sup> 1940/13 (19 June 1940).

<sup>244</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 128.

<sup>245</sup> Appendix A. It is extremely telling that much of what Larchet wrote about music and the position of music in the secondary schools, in 1951, replicated, almost verbatim, that which he had written in his 'Plea for music' in 1923.

<sup>246</sup> Hoppen, *Ire. since 1800*, p.243.

The idealism evoked by the Gaelic League and the Irish language movement in the late nineteenth century had ensured that a popular link had been drawn between national identity and the language. Indeed, few ideological or programmatic plans for the future government of the state were expressed in the early 1920s but for a constant referral to a romantic idealisation of Ireland's Gaelic past, a time before British 'interference'.<sup>247</sup> Assumptions that the educational system in Ireland had been established by the British administration to undermine indigenous culture, meant that the first task of the newly independent government was to restore the most obvious marker of that culture, the Irish language. The 'building up of nationality' then implied the building up of the Irish language and the education system, particularly the primary and vocational schools, were used by the state as political instruments towards this nationalistic end.

A rather authoritarian stance was assumed by the state in this regard then, determining what the nation required in a general cultural and educative sense, although advocating freedom of curriculum in attaining that goal, which in turn actually restricted subject development. Thus whatever educational policy there was for any academic subject, was subsumed by national concerns for the restoration of a Gaelic heritage, the basis of which was to be found in the Irish language. Despite the fact that the successive government administrations placed the burden of the reclamation of essence of the nation on the children of the nation, the Irish government did not afford any consideration of the other educational needs of those children. As long as the collective political agenda was being served, there was little attention paid to the development of children or philosophies on the teaching of certain subjects such as music.

Whilst there were some interesting initiatives like the children's concerts held in collaboration with the defence department and the department of education's summer school of music, this rang particularly true for the continued attitudes to and position of music, serving the Irish language within the singing class. Indeed the singing of songs in the Irish language in particular, which were often contrived adaptations or hymns, highlight that the focus of whatever state cultural policy did exist did not afford any particular concern for the revival and development of 'traditional' Irish music or the accommodation of the variant extant musical genres.

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<sup>247</sup> See Sean Ó Faolain's ascerbic take on the point in 'The Gaelic cult' in *The Bell*, ix, no.3 (Dec. 1944), pp 185-96.

Granted that much music of the 'traditional' genre would probably not lend itself to 'national' standardisation, the role of music of any genre in the Irish education system was not taken into consideration under the Cumann na nGaedheal or the Fianna Fáil administrations.

Rather, it was determined by the state language policy and that facet of the art of music which appeared to lend itself most easily to serve this end was communal singing. Ironically then, the independent Irish state was making exactly the same mistakes that they claimed the British administration had made in the nineteenth century by ignoring the schoolchildren's linguistic and musical backgrounds. Ironically too, where music education in the primary level system, which was ostensibly free of syllabus, was stifled by the language requirement and the teaching of mechanical versions of Irish songs, music education was stifled at second level by the mechanical renderings produced by the insistence on a particular curriculum in order to attain certification or progression to third-level education.

This is not to say that there was no opposition to a saturation of all the facets of a general education by the national language revival movement with the Irish National Teachers Organisation being particularly vocal on the issue over the period in question here and suggesting a more child-centred, rather than a nation-centred, approach to education.<sup>248</sup> However there was much tension between teachers and the Fianna Fáil government with de Valera claiming in Dáil Éireann on one occasion that he did 'not care' if he offended them by making primary certification compulsory.<sup>249</sup>

As Akenson has observed, de Valera was such 'an educational conservative' that he also reintroduced into secondary schools, the British system of set text books which had been abolished by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in 1922 – although it had existed somewhat anomalously for music.<sup>250</sup> Significantly too, the inadequacies of educational facilities for music in Ireland only came to be really discussed in Dáil Éireann, as already observed, once it was realised that foreign musicians would have to be imported to provide music for Irish people in Ireland in the late 1940s. Still little or no change was effected for the development of music as

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<sup>248</sup> See I.N.T.O., *A plan for education*, 1947 cited in M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 6.

<sup>249</sup> Hyland & Milne (eds), *Irish ed. docs*, pp 109-11.

<sup>250</sup> Akenson, *A mirror to Kathleen's face*, p. 32.

an educational art form in itself within any level of the education system in independent Ireland in the years between 1922 and 1951.

In 1951, Fleischmann claimed that there only 4 organising inspectors of music for 5,400 Irish primary schools, and 3 of these had been appointed after 1948. The inadequacy of this is only appreciated by comparison, with the department of education in Scotland, for example, which employed 13 supervisors of music for a similar number of schools in the same time period.<sup>251</sup>

That there were developments in musical education and instruction was more incidental than intentional and many of these resulted from external influences of contemporary society than because of musical activity in the schools. Where the musical impetus came from the locality though and was supported by the state, as happened with adult vocational and commercial choirs in the late 1940s, these were highly popular and successful in terms of creating a local musical culture. Where musical activity was dictated by a state ideal, as in primary education, or a state syllabus, as in secondary education, musical development was far less successful.

Above all though, a failure to grasp the 'distinction between education and instruction' was, as Harry White has observed, 'the major deficiency in Irish music education of the twentieth century'.<sup>252</sup> That there was a clear distinction, yet interdependency, between technical instruction in vocal or instrumental literacy and proficiency and music education, meaning the teaching of general musical history and awareness, was something that was rarely recognised. Without this recognition real change, for musical purposes could not be effected. Indeed, the level to which perceptions of music did, or more correctly did not, evolve over the years under consideration here are deducible from the M.A.I. memorandum 'Music and the nation' of 1949. The association claimed that education was 'a training for life', an acquisition of 'some culture, taste and a sense of values, not the mere learning of supposed facts nor the training for particular trades or occupations, which should come later, and for which education is a pre-requisite'. It held that 'instruction' was far 'too often equated with education' and 'a well-filled head...of dogmatic facts and figures' given as the criterion of a 'sound' education.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Fleischmann, 'The organization of the profession', p. 82.

<sup>252</sup> White, *The keeper's recital*, p. 201.

<sup>253</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40, 610), pp 1-2.

The M.A.I. also claimed that no thought was given simply to 'the first essential of listening to and enjoying music for its own sake. It is presented as a mere dry technicality...with no visible objective; as a kind of enforced penance, comparable to the exercise put upon prisoners of digging holes in the ground and filling them up again'. It remarked that it was not surprising, then, that pupils ended up with 'a permanent distaste' for whatever material was taught and were certainly not prone to reproducing that material outside of school hours.<sup>254</sup>

Music had been 'neglected' by successive Irish governments. The M.A.I. advocated a change of mentality and 're-orientation of values' at the administrative and political levels of the state where *it* saw that that materialism which governed the education system was bred. The association held that music had to be appreciated there as the 'most accessible' art form and thereby the art form most suitable to 'offset materialism'. The simple enjoyment of music had, *it* claimed, 'important effects on character formation' of a child for it provided them with the capacity 'for developing every part of the mind' amongst other things.<sup>255</sup>

The M.A.I. advocated that the primary school curriculum, in particular, be revised to make music 'a part of the education of every citizen' for education in music was important for a more rounded education. It advised, using Eoin MacNeill's argument, that expenditure on music 'be regarded primarily as expenditure on education, and it should not be necessary to prove that a good educational system is one of the first necessities for the state and one of the most serious responsibilities of any government'.<sup>256</sup> However, the M.A.I. also warned that any changes in the curriculum with regard to music had to be made with 'the full realisation that we are not seeking to create a nation of professional musicians, but of reasonably educated music-lovers.'<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., pp 3-7.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., p.15.

## Chapter 6

### TOWARDS A NATIONAL POLICY FOR MUSIC?

Having discussed the relationship between the state and music in terms of the expression or projection of Irish nationality, the 'national' role of music in the consolidation of the state and three key areas where state departments interacted with musical activity which may or may not have had intentional consequences for that activity, one major question still remains to be answered. To what extent was there any overall state policy for the development of music and musical activity in the period in question here or, at least, what attempts, if any, were made to create such a policy?

The actions and policies of certain government ministers, in terms of direct and indirect financial regulation, education and entertainment noted in the previous chapters, indicate, by and large, that personal attitudes towards music resulted in some state initiatives for music itself as a cultural endeavour. Yet, few, if any, of these were taken specifically for the purposes of developing any of the particular aspects of musical activity mentioned previously, nor were they taken in consultation with members of the music profession. Still these people constantly advised the government, either directly or in the pages of popular journals, magazines and daily newspapers, of the urgent need to have a comprehensive central state policy for the development of all aspects of musical activity.

This chapter will examine just some of that advice and place whatever efforts did occur towards the creation of national policy for music in the context of that advice. The significance of the role that the R.I.A.M. played in directing musical developments in the period in question here will also be considered in this context.

#### **6.1 A national academy of music, 1923**

Two of the main problems identified by members of the music profession regarding the development of music in independent Ireland were the lack of organisation and regulation within the profession itself and the consequent lack of a national standard for music teaching and examination. As it was, the music education of the youth of the nation, which, as already examined, was in itself a confused area and was generally focused on the singing of songs in the Irish language, was largely dependent on the competence of general teachers, with little or no music training, in

the schools. Indeed, in some cases, school inspectors reported that ‘only a limited number’ of the pupils actually took part in singing classes and in such cases the teachers were found to be following ‘the line of least resistance’ where only ‘born singers’ received attention, while those ‘gifted in a more minor degree’ were simply neglected.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, because the growth of the middle classes in the nineteenth century had increased amateur music-making and encouraged the inculcation, possibly in correlation with the recently established conservatories of Europe, of the celebrity virtuoso, musical education had come to imply the acquisition of virtuostic dexterity by means of technical musical instruction.<sup>2</sup> As will be discussed here, the teaching of budding professional musicians and singers in the newly independent Irish state, on the other hand, whilst widespread, was without any standardised certification and based primarily on economic concerns that Aloys Fleischmann referred to as ‘general “diplomania”’.<sup>3</sup>

Most commentators, however, saw as the solution to these problems, a national policy for music located in and directed by a central state-run institution such as a national music college, conservatory or academy. As already mentioned, one of the first persons to address the new independent government in this regard was John Larchet in 1923. He argued: ‘There should be but one endowed musical establishment, namely a National Academy of Music. This centralising institution should not only be responsible for the training of the future professional musician and the gifted amateur, but should control the musical examinations and conduct the inspection of the music classes throughout the country.’<sup>4</sup> A more detailed design for the establishment of such an institution was also submitted to the government by Larchet and his colleague Arthur Darley, a music collector, a prominent violin teacher at the R.I.A.M. and later director of D.M.S.M., in a memo entitled ‘Suggested establishment of a national academy of music’.<sup>5</sup>

This document offered some explanations for the unsatisfactory position of ‘the fine arts in the Irish Free State’, and particularly that of music which they claimed made ‘the greatest appeal to a large proportion of humanity’. Such

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<sup>1</sup> *Rep., dept of ed.*, 1929/30, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Rainbow, *Music in ed. thought*, p. 220-21.

<sup>3</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, ‘The outlook of music in Ireland’, in *Studies*, no. 24 (Mar. 1935), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> John F. Larchet and Arthur Darley, ‘Memorandum re: suggested establishment of a National Academy of Music’. See Appendix K for the full text of this document.

explanations included 'the political conditions which prevented the people from settling down to any form of self expression of self-development', the 'position under the English government', and the 'enforced conformity to English musical and educational methods...antiquated and often grotesque methods which have since been abandoned by the English themselves'. As a result, Ireland was judged to have fallen 'out of the general advance of musical knowledge and musical culture', a position considered by Larchet and Darley as 'degrading'. Changes were thus needed in order to remedy the state of music in the country and 'take a place amongst the great musical nations of Europe'. Of Germany, in particular, it was held: 'She pays as much attention to music and the fine arts in general as she does to scientific research. She looks upon both as equally necessary for the development of her people, and the results of her policy, in both directions, do not need to be pointed out'.

In order to attain the same level of development in Ireland, Larchet and Darley advocated the establishment a central musical institution, along the lines of 'the great musical conservatories of Berlin, Leipzig, Paris and Rome'. This institution to be known as 'the National Academy of Music' would be modified to suit Ireland's 'own peculiar conditions', would administer a national system of music education by controlling the teaching of music in all schools and colleges owned by the state, or receiving any educational grants from the government, and would 'endeavour to encourage the advancement of music in the country.' The institution would therefore cultivate in the people as a whole 'an intelligent love of music' whilst offering 'advanced teaching' to those with 'creative talent'.

The musical director of the proposed institution who would be appointed by the minister of education, would manage and administer the academy as chairman of a council, containing two staff members appointed by the director and two other persons 'interested in the advancement of music', appointed by the education minister. The academy itself would teach, control, direct, inspect and examine music in all schools in the Irish Free State by assuming the powers, duties and functions of the department of education in relation to music. It would also certify teachers and encourage music 'by means of scholarships, travelling studentships, research work (especially in relation to Irish music) lectures, recitals, etc.'

Larchet and Darley claimed that musical development in other European countries was successful because of 'generous and unremitting attention to the art',

fostered by 'magnificent government endowments, as well as the beneficence of private patrons'. Thus they argued that a similar institution in Ireland would require about £20,000 investment by the state, £5,000 of which was to purchase musical instruments, textbooks, music and furniture for the premises of the Academy. They suggested that instead of building new premises, the state would consider renting a suitable building such as 'the old University College buildings in Stephen's Green' which they believed contained 'ample room, and a very fair substitute for a concert hall'. It was envisaged that the new academy would be financially self-supporting after about five years for, in the manner of the extant music institutions, it would charge fees for tuition, lectures, examinations and certification as well as being 'at liberty, subject to the consent of the minister of education, to accept endowments of money, instruments, etc'.

Considering the connections that both Larchet and Darley had with a number of extant music institutions, including the R.I.A.M. and the D.M.S.M., indeed that both were employed at these institutions, and the extant problem of shared resources, it might seem as though they were advocating the establishment of another rival musical institution. However, they were actually advocating the amalgamation and standardisation of all music-teaching resources in the state and all existing endowments, private and government, to the one proposed institution and perhaps even intended for it to be under the auspices of the R.I.A.M itself. Thus it was that they argued that the academy 'should have the power to absorb any existing institutions, with their consent, whether endowed or not, and to accept the administration of any grants or endowments given by any body or individual for the advancement of music'.<sup>6</sup>

However, the proposal was turned down on the basis that the 'financial conditions' were such that the granting of finance to such an endeavour 'would not be justified'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, despite persistent calls for the establishment of such an institution, as outlined by Larchet and Darley, right throughout the period in question here, no music academy was established which served to amalgamate the scattered financial resources of the extant musical institutions and their various endowments or simply to co-ordinate the teaching of music in the state, particularly as many of

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix K.

<sup>7</sup> Secretary, ministry of finance to the office of national ed., 15 Feb. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2794).

the same teachers were employed in a number of these institutions although each had varying musical standards.

There were only five such institutions dedicated to the teaching of various branches of musical activity in the country, two of which were the municipal schools of music in Dublin and Cork, two of which were private schools of music in Dublin, the Leinster School of Music and The Read School of Pianoforte Playing, founded in 1904 and 1915 respectively and had little or no relationship with the state, and one, the R.I.A.M., which was, as already noted, given direct, albeit small, financial patronage by the government.

## **6.2 The R.I.A.M. - contender for the national academy**

This last institution availed, as discussed previously, of every opportunity to offer and promote itself as *the* national academy of music in Ireland in the absence of such a designated institution. The location of the academy, the royal patronage, the professional, middle-class business and corporation interest, the 'respectable' background of the pupils, and the genre of music to be transmitted clearly reflected its social standing and, what Marie McCarthy referred to as, its values of 'Victorian high culture'.<sup>8</sup> The practical extent to which this academy functioned though, in the absence of a central state-sponsored institution, as a national academy of music along the lines indicated by the likes of Larchet and Darley between 1922 and 1951 is a fascinating and relevant study in itself.

The academy was founded in the nineteenth century, after the European fashion, for the purposes of technical instruction in musical subjects such as piano, violin, 'cello, organ and singing, the type of subjects also encouraged by competitive festivals such as the Feis Ceoil. Other instrumental subjects such as brass and woodwind, viola, flute, double-bass and harp were taught but there was a rapid decrease in the numbers taking these subjects between the 1890s and about 1916. Undoubtedly the establishment of the D.M.S.M. was somewhat to blame for the decline of brass and woodwind instrumental teaching in particular and it was not until 1949 that there was sufficient demand to hold classes in subjects such as French horn, trumpet, trombone and oboe. There was perhaps a correlation here with the usage of such instruments in the popular dance bands but it was more likely as a

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<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, pp 47-8.

result of the recent expansion of the radio orchestra to full symphony strength for which players of these instruments were urgently required.

The R.I.A.M. also provided tuition in musical theory and harmony, these being specific skills required for musical composition, but again these were generally taught as individual subjects unconnected to a programme of music scholarship combining practical technical skills with harmonic and historical awareness. At any rate there was an increase in the variety of classes offered by the academy, from 1922, with classes in the classic 'art' music instruments detailed above, continuing to be well attended whilst many of those instruments for which instruction ceased during the first world war were re-introduced to the curriculum of the R.I.A.M. between 1922 and 1951, showing, at least, a continuing interest in the genre of 'art' music. Significantly though, the numbers of pupils attending classes at the academy began to decline from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s when the numbers continued to average at around 400 students per year, fifty per cent lower than they had been in the years prior to 1922.<sup>9</sup>

The level of musical activity in the R.I.A.M. was usually attributed by the governing body to external factors but it appears that the illness and death of Michele Esposito was the primary reason for the considerable downturn in numbers attending piano classes in particular towards the end of the 1920s.<sup>10</sup> However 'the abolition of the small orchestras in the cinemas' and the widespread introduction of gramophone soundtracks was also blamed for it was held that it deprived musicians 'of this opening for their abilities'.<sup>11</sup> By the early 1930s, the governing body of the R.I.A.M., though, were of the opinion that despite the continued reduction in numbers, they were satisfied that that reduction was 'less than might have been expected owing to the heavy and protracted depression which, we believe, has affected, and is affecting, the Royal Irish Academy of Music in common with other like educational institutions'.<sup>12</sup> The board of studies also expressed a similar view stating that while 'music should form part of every child's education' it was 'of necessity being abandoned, and parents, on the other hand, are having their children

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix L, tables 1a, 1b, 1c.

<sup>10</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1928, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 8.

trained along the lines of their particular gifts, whatever they may be, in order that they may be able, if necessary, to support or assist in supporting themselves'.<sup>13</sup>

In 1933 the governors reported that the further decrease in numbers of young people receiving musical tuition at the academy was due

mainly to the general depression which is affecting kindred institutions in England and Scotland in a similar way, while many of the young people who under former conditions would have studied with us, have now to do something on other lines towards their own support, as unfortunately the broadcasting of musical performances coupled with mechanical methods have deprived many of the opportunity of gaining pecuniary remuneration in orchestras etc.<sup>14</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 was cited as 'the only reason apparent' for the loss of numbers which occurred in that year.<sup>15</sup> However, in the early 1940s the numbers began to increase again, finally surpassing the 1922 figure of 783 by the end of the war in 1945.<sup>16</sup> The governors expressed their own surprise at this situation commenting that an increase in numbers was 'all the more satisfactory when one considers the difficulty of the present times' and 'the very abnormal conditions of existence owing to the war'.<sup>17</sup>

In 1948, the numbers of pupils attending the academy reached a peak, for the period in question in here, of 1,239, which the board of studies, in particular, took as 'evidence of public appreciation of the value of artistic study' and expressed the hope that the improvement in numbers would be maintained'.<sup>18</sup> Although the numbers had dropped somewhat by the early 1950s, the annual reports of the academy expressed more concern about a 'revival' of specific musical subjects such as 'cello, brass and woodwind, which, it was stated, were needed to aid in the development of orchestras and chamber music ensembles for, as already noted, there was not 'a full orchestra of academy students'.<sup>19</sup> However, the rise and fall of numbers of pupils attending the R.I.A.M. for musical tuition in various musical subjects should be seen as an indication of the state of musical culture and activity in the city of Dublin only and not that of the entire country. In fact, contrary to the trend at the R.I.A.M., the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1930, pp 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1933, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1939, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> See appendix L, tables 1a, 1b.

<sup>17</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1940, p. 6; *ibid.*, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 1948, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1950, pp 7-8.

evidence shows that there was a large and increasing demand for musical tuition in the subjects offered by the academy by way of its local centre examination system.

The R.I.A.M., responding to evident demand, had been holding examinations in musicianship and music theory at local centres outside of the academy since 1894. Senior professors of the academy, including the hugely influential Michele Esposito, travelled to these centres to examine prepared students who paid a small examination fee for the privilege. A 'centre' was defined as either a secondary school where there were enough prepared pupils or a central venue decided by the academy itself in which smaller numbers of pupils of private certified music teachers in different areas could be assembled.<sup>20</sup> After 1916 the local centre examination system of the R.I.A.M., appears to have developed rapidly and steadily and general public appreciation of the system was undoubtedly enhanced by the endorsement of the government school inspector L. E. Steele in his report of that year to the R.I.A.M. which stated: 'The syllabus of the examinations is so arranged that continuity of study is secured...it would be well if the public more fully recognised that they can obtain certificates of proficiency just as good as - in some cases much better than - those offered by English examination boards'.<sup>21</sup>

Even the civil war, despite impacting on the ability of some R.I.A.M. examiners to reach some of the more remote rural local examination centres 'amid the difficulties of railway communication', appears to have actually had a positive influence on the R.I.A.M. for 'the various examinations held in Ireland by English examining boards' were reported to have 'practically ceased'.<sup>22</sup> Indeed in 1923, the board of education in Ireland was informed by the Incorporated Society of Musicians, for example, that its examiners had to go to southern parts of the country 'in motor cars and be fired at impartially by both sides'. 'The conditions under which the work was done was extremely unpleasant to say the least, and several examiners have already refused to act again.'<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the Incorporated Society of Musicians had suspended its examination system altogether by 1928 to become a society for

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<sup>20</sup> Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, p. 298.

<sup>21</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1916, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1923, p. 9

<sup>23</sup> Marie McCarthy, 'Music education and the quest for cultural identity in Ireland, 1831-1989' (PhD thesis, Michigan, 1990), p. 322 cited in Pine and Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, pp 308-9.

professional musicians and thus it appears that a large proportion of its former adherents transferred to the R.I.A.M. examination system throughout the 1920s.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, it was soon noted that there was ‘a growing disposition upon the part of the heads of schools and colleges to avail of the facilities offered by the governors of this the leading body in musical subjects – theoretical and practical – in Ireland’.<sup>25</sup> The governors of the academy reported that owing to its ‘thoroughness’ the R.I.A.M. local centre examination system was ‘steadily raising the standard of musical efficiency and preparation’, ‘spreading throughout the country a better appreciation of the art of music’ and even improving ‘the standard of proficiency in the teaching’.<sup>26</sup> L.E. Steele, the government inspector charged with reporting annually the activities and progress of the academy to the department of local government and public health, under the Educational Endowments Act of 1885, stated that as ‘a standard test’ the local centre examinations held by the academy compared ‘most favourably with similar ones in the sister countries’.<sup>27</sup>

That the governors of the R.I.A.M. had decided to make common cause with, and perhaps therefore benefit from, the new state was further evidenced by the fact that almost all of the annual reports published in the 1920s highlighted the local examination centre system as something to be recognised as an important ‘Irish’ or ‘national’ development. The governors declared that they could see ‘no valid reason why any of the Irish educational establishments should send their pupils for examination to centres organised by British schools and colleges of music in this country, while the Royal Irish Academy of Music is prepared to carry out this work by highly competent and impartial members of their staff’.<sup>28</sup> As early as 1929 they declared: ‘The scheme is now firmly established as a most valuable agent in the musical education of our country.’<sup>29</sup>

### **6.3 The R.I.A.M. - relevance and musical standing, 1922-51**

Indeed considering that the decrease in the numbers of fee-paying students attending musical classes at the R.I.A.M. itself was attributed to the global economic

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix L, table 2 for details of the increase in the numbers taking R.I.A.M. local centre examinations during this period.

<sup>25</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1924, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1925, p. 9; *ibid.*, 1926, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1927, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1921, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929, pp 17-18.

depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the total annual income of the academy remained much as it had been in 1922, peaking, in fact, at £8,128 in 1931. This was, of course, owing to the amount of revenue taken in fees by the rapidly increasing number of candidates sitting examinations for certification in teaching a musical instrument or technical proficiency.<sup>30</sup>

It might appear as an ironic reflection on the work and standard of the academy that the awarding of teaching certificates and diplomas to private teachers to the standard of the academy decentralised their own educational system and may have actually taken students from the academy itself for such teachers were usually more accessible in physical and monetary terms and their pupils who passed examinations devised by the academy were awarded certificates of proficiency as if they were students of the academy itself. Yet it was a practical and pragmatic move by the governing body as the R.I.A.M. actually depended on the revenue taken in local centre examination fees for its very survival.

In fact, the proportion of the total annual income of the academy, which averaged at about £7,000 per annum until the 1940s, covered by this revenue had risen from 10 per cent in 1922 to 44 per cent in 1937 and would continue to account for an average of about 40 per cent of the academy's total annual income for the rest of the period in question here.<sup>31</sup> In 1938, the academy claimed that its local centre examinations were 'now firmly established and appreciated as the most valuable examinations of their kind. The high standard is being steadfastly maintained and, on that account, certificates issued to successful candidates in these examinations are most valued'.<sup>32</sup>

Significantly too, even in 1939, when numbers had declined at the academy itself in Dublin, the local centres examinations, on the other hand, 'sustained their numbers'. The governors reported that 'the constantly improving standard of proficiency shown by candidates as each year passes is undeniable proof of the increasing soundness of the knowledge of music obtaining throughout the country as a result of these examinations'.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the war years, the numbers taking local centre examinations continued to increase dramatically so that by 1945, the numbers

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix K, table 2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1938, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 1944, p. 13.

taking these examinations were almost nine times what they had been in 1922.<sup>34</sup> And despite 'difficulties of transport' the R.I.A.M. examiners managed to fulfil all of their appointments and examine musicians all over the country.<sup>35</sup>

As the number of candidates in the local centre examinations continued to increase annually, the academy reported in 1947, that their local centre examinations attracted 'candidates who are anxious to progress in their music under the best auspices at their disposal and are content to test the results of their diligence by their success, or otherwise, in examinations of such a high standard'. They added: 'It is only just to acknowledge the splendid work which is being done for music throughout the country by the convents and schools who are sparing neither effort nor expense in furthering knowledge of the art.'<sup>36</sup> The quality of these efforts in convent schools, though, was contested by members of the music profession, as will be discussed later.

At any rate, the effects of this furthering of music outside of the academy was evidenced by the numerous references, particularly from the 1940s, to the contributions made by teachers of the academy and the achievements of various pupils at competitive festivals such as the Feis Ceoil in Dublin, the Sligo Feis and the Londonderry Feis. Notable are the number of prizes awarded at these feiseanna which were named not only after prominent personnel involved in musical activity in Ireland such as John A Pigott (piano) and Fritz Brase (piano), but also after numerous persons affiliated with the R.I.A.M. such the Larchet Cup (piano), the Ida O'Reilly Cup (cello), or the Hamilton Harty Cup (piano). Incidentally a mere glance at the surnames of those who won such prizes reveals that many were children and relatives of teachers, governors or others involved with the academy as well as prominent musical figures, suggesting that Ireland had indeed a very small musical network.<sup>37</sup> Of course many of those prize-winners would go on to be the next generation of teachers, performers, musical broadcasters and general advocates for musical development in Ireland.

In 1948 the governors claimed: 'The very gratifying results at the feiseanna and at our own annual examinations are proofs of the enthusiasm of our pupils and of

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<sup>34</sup> Appendix K, table 2.

<sup>35</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1944, p. 12; *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1945, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1947, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> See *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1943, p. 5 for examples.

the thorough training they receive at the academy.’<sup>38</sup> The first part of this statement is particularly significant for it appears that the academy was effectively using itself as an indicator for the standardisation of music in independent Ireland. In 1949, the board of studies pointed out that not only was the number of leaving certificate candidates taking music increasing but also that many of these were entering the academy upon leaving school ‘to continue their studies’. The ‘high standard’ of musical proficiency apparently displayed by these particular students at the academy was held to reflect ‘great credit on the teachers and schools throughout the country’.<sup>39</sup> That such high standards very often reflected exceptional musical talent in a pupil despite the musical, or indeed music teaching, inabilities of their teachers has already been noted.<sup>40</sup>

It could be claimed that the R.I.A.M., which had defined its own role as a ‘national’ academy for music in independent Ireland from the outset of the period in question here, had neither precedent nor relative competition and therefore the standard of its teaching and performance and the value of its role in the development of musical activity could be questionable if not overestimated. However, the comments of eminent external examiners,<sup>41</sup> extracts of which can be found in the annual reports, would suggest that the work of the academy was of a particularly good standard, comparable to that of similar institutions in other countries. In 1923, for example, Frederick Dawson claimed:

In a wide experience of similar institutions in England and Scotland I have nowhere found such a high standard of technical training, nowhere so much musical (artistic) attainment as at your academy; indeed, I am tempted to say much more than that, the results being head and shoulders above all others that I know.<sup>42</sup>

The following year he reported not only ‘a state of general excellence and thoroughness such as I have never found at any other academy or school of music’ but felt compelled to make special mention of the ‘distinctive character’ with which each musician played because: ‘It is so rare; a standard of mere uniformity is pretty

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1948, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 1949, p. 15. See also Appendix H for details of the increasing numbers of candidates taking music as an individual examination subject across the period in question here.

<sup>40</sup> See ch. 5.

<sup>41</sup> Examiners not affiliated with the R.I.A.M., or generally with any aspect of the musical activity in Ireland, were employed to assess the examinations which occurred in the academy itself whilst examiners of the R.I.A.M. itself assessed the examinations held in the local centres around the country.

<sup>42</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1923, p. 7.

easy to attain, but playing which is personal to each player is very unusual, and that it is which gives distinction to your academy.’<sup>43</sup>

In 1924, Spencer Dyke wrote, generally, that ‘the playing was uniformly good, and there was no single competitor who fell below a recognised standard of efficiency’; therefore the standard of teaching was ‘on sound lines and a credit to the institution’.<sup>44</sup> L. E. Steele, the inspector of the academy under the provisions of the educational endowments act, reported, in 1927, that ‘the technical work is excellent, and the esprit de corps, which has always been a characteristic of the institution, is most marked’.<sup>45</sup> Robert Radford said that the standard of work and achievement in singing was high in 1930, and he was ‘quite certain that the academy, with all the resources it contains, presents the best outlet and possibility to the aspiring musicians in Ireland’.<sup>46</sup> Claud Pollard said that the academy possessed ‘several students of undoubted ability’ in piano-playing who, with ‘the necessary guidance’, would prove a valuable asset to the musical standard of Dublin’.<sup>47</sup>

In 1942, the external piano examiner, Vivian Langrish, wrote of the academy’s piano students: ‘The musical education they are receiving is of the best, and the students must surely feel very indebted to their respective professors and the Academy authorities in general for the excellent guidance they obtain from this famous school of music’.<sup>48</sup> R.J. Forbes, who examined piano and strings in 1947, wrote: ‘I am convinced that there is a great deal of native musical talent in Éire, and also that in the Royal Irish Academy of Music it is possible to obtain as good a training as anywhere in England or abroad at the present time’.<sup>49</sup> W.J. Watson who examined harmony and counterpoint at the academy praised the candidates who sat examinations in those subjects in 1949 stating that their work ‘revealed the fact that they had been prepared for their course of study along musicianly [sic] lines and kept well abreast of modern thought’.<sup>50</sup>

Of course because these comments were published as extracts of the examiners’ entire reports in the R.I.A.M. annual reports it might be safe to assume that certain less complimentary comments may have been intentionally suppressed.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1925, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1924, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 1927, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1930, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 1942, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 1947, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 1949, p. 14.

However, from the 1930s, less complimentary comments were increasingly included. In 1939, for example, C.J. Brennan who had examined singing at the R.I.A.M. criticised what he termed 'the rather gusty Celtic temperament, with a leaning towards the ultra-dramatic'. This, he said, was

a difficult thing to control, as I know from years of experience. The differentiation between the heavier dramatic type of expression and the lighter and more intimate kind, suitable to lieder singing, is not easily grasped by the average student, and when grasped not too readily applied...If the students as a whole will think more of the beauty of a nicely sustained melodic line, and indulge less in rather spasmodic bursts of unnecessary power, especially on high notes, they will let their voices develop on the lines laid down by their able instructors.<sup>51</sup>

This was something, which, as already noted, had been pointed out as a shortcoming in Irish singing ability by Adelio Viani, himself the professor of singing at the R.I.A.M.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly too, the general inability to distinguish between musical education and instruction was also referred to by the piano examiner Frederic Jackson, for example, who complained in 1950 that many pupils were not 'yet able to sublimate their technical prowess into musical meaning'. He added: 'in general candidates would do well to remember that the best solution of technical problems usually lies along *musical* [sic] lines, and that always the musical end should condition the technical means.'<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, the R.I.A.M. also promoted itself on the basis of external musical achievements by or honours bestowed upon many of its governors, teachers and pupils, including past pupils. Scholarships attained by students to attend musical institutions abroad were regularly mentioned in the annual reports to emphasise the standard of musical achievement attainable at the academy. In 1924, for example, the academy was 'proud' to report that 'Mr Walter Starkie, a former brilliant pupil, is now a Fellow of Trinity College'.<sup>54</sup> In 1925, a reception was held at the R.I.A.M. in honour of the conferring by T.C.D. of a honorary doctorate in music on Sir Hamilton Harty, a governor, and later president, of the academy, at which the governor-general of the Irish Free State, T.M. Healy attended and a programme of his compositions played by R.I.A.M. pupils.<sup>55</sup> In 1934, Valerie Trimble was reported as having 'won

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1939, p. 17.

<sup>52</sup> See ch. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1950, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1924, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1925, p. 9.

an open violoncello scholarship in the Royal College of Music London, in competition with cello students from the British Isles'.<sup>56</sup> In addition, various organ students were appointed to churches in the bigger towns.

The reputation of the academy, therefore, was largely based on the individual achievements of many of its students. That reputation though appears to have been highly regarded outside of the state as early as 1924 for the *Irish Times*, for example, reported that R.I.A.M. had been requested by Patna Training College in India to 'supply information regarding the constitution, rules and organisation' of the academy. Apparently a movement had been started in the Patna region 'for the encouragement and development of Indian music' and those involved wished to receive information on his this had been achieved to date in the newly independent Irish state.<sup>57</sup> In 1949, the R.I.A.M. itself reported that it had received some enquiries from England' about their local examination system, although it did not specify exactly from whom these enquiries were received.<sup>58</sup>

#### **6.4 The organisation of the music profession, 1922-51**

Considering the profitability of the local centre examination system it is hardly surprising that once the country had settled after the civil war, there was increased competition for Irish examining bodies from certain English musical institutions which continued to hold their own exams in urban centres in independent Ireland. Aloys Fleischmann calculated that by the end of the year 1933/4 there had been over 7,000 entries in the Irish Free State for examinations held by five English institutions, London's Trinity College of Music and London College of Music, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and the College of Violinists, Ltd. This was compared with the 7,684 candidates who entered for all types of certification by examination provided by Irish institutions such as the R.I.A.M., Leinster School of Music, Cork Municipal School of Music, the secondary schools and the universities.<sup>59</sup>

As already noted, the entire practice of 'education by examination' was decried by Fleischmann as 'the most negative of all methods' for the interest was

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 1934, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> *I.T.*, 10 May 1924.

<sup>58</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1949, p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> The number of examination candidates for each institution for the year 1933/4 were: R.I.A.M. - 4,938; Leinster School of Music - 2,472; Cork Municipal School of Music - 197; dept. of ed. secondary school examinations - 55; U.C.D. - 9, T.C.D. - 10; U.C.C. - 2.

naturally 'less directed towards the students than towards the amount of profit to be derived from examining them'. He called for the Fianna Fáil government to impose, in accordance with their 'tariff policy', an embargo 'on imported musical examinations' which were making tax-free profits in Ireland whilst preventing the growth of proper musical education'.<sup>60</sup> This embargo was, however, never imposed and although Fleischmann rued the examination system he admitted that it could not be done away with for there was yet a substitute to be found. Thus he advocated that some method of control was required 'to see to it that attention be focussed on the means by which the student may be educated to the standard required by the examinations, rather than on the examinations themselves or the profits therefrom'.

Interestingly however, Fleischmann did not propose a music academy per se but rather a central organising committee in the form of an 'Irish university examining board in music' which would 'create a fixed standard of valuation with regard to musical examinations'. He felt that only those who had 'gone through a prescribed course in one of the recognised schools of music' be allowed to sit for higher grade examinations and professional diplomas so as to ensure that the standard of the Irish schools of music would be raised. Fleischmann foresaw that the advantages to 'musical education' would be four fold.

Firstly, the training of more advanced students of music could be undertaken by 'competent teachers and craftsmen' and not left, as it had been, 'in the hands of irresponsible people lacking both qualifications and ability'. Secondly, musical education as a general education in music would be addressed and would not constitute 'a continuous cram in a single isolated subject' for it would necessitate a knowledge of 'a group of related subjects and subjects of general cultural importance'. Thirdly, Fleischmann felt that a period of training in a central institution would provide a stimulating environment for students to compete or take part in musical ensembles and be aware of other musical activities besides their own speciality. Lastly, a compulsory training period and a uniform standard for the acquisition of a professional teaching diploma would mean that a 'check' would be imposed on 'the phenomenal numbers at present engaged in teaching music'.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, 'The outlook of music in Ireland', in *Studies*, no. 24 (Mar. 1935), pp 125-7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 127-8; see also Appendix J for details of the numbers of music teachers in Ireland at this time.

Fleischmann also noted that, as in the secondary schools, even in the main recognised music institutions in the state, including the two municipal schools which were under the general control of the department of education, musical 'qualifications are the exception rather than the rule and that, as far as regulations go, anybody is eligible for election to the staff'. On the basis of his own investigations, he revealed that of the combined teaching staffs of the R.I.A.M., the D.M.S.M., the C.S.M. and the Leinster School of Music, which numbered 82 music teachers in all in 1934/5, only 8 possessed university degrees in music whilst 13 held various music diplomas but a rather alarming number of 61 were teaching music 'without any specific musical qualification' at all.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, Fleischmann suggested that a registration scheme for music teachers be implemented so that only those with certain qualifications could practise, but more importantly that 'their numbers would gradually be reduced to normal proportions, the level of their general education and of their musical ability would be raised, and a better living would be ensured for future members of the profession'.<sup>63</sup> No such scheme was implemented in the period here, however, for the M.A.I. would address the issue in their 'Music and the nation' memo of 1949. The association pointed out that the existing music schools in Ireland were still 'independent of one another and existing in rivalry, instead of cooperation. In such a small country such dissipation of effort is obviously quite impractical, and in fact there is in Ireland no academy or conservatory comparable to those in other countries, where a complete and all-round musical education may be had.'<sup>64</sup>

The M.A.I. also stated that a national conservatory of music controlled by a national music council of some sort, 'composed of leading musicians (especially composers) and educationalists', was still urgently required in Dublin and until this was established, they claimed, 'the state cannot be said to be showing recognition of the value of music'.<sup>65</sup>

The responsibility for the national education in music, as for education in general, lies solely with the state. Only the state has the power and the means to set up a national conservatory of music, and only if the conservatory is publicly owned can the proper liaison be brought about between it and other institutions, that it may play its full part in the national life.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 52

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

This 'state music conservatory' would be a central musical resource providing 'a library of representative musical works or the standard works on music' as well as 'a good gramophone and an adequate library of records'. It would 'organise and regulate the general lines of musical education in the land' and only music qualifications acquired there would be recognised and all music teachers would be required pass through the conservatory 'as much as any other teacher is required to pass through a university'.<sup>67</sup> Courses in music for the general primary school teacher and courses in teaching for musicians 'could be very well provided at the conservatory, in the former case in conjunction with a branch of the teachers' training colleges' - because musical equipment and 'direct contact with practical music' were often not be available in the teacher training colleges yet teachers were expected to teach 'singing' in the primary schools.<sup>68</sup>

The association was quick to point out, though, that blame for the disorganisation of the profession was not 'to be laid at the door of the privately owned music-schools, which, with the most commendable intentions, do what they can under the circumstances to fill the gap'. Of course, this was where many of the M.A.I. members were in employment, so it was not the object of the association to 'attack or belittle these efforts, but to state the need for their coordination and advancement'.<sup>69</sup> Yet, it concluded that until a 'state-financed conservatory' was set up music would remain 'rudimentary in Ireland, and anybody who wishes seriously to study music will be compelled, as at present, to go abroad to look for a minimum of the necessary facilities'.<sup>70</sup>

In 1951, Fleischmann himself would also write another article, very similar to that which he wrote in 1935, entitled 'The organisation of the profession' in which he urged that the music profession be promptly reorganised along the lines of other professional bodies in the state. He said that most professional bodies contended that it was 'better for members, clients and the public that a profession should be organised rather than unorganised, that only qualified persons should be allowed to practise, and that the public should be safeguarded from the fraudulent claims of

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 54-5.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp 59-60.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

“quacks”<sup>71</sup> He added that such organisation of the music profession would ensure that all musicians and music teachers had undergone adequate training before entering the profession, could deal more effectively with ‘the anomalies and abuses connected with local centre examinations, gradually raise the all-round standard of teaching’ and, therefore, increase the ability and utility of the average practising musician.<sup>72</sup>

Fleischmann pointed out, though, that none of this could be achieved by a voluntary body such as the M.A.I., for ‘the rank and file of music teachers’ would only be induced to cooperate by a body with ‘official status and statutory powers of registration’. However, such powers could only be achieved by means of legislation which, as Fleischmann highlighted, the government had not been persuaded even by ‘the important professions of engineering and architecture’ to consider. He also highlighted the precedents for such legislation, for music in particular, in other countries such as Italy, where, from 1926, all persons teaching music privately and in public institutions were required to have a recognised music teaching diploma, and Germany, where ‘state permission’ was required to teach music since 1925. In most of the western states of the U.S.A. all private music teachers were required to have a state license to teach by the 1950s, whilst in Canada ‘registration of music teachers’ acts regulated the profession. With such precedents, Fleischmann felt that it did not seem ‘unwarranted to continue to urge for music’ in Ireland and for similar legislative protection to that which was ‘thought desirable’ in many other countries.<sup>73</sup>

In 1943, a commission on vocational organisation, which had been established in 1936 by the Fianna Fáil government, recommended that some type of professional commission be established to investigate and draw up legal schemes for the sanctioning of proposals for registration and organisation submitted by the professions. It named the music profession as one of those extant ‘unregistered’ professions who would benefit from the opportunity this proposed commission would provide to secure powers of registration and official recognition. However, as Fleischmann pointed out, the report was ‘pigeon-holed’ by the government and none of the recommended measures implemented. ‘Accordingly’, he said, ‘the first

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<sup>71</sup> Fleischmann, ‘The organisation of the profession’, p. 78.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

opportunity which had presented itself to the “unregistered” professions, such as music, of achieving a stable form of organisation was lost through the government’s neglect to follow up its original policy in this sphere.’<sup>74</sup>

### **6.5 Cork School of Music and the publication of ‘Irish’ music, 1922-3**

Another area which any proposed national academy of music with a centralised music policy would also have to address was the interconnected issues of musical composition and publication. However, before any such policy could even be considered, these issues had created something of a controversy, particularly regarding the role of music in education and in the national life of the state, between the municipal school of music in Cork and the Irish government, in the early 1920s.

The Cork School of Music (C.S.M.), as this school was known, had been, founded by Cork Corporation in 1878, under the administration of the Corporation Technical Instruction Committee (C.T.I.C.) and was the first such music school established in the former United Kingdom for which town commissioners, corporations or councils could grant monies for their operation.<sup>75</sup> The school shortly had in excess of 150 students, a varied curriculum and examinations arranged in conjunction with the R.A.M. in London. From 1918, the school, ‘found itself wanting’, as Bernard Curtis put, as far as traditional ‘Irish’ music was concerned, particularly with the C.T.I.C. itself figuring such prominent local nationalists as Terence Mc Swiney and Fr J.C. O’Flynn.<sup>76</sup>

O’Flynn had apparently encountered the composer Carl Hardebeck some years previously and managed to convince the C.T.I.C. to create a combined position of headmaster and ‘professor of Irish traditional music’, with Hardebeck in mind, at the C.S.M. This position was advertised in June 1918 and Hardebeck’s application was the only one received. Hardebeck was born in London in 1869, blind almost from birth, and settled in Belfast in 1893 where he worked as a music teacher and organist. His most notable occupation was as a composer with his compositions winning eleven first prizes at Feis Ceoil competitions in Dublin between 1897 and 1908. His works were hugely influenced by the indigenous music and local songs that he collected upon his numerous visits to the Donegal Gaeltacht and transcribed

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard B. Curtis, *Centenary of the Cork School of Music: progress of the school 1878-1978* (Cork, 1978), p.15.

<sup>76</sup> Curtis, *Cork School of Music*, pp 32-36.

into braille, for which he devised a particular alphabet later adopted by the Irish Institute for the Blind.<sup>77</sup>

By 1921 though, the corporation's technical instruction fund for Hardebeck's salary was depleted and Cork Corporation, in an attempt to keep Hardebeck at the school gave £100, which had been intended for a chair in Irish Music at University College Cork, to the C.S.M. Hardebeck resigned as headmaster, however, in a controversy with colleagues at the school over the appointment of a particular piano teacher. Although he had been warmly accepted as a colleague he was not accepted as a superior at the C.S.M. and the early 1920s saw the resignation of a number of disgruntled members of the teaching staff. The C.T.I.C., though, were determined to keep Hardebeck as the professor of Irish traditional music at the school.<sup>78</sup>

Hardebeck's primary concern was to compose instrumental and vocal music in a traditional idiom for junior examinations and a substantial number of manuscripts were compiled, the printing of which proved to be problematic, firstly on a financial front and secondly, on account of the Gaelic script. The C.T.I.C. investigated printing costs in Dublin and London and eventually petitioned members of the 'illegal' Second Dáil for a grant to cover such costs, impressing upon the government and local Munster T.D.s the national significance of the scheme and of the endeavours of those involved, including the eminently regarded Hardebeck.<sup>79</sup>

In January 1922, a formal application was made by the C.T.I.C. to the then education minister Michael Hayes for a grant of £1,425 to be paid to the C.S.M., of which £300 was to pay Hardebeck's salary and the remainder to cover the costs of the printing and publication of his arrangements of 'Irish traditional music'.<sup>80</sup> The proposed scheme had already received the explicit support of the minister of finance, Michael Collins, evidenced in a letter dated 2 December 1921, to the secretary of C.T.I.C. which read: 'I am entirely in favour of your scheme, not alone officially, but personally. It would be difficult to estimate the amount of development possible to Irish music, and your Committee is deserving of every support for its work on the subject'.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp 71-3

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp 74-5.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp 73-4.

<sup>80</sup> Prionsiais Ó Dubhthaigh, ed. ministry to finance ministry, memorandum, 16 Feb. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795). Hayes was the ed. minister of the government of the 'illegal' Second Dáil whilst Fionán Lynch held the title of ed. minister in the concurrent provisional government.

<sup>81</sup> Michael Collins to Francic B. Giltinan, secretary, C.T.I.C., 2 Dec. 1921 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

Hayes informed the then Lord Mayor of Cork, Domhnal Ó Ceallachain, on 8 February 1922 stating that it was 'certain that the full demand made by the Cork School of Music as regards finance will be met by the cabinet on Friday....It is to be clearly understood that this grant is to be non recurrent. After the elections the government may see fit to give a yearly subsidy, but such is not to be counted on for the present'.<sup>82</sup> At the said cabinet meeting of 17 February 1922, the minister of education was granted permission to place £1,425 on the estimates of his department for the coming half year as a grant to the C.S.M.

Hayes was also authorised to make a payment of £425 immediately subject to his receiving a satisfactory report on the school, after which a letter, enclosing a cheque for £425, was sent to the school:

We have been informed by An Séabhach, Inspector, that it is your intention to set up a small sub-committee of people well acquainted with music, old Irish music, the national language and old Irish songs to survey the work of Carl Hardebeck before its publication and to consult with the composer in this correction. We approve of this proposal...if we are satisfied with the progress of the school, the remainder will be sent as it is needed.<sup>83</sup>

Thus a grant was clearly promised to the C.S.M. operating under the Technical Instruction scheme, a portion was paid and the rest was to follow upon the fulfilment of certain conditions and subject to the inspection of the ministry of education.<sup>84</sup>

From the government material it appears that no further correspondence took place between the two parties until 5 December 1922 when an application was received by the ministry of education from C.T.I.C. for a further instalment of £500 of the promised grant. The committee were asked to account for the expenditure of the £425 already granted and to furnish details regarding the disposal of income from the sale of printed manuscripts published by the school. This they duly did, outlining proposals to spend the proceeds of the sale of manuscript music upon travelling expenses for the school's advisory board, the procurement of instruments for the 'Gaelic department' and sundry expenses yet to be met in the quest to 'establish firmly in all the boys' and girls' schools an Irish system of music exams., as many of the school teachers, primary and secondary, are still under the spell of the English

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<sup>82</sup> Michael Hayes to Domhnall Ó Ceallachain, 8 Feb. 1922 (N. A. I., FIN 1/2795).

<sup>83</sup> Translation cited in Ó Dubhthaigh's memorandum of 16 Feb. 1923 (N. A. I., FIN 1/2795).

<sup>84</sup> In an appendix to his report on the ed. ministry presented to the Dáil on 26 April 1922, the minister of ed. Hayes reported that permission had been obtained to send £450 to the C.S.M. See *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ii, 290 (26 April 1922).

examining bodies'.<sup>85</sup> This was similar to the sentiment later expressed by Aloys Fleischmann in 1936.

Here, however, begins the controversy between the Irish Free State ministries of education and finance themselves and the C.S.M. operating under C.T.I.C. On 16 February 1923, Prionsias Ó Dubhthaigh, the secretary of the ministry of education sent a four-page letter to the secretary of the finance ministry, Joseph Brennan, outlining the position of and relations with the school to date. He stated: 'The minister of education is satisfied that this school is doing work for Irish traditional music which is of national importance, and which is not being done or attempted elsewhere'. He also requested the observations of the minister of finance on the matter, and information as to arrangements made for dealing with any other such obligations incurred by the education ministry of the Second Dáil.<sup>86</sup>

The ministry of finance did not offer any such observations or information, however, until 6 June 1923 when Brennan wrote, informing the ministry of education, that 'no funds exist...for the discharge of any grants promised by the ministry of education of the Second Dáil', claiming that, besides, the 'position' of the C.S.M. was unsatisfactory as they received grants from Cork Corporation and the ministry of agriculture and technical instruction yet they offset the cost of the publishing of Irish traditional music against grants apparently promised in 1921. It was, according to Brennan, the view of the minister of finance, Ernest Blythe, that if a grant did ever become practicable in the future the state could not be expected to share but a fraction of the total expenditure, the rest being provided by the local or municipal authority and/or by private subscriptions.<sup>87</sup>

This *was* in fact the situation at the C.S.M. as the department of Irish traditional music was but one facet of the music school and the work of 'national' significance which it was undertaking had been recognised and provided for financially by the government in 1922. Upon being informed of the minister's decision, however, the secretary of C.T.I.C., Francis Giltinan, replied on 10 July, pointing out the inaccuracies of the minister's position and stated that the committee were 'exceedingly astonished at the attitude of the ministry of finance in

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<sup>85</sup> Giltinan to ministry of ed., cited in Ó Dubhthaigh's memo to finance ministry, 16 Feb.1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>86</sup> Ó Dubhthaigh to finance ministry, 16 Feb.1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>87</sup> Brennan to Ó Dubhthaigh, 6 June 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

endeavouring to justify its action in breaking a distinct and unequivocal promise made by the Second Dáil'.<sup>88</sup>

Giltinan also enclosed copies of previous correspondence with Michael Ó hAodha, which he hoped the ministry of finance had not been aware of when they drafted their minute of 6 June 1923 to the ministry of education. He requested a withdrawal of this minute and 'the recognition of the honourable understanding upon which my committee have made themselves liable for the expenditure involved in carrying out this work of national importance'. If this did not occur, the committee threatened to 'organise public opinion on the matter...with its consequent damage to public faith and the creation of an atmosphere so colourful of an old regime'.<sup>89</sup>

In the interim, an unpaid Hardebeck resigned from his post as professor of Irish traditional music in July 1923 and returned to Belfast. Despite the continuing frustrations over the lack of funding for the publication of his works, and issues of copyright or ownership of the manuscripts he produced, relations between himself and C.T.I.C. appear to have continued to be amicable.<sup>90</sup> Those between the ministries of education and finance were not quite so, however.

The new minister of education, Eoin MacNeill, ardently disagreed with the view of the ministry of finance on the issue and addressed a letter to the president of the executive council of the Irish Free State, W.T. Cosgrave, enclosing copies of correspondence regarding the C.S.M., including Collins' letter of 2 December 1921 in favour of the scheme, and strongly urged that it be pressed upon the ministry of finance that the matter be reconsidered 'in view of the definite promise given'.<sup>91</sup>

Whilst no indication of Cosgrave's position is found in the written records, however, MacNeill informed the finance ministry on 4 October of his own particular dissatisfaction, particularly at the inaccurate interpretation of the previous dealings with the C.T.I.C.<sup>92</sup> The ministry of finance responded by putting the issue to the former education minister Hayes, now the ceann comhairle of the Dáil, who stated:

there is no doubt that the Cork School of Music which was working under the technical instruction schemes, undertook certain liabilities with regard to Irish traditional music, and was given a clear undertaking that £1425 would

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<sup>88</sup> Giltinan to ministry of ed., 10 July 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Curtis, *Cork School of Music*, pp 75-76.

<sup>91</sup> Eoin Mac Neill to W.T. Cosgrave, 30 July 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>92</sup> Mac Neill to finance ministry, 4 Oct. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

be placed at its disposal...£425 was sent, and I think the school committee were justified in assuming that the rest of the money would be forthcoming.<sup>93</sup>

He did however suggest that an enquiry into 'musical education generally and particularly the question of Irish traditional music must be made before any further grant even within the total sum of £1425 fixed by the Second Dáil is paid.'<sup>94</sup> Whether or not Hayes was attempting to placate the ministry of finance in the hope that such an enquiry would corroborate the payment of the remainder of the grant to the school or if he now had personal reservations about the work or educational value of the school, and music education in general, is unclear.

### 6.6 'Popularisation of the national music', 1924-33

The matter of the promised government grant to the C.S.M. was not addressed by either party again until May 1924 when Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, a Cumann na nGaedheal T.D. for Cork Borough, posed a question in the Dáil, at the behest of C.T.I.C., regarding the payment of the remainder of the said grant. It transpired during the course of the terms of the notified question that there outstanding liabilities, well in excess of the £425 grant actually paid to the school, for which the remainder of the grant was urgently required to cover.<sup>95</sup>

Joseph Brennan, the secretary of the department of finance, however, was sceptical in relation to what extent, if at all, actual publication of traditional music had been carried out. He informed Ó Dubhthaigh, the secretary of the department of education, that the department would pay the amount in question provided the minister for education could 'give an assurance that no further liability would be imposed on the state in this matter and that satisfactory work has been done for the total expenditure' involved.<sup>96</sup> The department of education undertook to request particulars from the school committee about liabilities incurred and the extent of publication but disputed the figure for total excess expenditure to date claimed by the department of finance. Ó Dubhthaigh added rather caustically:

As to assurances that no further liability will be imposed on the state in this matter, I am directed to state that if the minister of finance is prepared to meet such existing liabilities as were incurred on the strength of the promised

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<sup>93</sup> Hayes to Brennan, ministry of finance, 20 Oct. 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vii, 196-7 (6 May 1924).

<sup>96</sup> Brennan to Ó Dubhthaigh, 5 May 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

grant...the minister of education will not feel called upon to make any further claims on behalf of the school.<sup>97</sup>

On 9 June 1924 Giltinan, the C.T.I.C. secretary, furnished details of the total expenditure of the C.S.M. to date, pointedly stating that the only objective of the C.T.I.C. in 'undertaking this work of publication' was 'the furtherance of an appreciation of our national music' and not 'monetary profit'.<sup>98</sup> Giltinan also enclosed specimen copies of the schools's publications, *Nursery rhymes* and *Examination test music* (primary, junior, intermediate, senior and advanced grades) and three intended publications, 'Preludes and pieces – primary grade', 'Preludes and pieces – junior grade' and 'Songs, grade II', which were forwarded to the department of finance by the department of education.<sup>99</sup> The department of education obviously had confidence in the merits of the musical work and had no reservations about the content in forwarding the booklets to the finance department. Brennan, the finance secretary, was of the opinion, however, that there was 'nothing Irish in them except the top line of print on the cover'. He added sarcastically: 'I do not know whether it was hoped that we would not look inside the covers!'<sup>100</sup>

Brennan himself has been regarded as one of the most important figures in the early administrative history of the new Irish Free State. After gaining recognition and promotion in Dublin Castle through the British civil service reform of May 1920, it appears that he was approached by Michael Collins on various financial matters during the treaty negotiations of 1921, and that he clandestinely helped to create for Collins ten memoranda credited for enabling the Irish delegation to counter British financial claims and allow for the settlement of financial difference to be postponed until after the administrative establishment of the Irish Free State. He was subsequently appointed as the secretary to the new ministry of finance of the Irish Free State, a ministry over which he had significant control until his resignation in 1928. Brennan's technical knowledge was immense and he, along with eminent civil servants on loan from the British Treasury, played a crucial role in the creation of many of the guidelines and much of the policy for establishing proper financial

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<sup>97</sup> Ó Dubhthaigh to Brennan, 7 May 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>98</sup> Giltinan to dept. of ed., 9 June 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Brennan to D..J. O'Sullivan, 17 Oct. 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

procedures in the new state.<sup>101</sup> His musical knowledge appears to have been less impressive, however.

On 17 October 1924 Brennan sent the booklets, which had been supplied by Giltinan, to Donal J. O'Sullivan, the assistant clerk of the Seanad and being the editor of the *Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society* was, what Brennan termed, 'an authority on the subject of traditional Irish music', outlining in a personal letter the situation to date and requesting his views on the matter.<sup>102</sup> O'Sullivan, who would also be appointed the director of Irish folk song studies at U.C.D. in 1951, responded in a rather balanced way about the publications. He regarded that the content of *Examination test music* series, for example, was the type of music easily obtainable in other publications and at a cheaper rate from Germany or England. He hoped that 'Songs, grade II' would 'never get as far as publication' for there were many errors in the words of the Irish language songs contained within and the airs themselves were 'practically all readily accessible in recently published books'.

On the other hand, O'Sullivan praised the intended 'Preludes and pieces – primary grade' and 'Preludes and pieces – junior grade' and *Nursery rhymes*, which had already been published, as 'genuine Irish' music, which not been previously arranged nor had it 'appeared in staff notation'. He recommended that the nursery rhyme book in particular would be very suitable for use in national schools and commended Hardebeck on the excellent arrangements of the airs which meant 'very little except to the expert, and they have no chance of being popularised except when arranged in this way'. 'Work of this kind', O'Sullivan said, 'when well done, deserves all the encouragement it can get.'<sup>103</sup>

Brennan clearly did not wish to encourage the C.S.M. in their endeavour and displayed no qualms about reneging upon the grant promised by Collins, as the necessity for retrenchment and the most rigid economy took precedence over cultural advancement in his mind, and the disputable 'nationality' of some of the music published provided a pretext in this case. He subsequently wrote to the department of education highlighting only O'Sullivan's negative criticisms about half of the music booklets and attributing these comments to 'a responsible and well informed quarter'. Brennan advocated the disallowing of the promised grant in respect of

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<sup>101</sup> Fanning, *Irish dept. of finance*, pp 40-41.

<sup>102</sup> Brennan to D.J. O'Sullivan, 17 Oct. 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795). See also Donal O'Sullivan, 'The Irish Folk Song Society' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 294-8.

<sup>103</sup> O'Sullivan to Brennan, 28 Oct. 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

material which 'could not have the slightest pretension to be regarded as Irish traditional music'.<sup>104</sup>

Ó Dubhthaigh responded: 'In the absence of all information as to the identity of the critic, he [the minister for education] is not in a position to determine how much weight, if any, should be given to the criticisms' and he refused to disallow the grant. In addition, he pointed out that the minister for education, Eoin MacNeill, did not and could not agree that the claim for expenditure incurred in the production of 'classic' music books for examination purposes be disallowed, as it was accounted for in the original estimate of £1,425 accepted by the Dáil cabinet on 10 March 1920.<sup>105</sup> There ensued a heated written argument on this particular point for more than a year with Ó Dubhthaigh warning that 'the delay in settling it is calculated to do considerable injury to the government as it is being referred to as an instance of departments refusing to carry out undertakings of the Dáil ministers'.<sup>106</sup>

In the interim, however, C.T.I.C. still had outstanding debts to printers which they could not pay without the government grant. Giltinan enquired on numerous occasions as to what had been done regarding payment of the promised grant, intimating that the committee were 'heartily sick of this whole transaction' as it seemed to be 'the policy of the minister for finance to force them to publish the history of this broken pledge'.<sup>107</sup> In September 1926, the department of finance informed the education department that Blythe felt that whilst some of the work of the C.S.M. 'may have been very valuable, part of it, on the other hand, has obviously very little merit in it' and thus the minister could not discharge money from public funds to that end. The minister for finance, however, allowed the then minister for education, J.M. O'Sullivan, to eventually pay an ex-gratia grant of £300 from departmental savings to the school in 1927.<sup>108</sup>

The matter continued, though, as an administrative anomaly for a further two years after a lengthy investigation by the committee of public accounts as to the legality of such an award without full Oireachtas authority.<sup>109</sup> The whole issue would eventually dissipate, from the state point of view, in 1930, when the vocational education act decentralised the control of funding of the C.S.M. and its musical

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<sup>104</sup> Brennan to Ó Dubhthaigh, 4 Dec. 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Ó Dubhthaigh to Brennan, 20 Jan. 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>107</sup> Giltinan to Ó Dubhthaigh, 13 Nov. 1924 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>108</sup> Memo, dept. of finance to dept. of ed., 30 Sept. 1926 (N.A.I., FIN/1/2795).

<sup>109</sup> See FIN/1/2795 (N.A.I.).

endeavours to the local authority, Cork Corporation.<sup>110</sup> The protracted controversy highlighted, not only the reluctance of the department to grant finance to a potentially very significant scheme, or the internal divisions and variance of ideology within the Cumann na nGaedheal government, but also that ‘traditional’ music, that being the music and song actually passed on, or transmitted orally in its original context, had begun, as Marie McCarthy has noted, ‘to enter new public spaces’.<sup>111</sup>

The schools of the state were paying lip-service to the supposedly indigenous music of the country with the teaching of songs translated into Irish and the adaptation of hymns; it was being assessed, and standardised to some degree, by the feiseanna; the national broadcasting station would promote it from the outset. It is important to remember, though, that ‘traditional’ music appears to have been generally perceived as a raw musical source to be arranged or orchestrated for the concert stage or for broadcast, rather than as a musical art form, to be practised in the ‘traditional’ way, in its own right.<sup>112</sup> As already noted too, P.J. Little, for example, had regarded the orchestration, as opposed to the traditional exposition of indigenous music, as the ‘bettering’ of such music.<sup>113</sup> With a general increase in literacy and the concurrent attempts to elevate the musical taste and culture of Irish people, particularly via the wireless, the publication of Irish music was now becoming a greater issue under the Fianna Fáil administration in the 1930s. More significantly though, and as the C.S.M. controversy had proved, it was really only in this area that questions regarding the need to publish music and regarding the Irishness of ‘Irish’ music came to be asked, particularly in Dáil Éireann.

In April 1933, for example, Thomas Kelly, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Dublin-South, noted that £10,000 had been set aside by his party colleague, the minister for education, Thomas Derrig, for the ‘purpose of the preparation and publication of translations of original works in Irish and also for Irish music’. He pointed out that he was speaking on behalf of musicians, ‘a large and very cultured number of our people’, who had been unemployed due not, in his opinion, to the general economic

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<sup>110</sup> See ch. 5.

<sup>111</sup> McCarthy, *Passing it on*, p. 103.

<sup>112</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

depression, but 'to the change in manners of the people' and questioned how this 'grant for Irish music' was to be used 'in terms of popular interpretation'.<sup>114</sup>

There were, according to Kelly 'many hundreds of our people' who had been 'idle' for some time owing to the 'change in management of these picture houses and other changes, such as jazz music'. 'Jazz' music, heard in the dance halls, was to Kelly 'a remarkable sort of music even to my unmusical ear' which had 'nothing in it'.

The cult of the picture house and the cult of the jazz shop is, I think, affecting very considerably, and in a not a very pleasant way, the disposition of our people... People tell me that it used to be a pleasure, from a musical standpoint, to go into those picture houses years ago, and that this all changed now. I suppose that the general wish for this unhealthy excitement and love-stuff that is being circulated now in every picture house throughout the country has demoralised, in some way at any rate, the better sense of our people.<sup>115</sup>

He went on to say that the 'particular type of citizen', for whom he spoke, the musician, suffered an intense poverty because it was a secluded poverty.<sup>116</sup>

Thomas Kelly proposed that the money set aside for the publication of music would be better spent on the organisation of 'civic orchestras inside the five large cities in this country' to be subsidised in three ways, firstly, by a grant from the department of education, secondly, by a 'small rate-in-aid' struck by the local authorities and thirdly, by 'citizens who are blessed with wealth and have cultured minds'. The organisation of such orchestras would, he felt, be very useful work for the department to undertake in order to 'bring about again the popularisation of the national music of our country'.<sup>117</sup> He asked that this matter be viewed seriously, not only because of the 'unhappy position' of musicians for whom he spoke but also from the point of view of 'the general trend of the aspirations of our people' and 'to advance national culture'. He said that there had been 'a period of great musical effort in this city [Dublin], 80 and 70 and 60 years ago' and he himself remembered

the enthusiasm of 25 years ago, amongst Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and all the other associations existing then with strong national aspirations, for our native music. That is all gone, or nearly gone. That may be a very strong statement to make, but I believe it is true. I think it would be great work if we

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<sup>114</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 2317 (5 Apr. 1933).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2315.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2316.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* Kelly's proposal echoed one which had been suggested by the Labour leader, Thomas Johnson, to the department of defence, regarding expenditure on the army school of music, in 1926.

could help to restore it. The Hollywood element, we know has got big odds in the race, but nevertheless, I think, with the help that I am sure we could get, we could probably make some tracks in endeavouring to overtake that element.<sup>118</sup>

### 6.7 Irish composers and 'Irish' composition from the 1930s

No response was elicited from the department of education on this occasion even though it was the publications section of that department which had received the £10,000 grant. This publications section, which became known as An Gúm, was initially founded in 1926 for the purposes of creating school text-books in the Irish but had gradually expanded to consider other publications in Irish by 1935.<sup>119</sup> 'Irish music' was also published, for the first time, in this year with the number of pieces published by the end of the academic year 1935/6 amounting to about thirty-two.<sup>120</sup>

About seventy-eight percent of these pieces were composed or arranged, ironically, by Carl Hardebeck, the rest by Liam de Noraidhe and Ernest de Regge.<sup>121</sup> This remained the position until works by Larchet were also published in 1939 and by Éamon Ó Gallchobhair in 1940.<sup>122</sup> Constraints brought about by the Second World War meant that paper and publishing machinery were affected. Consequently, the level of publication subsided so greatly that between 1941 and 1945 only about five pieces of music had been produced.<sup>123</sup> By the end of the period in question here, the total number of pieces of Irish music published by An Gúm was 133.<sup>124</sup>

All of the musical pieces published had Irish language titles and consisted mostly of relatively short choral compositions, instrumental orchestrations or arrangements of 'traditional' melodies. By 1951, it was reported that An Gúm had also received a number of more 'lengthy' works, such as a symphony and an

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., col. 2316-7.

<sup>119</sup> See *Rep., dept. of ed.*, 1928-29, pp 226-7; Neil Buttimer, 'The Irish language, 1921-84' in *N.H.I.*, vii, 557-9. See also ch. 5.

<sup>120</sup> Details of these pieces are given in *Rep., dept. of ed.*, 1935-36, p. 279; these figures differ somewhat though from those given in a departmental file TAOIS/S9538A (N.A.I.) on the work of An Gúm. This may be explained, however, by fact that the dept. of ed., presumably, cited the numbers of works published within the academic year, whereas those detailed in the departmental file are based on a calendar year. Additionally, there appears to be some confusion regarding the number of musical works to hand and awaiting consideration by the publications committee, those approved but not yet prepared for publication and those actually published.

<sup>121</sup> *Rep., dept. of ed.*, 1935-36, p. 279.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 1938-39, pp 102-3; *ibid.*, 1939-40, pp 92-3.

<sup>123</sup> Memo, 23 Apr. 1945 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S9538A).

<sup>124</sup> Memo, 28 Jul. 1951 (N.A.I., TAOIS/S9538A).

operetta, that were awaiting preparation and approval.<sup>125</sup> An examination of the list of the names of composers whose works were published, which was very small in number, is very significant too. It consisted of only those, such as Larchet and Ó Gallchobhair, who believed that the composition of art music in Ireland had to be related to the indigenous repertory in some way and that a national expression of this type could and would only be found by basing all compositions on 'folksong'.<sup>126</sup>

This view was not shared by other contemporary Irish composers such as Aloys Fleischmann, Brian Boydell or Frederick May, all of whom commented on the predicaments of the composer in Ireland with regard to the traditional canon, and all of whom would be founding members of the M.A.I. in 1948. In 1935, for example, Fleischmann wrote: 'One finds a great deal of complacency on the score of Gaelic traditional music. But that music is not an achievement of this generation but of the last; it is an ancient legacy.'<sup>127</sup> The following year he rebuked the compositional mode which adhered to the propagation of 'folk music' saying that it simply did not lead to the cultivation of 'art' music.<sup>128</sup> The extent to which things had not changed by the end of the period in question here, however, was evidenced by the fact that Brian Boydell was still making similar criticisms to those which Fleischmann had made in the 1930s

In a most revealing article written in 1950, Boydell stated that the conscientious attempts by the state and others to maintain insularity and self-sufficiency and to develop 'our own pure little culture' meant that Irish people were 'already tolling the death-knell of Irish culture'; 'lest we should be tempted to benefit from any cleansing influence from outside', he added sarcastically. Boydell pointed out that the character of any individual or nation was formed by 'the reaction of that individual to his surroundings' and that it was, 'not only arrant nonsense', but also 'an ignorance of historic fact to claim that we can build a great Irish culture by shutting out foreign influences'.<sup>129</sup>

Boydell claimed that it was time that Irish people 'grew up and realised that the individuality of a nation is expressed by the *natural* activities and thoughts of its

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> See Ryan, 'Nationalism & music in Ire.', pp 350-73 for a treatment of Larchet's outlook and compositions. See also White, *The keeper's recital*, pp 131-2.

<sup>127</sup> Fleischmann, 'The outlook of music', p. 129.

<sup>128</sup> See Aloys Fleischmann, 'Composition and the folk idiom' in *Ireland Today*, i (Nov. 1936) cited in Ryan 'Nationalism & Mus. in Ire.', p 419.

<sup>129</sup> Brian Boydell, 'Culture and chauvinism' in *Envoy*, no.2 (May 1950), pp 75-6.

people, through the mouthpiece of its artists' and not through any prescriptive sense of Irishness, in music or otherwise. He said:

Any artist who is Irish, and is sensitive to the strong and individual atmosphere of his country *cannot help* expressing the Irish spirit in his work; and it is his peculiar viewpoint which is a contribution to the art of the world. If the artist should become aggressively self-conscious of his nationality, he deceives himself and becomes an impostor; he behaves like a small boy asserting his individuality, and adds nothing to the progress of culture.<sup>130</sup>

Boydell advised those who claimed that 'Irish musicians should devote their time to the performance of Irish music, and not waste time on "foreign products"' to consider the fact that those who were considered to be 'the great nationalist composers', such as Greig, Sibelius and Bartok, 'could never have made such a contribution without their intensive study of the mainstream of European music with its continental developments'. He held that Ireland was 'unfortunate', in a way, in 'having an incomparable tradition of folksong', for 'folksong' was, according to Boydell, a 'spontaneous expression of national feeling' and therefore 'totally different from the organised expression of art music'.

He added that it was 'only too easy for unimaginative composers today to hide their lack of imagination by pasting this ready-made national expression all over their music' and did not see how a musical culture could be built on folksong alone, particularly when 'what the average person believes to be the genuine article is nothing more than a shadow, distorted by Victorian musical ideas'. He concluded: 'If Irish culture is worthy of survival, which I certainly believe it is, it will survive on its own merits as an integral part of the culture of the world. Insulate it from the invigorating influences of other countries, and it will surely rot in its own mildew of chauvinism.'<sup>131</sup>

The following year, 1951, Frederick May wrote that 'nationalistic considerations would have to be relegated to second place', particularly in the education system, for he felt that 'the talented youth of Ireland should not be denied the same facilities for development' in music as were afforded in other countries such as Sweden and Finland. May doubted whether any nation 'with such a wonderful storehouse of traditional music' had 'made such a negligible contribution to art music' as Ireland had. He advised that 'maudlin sentiment and barren

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp 76-7.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp 78-9.

theorising' be abandoned and only proper musical criticism, not that based on the premise that 'all good music must be demonstrably national in feeling', be allowed.<sup>132</sup> There appears to be no evidence to suggest whether, at any stage, composers such as May had also submitted works to An Gúm, to be considered for publication, and were, perhaps, rejected. There were other musical publishers in the state, such as Juverna Music Co., Browne and Nolan, Ltd., McCullough, Ltd., Pigott and Co. Ltd., Walton and Co., Ltd. A brief glance at the lists of publications deposited at the National Library of Ireland, under the terms of the Industrial and Commercial Property (Protection) Act, 1927, reveals that the music published by these companies consisted mainly of songs and ballads in both the English and Irish languages as well as arrangements of Irish airs for voice, piano and violin.<sup>133</sup>

Significantly, a number of parliamentary representatives echoed the sentiments expressed by Fleischmann, May and Boydell, both in Seanad Éireann and Dáil Éireann in the years prior to the Second World War. In 1935, Ernest Blythe, for example, now sitting in the Seanad, having lost his Dáil seat in Monaghan in the 1933 general election, claimed that while there were 'lots of lovely and surpassingly excellent songs', there could not be a dependence on old songs for the purposes of the revival and maintenance of the Irish language. Blythe wondered if there were actually Irish people who could 'write new songs or musicians who can set music to new songs, or, if you do not go as far as that, can compose new words for old songs', somebody to write 'Irish words to the tune of "Get along, little doggie, get along" or "The isle of Capri"', for example.

Blythe felt that there should not be a 'rigid' or 'impossibilist attitude on the question of Irish music because the popular songs of the day are going to be sung here and they are going to be known here'. There must be 'newness and variety in songs', he said, pointing out that this was 'one of the big difficulties' which the national broadcasting station, in particular, had to face.<sup>134</sup> Of course, as already discussed, it was the procedures implemented by Blythe himself, as minister for

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<sup>132</sup> Frederick May, 'The composer in Ireland' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus in Ire.*, pp 164-9. See also Frederick May, 'Music and the nation' in *The Dublin Magazine*, no. 11 (July to Sept, 1936), pp 50-56 for an earlier treatment of most of the same issues.

<sup>133</sup> Industrial and Commercial Property (Protection) Act (1927/16). See *List of publications deposited under the terms of the Industrial and Commercial (Protection) Act, 1927*, no.1 (1 Aug. 1927 to 31 Dec. 1929), pp 63-4; no. 2 (1 Jan. 1931 to 31 Dec. 1930), pp 61-2; no. 3 (1 Jan. 1931 to 31 Dec. 1932), pp 61-2; no.4 (1 Jan. 1933 to 31 Dec. 1934), p. 54; no.5 (1 Jan. 1935 to 31 Dec. 1936), pp 60-1.

<sup>134</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xix, 1658-9 (10 Apr. 1935).

finance and for posts and telegraphs in the 1920s, which were largely responsible for these ‘difficulties’ with regard to broadcasting.<sup>135</sup>

In Dáil Éireann, James Dillon, now sitting as a Fine Gael T.D. for Monaghan requested to know if the department of education had consulted with

any body of artists or recognised authorities on Irish music with a view to selecting authoritative material and with a view to ensuring that whatever is printed, with the seal of the government’s approval will truly represent that type of Irish music which we might not expect a publisher, who is seeking nothing but profit, to produce.<sup>136</sup>

Richard Anthony, the Independent Labour candidate for Cork Borough, agreed that the department would be well advised to take some authoritative advice on the matter, for he himself felt that there was ‘a lot of “come-all-ye’s” coming over the ether which is offered to us as Irish music, but which is not very creditable to the country’.<sup>137</sup> Anthony went on to question the minister for education, Thomas Derrig, whether or not anything had been done regarding the publication of the likes of the Bunting Collection which he personally regarded as ‘a standard work’. He added, though, that in the view of persons better qualified to judge than he was, the music collection was ‘beyond the reach of the ordinary school-child and is certainly beyond the reach of many-working class people’ and asked if the minister would ensure a more universally accessible publication.<sup>138</sup>

Derrig responded that Bunting’s work was, in fact, being edited and published at that time by a private publisher, ‘a gentleman here in Dublin who is well known’. However, he was quick to point out that this work was not being done under government auspices, their chief concerns lying with the publication of the musical works prepared by Carl Hardebeck. Whilst he admitted that there had been some delay in getting these works printed he expected that ‘about hundred pieces in all will be available in a comparatively short time’.<sup>139</sup>

In response to Dillon’s query, Derrig responded that the department had a ‘small committee of experts to advise the department regarding the suitability for publication of pieces of Irish music’ which would consider ‘any work’ offered to it, whether this be original compositions or ‘the re-editing of Bunting or of the work of

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<sup>135</sup> See ch. 4.

<sup>136</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, vol. lxxv, 234-5 (4 Feb. 1937).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 236.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 236-7.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 237.

other early workers in that sphere'. Derrig added that his department were satisfied with the work done by this committee to date.<sup>140</sup> Dillon pushed the minister to state the actual names of the personnel of the committee which was advising him on the music intended for publication by the department but the minister declined to answer.<sup>141</sup>

### 6.8 'We will have no *Irish* music!'

In Dáil Éireann a year later, 1938, however, Dillon pushed Derrig to explain how exactly the publication of 'Irish music' was even justified by the department. The original intention of the publications committee, he pointed out, had been to provide Irish texts so that pupils would have adequate learning resources. He asked:

What do we mean by Irish music? Surely we are branching out into a very much wider sphere now than the publishing of ordinary Irish texts? Is it proposed to collect traditional airs which have hitherto been unrecorded, and set them down, or is it suggested that we are to publish slip jigs in convenient form?<sup>142</sup>

It was Dillon's opinion that money spent on the publication of 'modern music such as is habitually played by dance bands or the like' would be money wasted but he felt that 'everyone would be sympathetic with a proposal to collect traditional music on the lines on which *Béaloides* is working at the present time'.<sup>143</sup> Dillon was referring here to An Coimisiún Béaloidesa Éireann, also known as the Irish Folklore Commission (I.F.C.), and whose work was published in *Béaloides*, the journal of The Folklore of Ireland Society.

In 1927, the Cumann na nGaedheal government had collaborated with this society in setting up the Irish Folklore Institute which eventually resulted in the establishment by the Fianna Fáil government of the I.F.C. in 1935. The aim of the commission was the collection of the 'oral traditions and the oral literature of the country' and the cataloguing and archiving of these. Collectors and archivists were sent abroad, to Sweden, for example, to learn the methodologies employed there for similar projects. Accounts of local 'traditional' musical activities and musicians featured in the material collected in the field as well as the accounts provided by

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., col. 243.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., lxx, 190 (4 Feb. 1938).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

school-children as part of the project.<sup>144</sup> The commission also had one part-time collector of music, Liam de Noraídh, between 1940 and 1942 and one full-time collector of music, Séamus Mac Aonghusa, from 1941 to 1947, both of whom collected thousands of dance tunes and songs in the Irish language from all parts of Ireland, and, indeed, from areas of west Scotland.<sup>145</sup>

Timothy Linehan, a Fine Gael T.D. for Cork North, picked up on Dillon's query and asked Derrig what exactly was meant by 'the preparation and publication of Irish music', and whether it included:

The publication of existing Irish music, publications put into cheap form, of old airs and old collections of Irish music that are not easily available to the public, or whether the phrase 'Irish music' would cover some such case as that of somebody here in Dublin composing a tune in the latest 'swing' style, called 'The moon rising over pillar'? Would a composition of that kind come under the heading of Irish music?<sup>146</sup>

Derrig replied that it was the government's intention 'to publish arrangements or settings of original Irish airs as far as possible' and that at present they were confined to arrangements by comparatively few composers, such as Carl Hardebeck. Hardebeck's work, as already noted, constituted the majority of the musical work published to date and, according to Derrig, was 'familiar' to the public. Derrig did add, however, that although the circumstance had 'not arisen', 'new' compositions would be considered:

If a new composer swims into our ken, who is capable of doing for native Irish music what has been done in other countries by composers like the Hungarian composers of the present day or the Russian composers of some time back, it would be a question whether such a composer would be passed as being really true to the Irish genius or whether he had forsaken the native music for modern modes<sup>147</sup>

Dillon jibed about 'An Gúm passing judgement on Sibelius!' but Derrig replied that he was quite satisfied that any work submitted and eventually accepted for publication would be of a good standard - because of the 'committee of experienced

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<sup>144</sup> See 'Introductory note' in Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *A handbook of Irish folklore* (Detroit, 1970), iii-vi; See also Buttimer, 'The Irish language' in *N.H.I.*, vii, 562-3.

<sup>145</sup> Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'The music collection of the Irish Folklore Commission' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, pp 308-9.

<sup>146</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 193 (4 Feb. 1938).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 194.

musical experts, gentlemen of high repute in this country' which the department had.<sup>148</sup>

Timothy Linehan was not satisfied with Derrig's reply, though, and pressed him to define the term 'Irish music'. Linehan said that the term could be taken to mean 'music by an Irish composer' or music composed by anyone 'in the Irish traditional line'. He asked the minister if An Gúm would consider publishing the work of an Irish composer who composed, for instance, 'popular music, not of the Irish traditional style, but rather of the modern style, any of the popular types of modern music' found in Ireland. Derrig clearly replied: 'I do not think that the type of music that Deputy Lineman has in mind would be considered suitable for publication.' Linehan retorted: 'Therefore, we will never have Irish music' to which Derrig said that such music could be published 'by the numerous publishing houses' that dealt with *that* kind of work'. Linehan concluded the debate by declaring: 'In that case we will have no Irish music!'<sup>149</sup>

A similar point was raised in Dáil Éireann in 1939, by Erskine Childers, a Fianna Fáil T.D. for the Athlone-Longford constituency and a future president of Ireland. Childers stated that in order to improve musical culture in Ireland

one of the most essential things is the development of orchestration of Irish music for ordinary purposes, the development of Irish songs and Irish melodies played by orchestras, and to be used as compositions for ordinary music by people listening for the sake of entertainment, and not because it was Irish or culturally Irish.<sup>150</sup>

Childers suggested that, despite what was being done by Radio Éireann, a

vast amount of Irish melodies and Irish music could be explored to be used for common entertainment by the people so as to get them out of the habit which was amongst them of thinking that Irish music has something to do only with patriotic music, and to make it part of the normal life of the country.<sup>151</sup>

This tied in with what many members of the music profession, like Fleischmann, Boydell and May had been repeating since the establishment of the I.F.C. In its 'Music and the nation' memorandum of 1949, the M.A.I. reiterated the association's position with regard to composer and musical composition in the Irish

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., col. 194-5.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., col. 196-7.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., lxxiv, 2494-5 (23 Mar. 1939).

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

state, claiming: 'The composer is in fact the centre and the source of all musical activities. In spite of this he is the one kind of musician for whom, in Ireland, absolutely no provision is made...even musicians forget that without composers they would have no material.' It pointed out that Ireland's contribution to the world of music would and, could only, be measured 'chiefly by the composers she has produced. It is through its artists that the spiritual stature of a nation may be judged, and it is through them that a nation best expresses itself and makes itself understood, both to others and to itself.'<sup>152</sup>

Other nations, the M.A.I. claimed, realised this and 'valued their composers' as a result. It pointed to Poland where the government there had appointed Szymanowsky as head of Warsaw Conservatory and subsidised performances of his works elsewhere in Europe, to Sweden, where the government paid pensions to certain composers. It also pointed to Finland, where the government had supported Sibelius and therefore 'did more than anything else to establish Finland as one of the most civilised European nations of the present day'.<sup>153</sup> The association added that conditions had been propitious at the time of Sibelius' emergence with the existence of 'a musical public, a good orchestra, a publisher, and a number of excellent musicians and teachers, including more than one contemporary first-class conductor'. 'There was', it claimed, 'something for which to write music; music that would express the spirit of Finland as a force in Western civilisation, and that was received with the enthusiasm of a nation.' The fact that there was no composer of Sibelius' stature in Ireland, then, was not, according to the M.A.I., the fault of composers, or their inability as such, but of unfavourable musical conditions - and 'the general lack of interest in music' which, the association claimed, was 'a striking feature of Irish life'.<sup>154</sup>

The primary problem for the Irish composer, though, which the M.A.I. highlighted, remained the lack of 'a highly developed art music in Ireland'. It pointed out that it was 'often supposed that Irish composers should base their work upon folk-music; or what is even more narrow-minded, that to qualify as "Irish" composers they must merely arrange folk-songs, or at least introduce a conspicuous

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<sup>152</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 61.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., pp 61-2.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

folk-song element into the matter or style of their compositions'. There was, the association said, nothing

more barren or sterile than these prejudices, which are the cause of some of the obstacles put in the way of our composers. Unfortunately a number of musicians have encouraged such ideas by incorporating Irish folk-tunes into larger works; but by so doing they have at the same time illustrated its fallacies, and failed completely to produce music of the slightest interest.

A new idiom will have to be created that will express the Irish spirit and character in relation to the world today, and as a contribution to the future. Such an idiom will perhaps be inspired partly by the cultural traditions of the past, whose strength lies in poetry and language, not music; partly by the landscape; and perhaps to a very limited extent by a familiarity with the folk-music. But inevitably also it will be inseparable from the character and individuality of the composer and must be spontaneous, not a deliberate construction out of arbitrary ideological elements.<sup>155</sup>

Referring again to the example of Finland, the M.A.I., pointed out that Sibelius had succeeded in creating an entirely new musical idiom that was 'at the same time so Finnish in character that many people imagine it to be based on Finnish folk-music'. It claimed that Sibelius had 'in fact never made use of a folk-tune, and his idiom is singularly unlike that of Finnish folk-music'. However, it also warned that the composer, whilst requiring 'some form of official recognition and encouragement', had to be left free to write as he chose. 'We do not want the appointment of state composers, under compulsion to produce music according to the dogmas of the ruling régime, as in the U.S.S.R.'<sup>156</sup>

Yet, the composer in Ireland needed guidance and the M.A.I. pointed to the 'large field' open in the composition of music suitable for school or amateur choirs and orchestras, of which there was 'exceedingly little available that is up to a competent standard'. This type of composition, it assured readers of its memorandum, would not be 'a handicap to the composer, but on the contrary a stimulus' to the imagination. Most, it claimed, of the 'great works of music were produced to order in this way and would never have come into being if they had not been specially written for some particular player, purpose or occasion'.<sup>157</sup> 'It is', it concluded, 'not enough merely to enjoy the music of other people and ages; each

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

society must produce its own. The composer is the end and justification of its musical life, its own realisation in music.’<sup>158</sup>

### 6.9 The campaign for a national concert hall, 1920s-30s

One of the main ways of stimulating composition in Ireland, that was advocated by the composers mentioned above, and by the members of the M.A.I., was the provision of a concert hall, primarily to remedy the fact that there was little or no live execution of composers’ works in Ireland, and especially of more extensive orchestral or symphonic works. Compositions, the M.A.I. claimed were, therefore, merely ‘technical or academic exercises’.<sup>159</sup>

One of the main objectives of the association upon its establishment in 1948, then, was ‘to work for the establishment of a national concert hall’.<sup>160</sup> This was not, however, a new issue and had in fact been regularly discussed in the public sphere since about 1924, when the civil war had ended and the state was planning to stage the Aonach Tailteann. In that year, John Mc Cormack was reported to have given £250 ‘towards the fund for a central concert-hall in Dublin’ and promised ‘to give a recital in the new building, gratuitously, as soon as it is opened’.<sup>161</sup> Apparently owing to the ever-increasing numbers of competitors at the annual Feis Ceoil in Dublin and the difficulties which often arose about choosing venues in the city with suitable acoustics and audience seating capacity, the feis committee had decided to establish a fund to which the citizens of Dublin would contribute for the building of such a venue.<sup>162</sup>

Although it was reported that the Four Courts had been suggested as a possible venue, it was generally felt that a purpose built civic concert hall, with a main hall capable of seating about 3,000 people and smaller rooms for competitions and the like, would be better for the advancement of music and ‘a credit to the city’.<sup>163</sup> The *Irish Times* commended the proposal stating: ‘any tendency towards the fine arts in the Free State must be encouraged, and since a nation’s genius is shown in its songs rather than in its laws, the muse ought to have a worthy setting’. The

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64. See also May, ‘The composer in Ire.’, p 165-6.

<sup>160</sup> ‘The professional organisations’ in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire*, p. 101.

<sup>161</sup> *Musical Times*, 1 Sept. 1924.

<sup>162</sup> *Leader*, 1 Mar. 1924.

<sup>163</sup> *I.T.*, 20 Feb. 1924.

prominence of the Feis Ceoil committee and the centrality of its feis as a centralising musical force is also highlighted here. Its 'enthusiasm' had taken a practical form with a donation of £500 for necessary expenses for the project, which for a committee that made an annual income of £200 was, as the *Irish Times* observed, a striking 'liberality'.<sup>164</sup>

In May 1924, the *Irish Times* called for public support for the concert hall fund stating that the fact that a city of the 'size and standing' of Dublin did not have such a hall was 'an artistic scandal', the result of which was the 'musical starvation' of the Irish nation. The newspaper pointed out that the government had already 'shown its sympathy with musical culture by the encouragement of military bands' but that there had to be a 'public initiative' for the concert hall, for enthusiasm was not enough: 'It needs to be mobilised and directed into practical channels.'<sup>165</sup> However, no national concert hall came into being during the 1920s, although it was regularly mentioned in music reviews in the national newspapers, and usually in comparison with concert halls elsewhere such as Belfast, Salzburg or Stockholm.<sup>166</sup> In 1927, when the Dublin Orchestral Society had to explain why they were holding concerts on Sunday afternoons, they blamed the 'lack of a suitable concert hall' which meant that theatres, which were only available for evening performances on Sundays, had to be utilised.<sup>167</sup>

There was renewed agitation for the provision of a concert hall with the formation of the I.N.M.L. in November 1931, which co-operated, as already noted, with the broadcasting station orchestra to provide public concerts at reduced admission fees.<sup>168</sup> This league was determined to 'attack the problem of providing a concert hall worthy of the city' but warned that the success of this 'attack' was dependent on the support, financial and otherwise, of the general public.<sup>169</sup> The league soon set about achieving this main objective and by March 1933 had secured meetings with the municipal council of Dublin on the matter.

In connection with this new campaign, the *Irish Times* published interviews they had conducted with John Larchet and Vincent O'Brien on the issue. Larchet stated that he felt that the most suitable venue in the city for the erection of a proper

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 15 May 1924.

<sup>166</sup> See *I.T.*, 4 Apr. 1928, for example.

<sup>167</sup> *I.T.*, 5 Mar. 1927.

<sup>168</sup> Pine, *Music & broadcasting*, p. 54. See ch.4.

<sup>169</sup> *I.I.* and *I.T.*, 19 Nov. 1932.

concert hall was the derelict site of Maple's Hotel on Kildare Street. Being in close proximity to the Metropolitan School of Art, the National Museum, the National Gallery and the National Library, he felt that it was 'in the art centre of the city'. Larchet also felt that 'the government should make a free grant' of the site, upon which a suitable building could be built to run back to the Mansion House behind it and 'take in' the Round Room, often used for musical competitions or events. He believed that the building could be made profitable by letting out various rooms for meetings or art exhibitions, such as that run annually by the R.H.A.

Larchet added that he had once suggested to Dublin Corporation that a rate be struck on the people of Dublin to pay raise the necessary funds to build the concert hall, which was then estimated to cost £150,000. However, he had been told to consider, realistically, 'what number of people wanted music, and were willing to pay for it, and how many would object'. Larchet argued, however, that now was the time to 'find out': 'If the government will give us the site, I suggest that the general public would start some means of raising the cost of building.'<sup>170</sup>

Vincent O'Brien agreed that the Maple's Hotel site was a 'splendid site and a good centre' for the proposed concert hall. He also agreed with Larchet's suggestion that there was 'a public to patronise a civic concert hall' particularly if the numbers who had recently attended the I.N.M.L. concession concerts were anything to go by. He felt that a proper hall would be regularly demanded by various musical organisations and choral bodies who would rent rehearsal and recital rooms would be able to produce quality performances. These better quality performances would, in turn, generate public support. O'Brien pointed out that music in Dublin, in particular, had been 'fearfully handicapped' for the want of suitable rehearsal as well as performance venues. However, he felt that the funds required to build the hall in the first place had to come from the state. He said, it was 'really more a state than a civic matter' especially as 'a lot of state business could very usefully be performed there' also. 'If it were made a state undertaking', he said, 'it would be a small matter to levy the cost from the general taxpayers of the country. The impost would be trifling compared with what it would be if the burden fell on the rate-payers of the city alone.' He added: 'A municipal concert hall should be as natural a building in a city

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<sup>170</sup> *I.T.*, 14 Mar. 1933.

as a cathedral or town hall – it is, after all, a kind of cathedral for art – at any rate, a home for it'.<sup>171</sup>

However, neither the government nor the municipal authority would consider imposing taxation at any level for the building of a national concert hall so the I.N.M.L. took it upon itself to attempt to secure the necessary funds. During 1934, letters were circulated to the different banks and insurance companies in the city requesting that financial investment, in the project, be considered. Although some companies did apparently consider it, no funding was forthcoming. In March 1934, the I.N.M.L. declared that everyone realised the necessity of having a concert hall in the city, particularly in light of the recent closure of the Theatre Royal, the only music hall previously considered adequate, but the question of 'how it could be done' remained. It was appreciated that the priority of the corporation and of the government lay in 'housing the poor' but there were many complaints that 'nothing else' was being 'considered'.<sup>172</sup> At a meeting held in Dublin on 16 March 1934, Dermot O'Brien, the president of the R.H.A. and a vice-president of the R.I.A.M., stated that unless the government or Dublin Corporation took up the matter, the undertaking was, particularly in the context of the 'economic war' with Great Britain, 'too big for any number of individuals, however interested they were'.<sup>173</sup>

The issue was eventually raised in Dáil Éireann in February 1935, when a proposal to spend about £100,000 on the building of state offices, for the department of industry and commerce, on the derelict site of the Maple's Hotel, was presented by the Fianna Fáil minister for finance, Seán MacEntee. It was a Fianna Fáil T.D. for Dublin-South, Thomas Kelly, who actually raised the issue of the concert hall campaign.

Kelly informed the Dáil that Eamon de Valera, the leader of his party and president of the executive council of the Irish Free State, had, received 'a very representative deputation' from the I.N.M.L. during 1934. The object of the league had been to secure government support for the acquisition of that very site for a concert hall. Kelly said that a representative of the league had informed him that de Valera had seemed to be 'entirely with sympathy' with that object at the time but that no response had since been received to their request. Now, though, it appeared that

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 18 Mar. 1933.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 17 Mar. 1934.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

the government had taken their intended site to build offices for the department of industry and commerce. Kelly pointed out that if Dublin Corporation had the power and finance to raise a concert hall he would not have spoken out at all, but 'in respect of many things, we have not got the power to raise the price of a smoke!' He asked MacEntee to 'see if he could accommodate the city by having a site reserved for a public hall', which was 'due to the city'. He added that while both the purchase of a site and erection of a hall was too large a project for ordinary citizens to undertake, certain people were 'prepared to put down the money for the building provided they get the site'.<sup>174</sup>

Richard Mulcahy spoke out in support of Kelly and appealed to the Fianna Fáil government 'to face, in a national spirit, having regard to the claim they make at times to a cultural aim, the problem of setting up a suitable hall in the city of Dublin which would serve as a national, cultural and musical centre'. Mulcahy said that 'national culture, whether in musical matters or in any other aspect' was being 'throttled' by the difficulties brought about by the economic war. He advised the government to do something to 'offset the blows that are being struck at national culture' whilst providing something that 'in the near future, might help to foster the cultural side of things'. He added: 'There is no hall today in which a reasonable large audience can be treated to an orchestral performance'.<sup>175</sup> No response, however, was made by MacEntee or the minister for industry and commerce, Sean Lemass.

In an interview with the *Irish Times* in January 1936, the composer and former conductor of the Hallé orchestra, Sir Hamilton Harty, who was also a vice-president of the R.I.A.M., thought it only fair to 'reproach Dublin with the lack of a concert hall', something which he said was 'really necessary'. Harty believed that it was the duty of the Irish state to 'subsidise music' to prevent, what he termed, 'latent talent' remaining undeveloped. He said that there was a ten to one chance that every orchestral composition written in Ireland would never be heard in Ireland as long as there was no concert hall for it to be heard in. He argued that a national academy or conservatory of music could only do so much for music, for a 'background of musical endeavour' had to exist for it to be effective. Interestingly too, he added that music in itself was something which could be used 'in attracting other people to these shores' for people on commercial or other business in the country liked to be

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<sup>174</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liv, 2383-5 (21 Feb. 1935).

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2385-6.

‘entertained at the same time’ and might be more likely to visit ‘if they knew they would have the pleasure of being provided with music here such as they get in their own country’.<sup>176</sup>

In light of this public pressure, de Valera established an inter-departmental committee to consider the question of a concert hall and a proposal to lease the Rotunda buildings at Parnell Square for the purpose was mooted.<sup>177</sup> However, the matter went no further, for the department of finance objected outright to any such expenditure. The department held that whilst there may have been a case for state subsidisation of public musical performances and a venue for them ‘thirty years ago or more’, wireless sets, gramophones and ‘musical talking films’ were now widely available. Therefore ‘the necessity for such public concerts has become smaller and will continue to decline’. ‘Is it any part of the state’s duty to resuscitate a Victorian form of educational recreation?’ it asked.<sup>178</sup> That those who sang or played the music over the wireless, on the gramophone records or on the film soundtracks also needed this outlet for the performance of their art and that a standard of musical culture could be cultivated by this outlet, especially with the prevalence of contemporary complaints about the infiltration of popular and ‘jazz’ music, was not appreciated at all by the department of finance.

### **6.10 ‘The one great deficiency’ of Irish musical life, 1940s**

The notable increase in musical activity in the city from 1941, particularly with the series of public symphony concerts inaugurated by Michael Bowles and the recently expanded Radio Éireann orchestra, called even greater attention to the deficiency with regard to adequate performance venues in Dublin city.

The *Irish Times*, for example, pointed out that holding feiseanna and improving the radio orchestra was of no value if there was a ‘lack of facilities for adults who take an interest in music and wish to keep themselves in touch with the world of music’. Thus, the newspaper commented that the ‘music-lovers of the city’ deserved a concert hall to sustain their musical interest.<sup>179</sup> In an address to the Friends of the Irish Academy of Letters made in Dublin in February 1941, John

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<sup>176</sup> *I.T.*, 6 Jan. 1936.

<sup>177</sup> See Brian Kennedy, *Dreams and responsibilities: the state and the arts in independent Ireland* (Dublin, [n.d.]), pp 41-3.

<sup>178</sup> Dept of finance memo, Jan. 1937 (Dept of finance, S101/13/36) cited in Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, p. 43.

<sup>179</sup> *I.T.*, 17 Oct. 1941.

Larchet also stated that 'the one great deficiency in the musical life of the city was its lack of a concert hall' and hoped that Dublin would 'awaken to the realisation of its humiliating position'.<sup>180</sup>

By March 1942, the position had not changed and the lord mayor of Dublin and Fine Gael T.D. for Dublin-South, P.S. Doyle, presiding at a prize-giving ceremony at the R.I.A.M., stated that there was a 'strong feeling of embarrassment not only in the academy but among others outside', that there was no proper concert hall in the city. He appreciated that recent moves to improve that situation had been 'held up by the emergency' but he advised those concerned 'to get a move on again in preparation for the peaceful times', which he hoped would soon return.<sup>181</sup>

Despite the 'emergency' though, the R.I.A.M. itself took steps to rectify the matter, at least in terms of the performance needs of its own students. As early as 1923, it had reported that the 'much needed concert hall' was engaging the attention of the academy governors and it was 'hoped that a scheme may be evolved whereby it may be possible to accomplish the object in view'.<sup>182</sup> In 1925, the academy reported that there had been a project on foot to build a concert hall at the back of the academy buildings in 1924, but when having found that the cost of building such a hall and the expenses of maintaining it would be beyond the means of the Academy, the project was dropped.<sup>183</sup>

In 1943, the R.I.A.M. managed to purchase the premises on 27a South Cumberland Street adjoining the then 'bandroom' of the academy, through the efforts of T.S.C. Dagg, one of the governors of the academy. These premises had reportedly always been 'the preventative to the extending of the bandroom', which for many years past had proved 'too small for the choral and orchestral activities of the academy'.<sup>184</sup> By 1944, 'great progress' had been made in the extension of the old bandroom into a concert hall and despite the 'great difficulties of the times', the project had been brought to such an advanced stage by the 'unsparing efforts and enthusiasm' of T.S.C. Dagg, that the R.I.A.M. could report: 'We look forward to have the concert hall an accomplished fact early in 1945.'<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 Feb. 1941.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 Mar. 1942.

<sup>182</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1923, p. 6

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 1925, p. 13.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 1943, p. 4.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 1944, p. 10.

Indeed, Dagg had gone to great lengths to garner support and funding for the project. He wrote to the head of the government, Eamon de Valera, in October 1944, informing him that a sum of £2,000 was required for the erection of a 'small concert hall' at the academy, of which over £700 has so far been subscribed, and suggesting: 'You may see your way to become a subscriber.'<sup>186</sup> Enclosed was a printed circular compiled by the secretary of the R.I.A.M., Sealy Jeffares, in April 1944, which was entitled 'Proposed new theatre and concert hall' and had a detachable subscription form. The circular justified the proposed new hall, which it said was considered 'an essential adjunct at other academies of music', as being of 'inestimable value to the teachers and pupils of the academy'. Jeffares proposed that it could also be made available 'for the numerous musical, dramatic and other cultural associations in Dublin whose activities are seriously handicapped at present owing to the absence of a really suitable small theatre or concert hall'.

The circular continued by pointing out that during the ninety years of its existence the academy had 'fostered the best methods of study' and 'done much to raise the standard of music in Ireland'. It was hoped that 'the works of young Irish composers might receive their first introduction to the public' in the proposed hall. Although the R.I.A.M. did not teach 'traditional' Irish music per se, it is significant to note that it obviously felt the need to mention that it *could* foster this type of music in order to gain support:

Performances of traditional Irish music could also be given by students of the academy, by which a wider appreciation of the many beautiful Irish airs and songs might be awakened. Our music is one of the few remaining heritages which proclaim our separate culture and nationhood, and no effort should be spared to preserve it and to foster its development.<sup>187</sup>

The *Irish Times*, commenting on this project, pointed out that it was impossible to 'count the number of recent occasions on which speakers and writers have insisted that Dublin must have a concert hall'. The newspaper supported the R.I.A.M. project, which it was felt, would 'help to fill the breach'. It informed prospective subscribers that they could 'feel not only that they are assisting an institution which has fostered fine music in Ireland for ninety years, but that they are doing a service to the capital and the nation'.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> T.S.C. Dagg to Taoiseach Eamon de Valera, Oct. 1944 (N.A.I., TAOIS/97/9/572).

<sup>187</sup> Sealy Jeffares, 'Proposed new theatre and concert hall', Apr. 1944 (N.A.I., TAOIS/97/9/572).

<sup>188</sup> *I.T.*, 18 Nov. 1944.

By February 1945, Sealy Jeffares was able to inform de Valera: 'The new concert hall of the academy, to the expense of which you very kindly subscribed is now practically completed, and it is intended to open it formally on Sat. 3<sup>rd</sup> March.'<sup>189</sup> On that date, the concert hall of the R.I.A.M. was formally opened by the minister for posts and telegraphs, P.J. Little, 'in the presence of a distinguished company'.<sup>190</sup> Annual R.I.A.M. concerts which had previously been held at the R.D.S. or at the Gresham Hotel could now be held at the academy itself and the academy's opera class could also perform in a suitable venue, putting on Mascagni's 'Cavalleria rusticana' and a scene from Donizetti's 'L'Elisir d'Amore' in 1948 and Donizetti's 'Lucia de Lammermoor' in 1950, for example.<sup>191</sup>

In the meantime, P.J. Little, who had been de Valera's parliamentary secretary since 1933 and his unofficial advisor on 'the arts', was appointed as minister for posts and telegraphs, following a cabinet shuffle of 1939, had taken up the issue of the lack of concert and performance facilities, as well as implementing improvements in the recently expanded Radio Éireann orchestra and bringing it closer to being a national symphony orchestra.<sup>192</sup> In 1942, he raised the issue in Dáil Éireann, stating that it was 'a matter of regret' that there was not 'at our disposal a hall, acoustically suitable and of adequate size in which these first-class, highly interesting, and highly educative performance could be given to fullest advantage'.<sup>193</sup>

Alfred Byrne, the independent T.D. for Dublin North-East, however, criticised the department of posts and telegraphs for not incorporating in the General Post Office, where the national broadcasting station was then located, 'a large hall which could be used for their own concerts'. Byrne, a former lord mayor of Dublin and thereby an ex-officio vice-president of the R.I.A.M., pointed out, as others had, that while a concert hall was 'very badly required' in Dublin city, 'no private person is prepared to take the risk of putting up such a hall'. He added: 'It is possible that the government, when things become normal, may be undertaking more building operations. In other countries I have seen in large government buildings big halls for

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<sup>189</sup> Jeffares to de Valera, 15 Feb. 1945 (N.A.I., TAOIS/97/9/572).

<sup>190</sup> Note on file, 22 Feb. 1945 (N.A.I., TAOIS/97/9/572); *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1945, p. 10.

<sup>191</sup> *R.I.A.M. annual rep.*, 1948, p. 11; *ibid.*, 1950, p. 6.

<sup>192</sup> Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, p. 46; see also ch. 4.

<sup>193</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxxvii, 1148 (17 June 1942).

this purpose. It ought not to be impossible for the government architects to design such a hall in conjunction with a government building of another type.<sup>194</sup>

Little responded that he was fully aware, from the 'frequent representations' which had been made to him, 'of the opinion widely held as to the need for a hall in Dublin in which the public could be given the fullest possible opportunities of attending in person broadcast performances of high-class orchestral music, symphony concerts and so on'. He admitted that he appreciated 'the difficulties of building, or otherwise procuring, such a hall in existing conditions', but, he added: 'The need should, I think, be recognised as one demanding urgent attention.'<sup>195</sup>

That there was not necessarily universal concurrence with this view, however, is evidenced by comments made by the likes of Brian O'Nolan ('Myles na gCopaleen') writing his 'Cruiskeen Lawn' column in the *Irish Times*. In November 1944, O'Nolan wondered, sarcastically, if even 'as many as twenty-eight people', including those who worked there, would attend any event at a concert hall. He queried: 'And what *is* a concert hall for the purposes of the Dublin situation?' He pointed out that usually a 'really big theatre' sufficed for the numbers that 'a great musical personality', such as John McCormack, attracted and that the Radio Éireann concerts held at the Capitol Theatre were never full to capacity. He added that there were 'plenty of halls of various sizes for more modest musical shows' and that 'no intellectual hardship or famine arises from the absence of a concert hall, properly so-called'.<sup>196</sup>

### **6.11 Makeshift' and 'myopic': government policy towards music**

Once the Second World War ended in 1945, P.J. Little began to seriously consider the role of the government in relation to, not only music, but cultural activity and the arts in general.<sup>197</sup> Undoubtedly, he was influenced by recent developments in Great Britain, and in Northern Ireland, where an overall state policy for music and other arts was being formulated following the success of the Committee for the

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., col. 1153.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., col. 1184.

<sup>196</sup> *I.T.*, 1 Nov. 1944.

<sup>197</sup> Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, p. 53.

Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.), which had been established during the Second World War to organise musical activity on a local level.<sup>198</sup>

Little requested his departmental secretary, Leon Ó Broin, formerly of the department of finance, to prepare ‘a sketch of what an arts department might encompass’ in Ireland.<sup>199</sup> This ‘sketch’, which proposed a ‘cultural institute’ or a ‘council of national culture’, along the lines of the recently established Arts Council of Great Britain, was presented, informally, as a memorandum to de Valera for his consideration in November 1945. In musical terms, the proposed council would extend the Radio Éireann public symphony concerts to local areas in collaboration with local musical societies, help to reorganised these societies and help to form a national symphony orchestra.<sup>200</sup>

Little had also requested the support of his friend, Seán MacEntee, the former minister for finance and now the minister for local government and public health.<sup>201</sup> MacEntee told him that whilst he was ‘most sympathetic to the idea’ he was ‘just a bit dubious about the effect of imposing any kind of bureaucratic control over the arts’.<sup>202</sup> De Valera, on the other, did not respond, despite being prompted by Little to give it his ‘personal’ interest as ‘a special favour’. Little feared that without de Valera’s personal support his proposals, which he felt were ‘extremely important if Ireland is to survive culturally’, would ‘receive rough handling and niggardly treatment - from finance’ and would consequently ‘only limp and fall’.<sup>203</sup>

P.J. Little, however, was not the only person agitating the taoiseach with regard to cultural affairs. In February 1947, for example, Basil Clancy, the editor of the *Hibernia* magazine, also submitted proposals for the creation of some type of state-nominated council which would organise cultural activities on a local and national level. Clancy took a different approach to Little, though, in highlighting the benefits that such a council could have for enhancing Ireland’s reputation abroad, particularly after the neutral stance taken in the war.<sup>204</sup> It was this aspect of Clancy’s

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<sup>198</sup> See Jack Loudan, ‘C.E.M.A. and music in Northern Ireland’ in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus in Ire.*, pp 207-9; Gillian McIntosh, ‘CEMA and the national anthem: the arts and the state in post-war Northern Ireland’ in *New Hibernia Review*, v, no.3 (2001), pp 22-31; Ruth-Blandina M. Quinn, *Public policy and the arts: a comparative study of Great Britain and Ireland* (Aldershot, 1998).

<sup>199</sup> Leon Ó Broin, *Just like yesterday: an autobiography* (Dublin, 1986), p.173.

<sup>200</sup> P.J. Little to Éamon de Valera, 27 Nov. 1945 (TAOIS/S13773A).

<sup>201</sup> See Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, p. 41.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>203</sup> Little to de Valera, 16 Jan. 1946 (TAOIS/S13773A).

<sup>204</sup> Basil Clancy to de Valera, 16 Feb. 1947 (TAOIS/S13773A).

proposal, rather than the cultural benefits which might accrue domestically, which interested de Valera most and he forwarded the proposal to the department of external affairs who were also considering a similar scheme.<sup>205</sup>

De Valera's concern with the perceptions of the Irish nation, and its culture, abroad meant that while few cultural initiatives were subsidised for the development of culture within the state, £10,000 was provided for establishment of an Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations.<sup>206</sup> However, the sixteen-member committee, which was eventually established in 1949 under the department of external affairs did not comprise a single musician. Aloys Fleischmann criticised this and the fact that the work of the committee was intended to be external rather than internal. 'The much more important task of developing the arts internally for the benefit of the people still awaits further help', he stated.<sup>207</sup> In the meantime, P.J. Little had decided to push for his arts policy by focusing on one aspect of cultural regeneration in the form of a provision for a concert hall and renewed attempts were made to acquire a lease of the Rotunda buildings for the purpose. The complicated negotiations were rather protracted and were deadlocked by the time that the Fianna Fail government fell in February 1948.<sup>208</sup>

Sitting as an opposition T.D. in 1948 Little explained that the Fianna Fáil government had taken 'a very keen interest' in attempting to bring about 'a proper national concert hall'. He told the Dáil that 'preliminary agreements' had been entered into to sign a contract with the Rotunda in order to build a concert hall at Cavendish Row in Dublin, immediately beside the Rotunda, with the Rotunda to be regarded as the 'foyer'. According to Little, it had also been intended that this building could be used even to create revenue for it could be hired by various organisations and societies. Little also let it be known that he had sent an architect and a radio engineer to visit the radio studios in 'Northern Europe' in 1947 and bring back 'accumulated knowledge of what is wanted in connection with a concert hall'. He claimed that those plans for a purpose-built concert hall had been completed before he had left office. Such a hall, he said, was what the country deserved 'in the way of adequate and first-class music' and would 'remove a blot from...our

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<sup>205</sup> Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, pp 60-61.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. See also TAOIS/S 14751 A, B and C (N.A.I.); Anne Kelly, *Cultural policy in Ireland* (Dublin, 1989), p. 90.

<sup>207</sup> Fleischmann, 'The organisation of the profession' in *idem* (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 85.

<sup>208</sup> See Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, pp 56-60 for details of these negotiations.

civilisation, because there is really no country of the standard of education of Ireland which has not got a decent concert hall in its capital'.<sup>209</sup>

This was echoed by the M.A.I. who claimed in its 1949 memorandum that the absence of a concert hall in a city the size of Dublin, not to mention in the whole country was: 'nearly unique. It testifies to a regrettably primitive state of affairs in certain respects, and gives an impression of a lack of esteem for cultural or spiritual values'. The M.A.I. also stated that recent announcements made by the new inter-party government in Dáil Éireann that the Radio Éireann public concerts were to be discontinued and plans to build a concert hall deferred would 'do nothing to alleviate' that apparent impression of cultural disregard. 'The necessity', it claimed, 'if music is to thrive, for a properly built and designed National Concert Hall is one of the first things that become apparent to any musician or music-lover in Ireland, and all are unanimous upon it...there would be a permanent focus for musical life and activity.'<sup>210</sup>The *Irish Times* also claimed, in 1949, that 'a good national concert hall would do much to help Ireland to polish her tarnished reputation with regard to music. The "makeshift" policy which has prevailed hitherto is not to the country's credit.'<sup>211</sup>

P. J. Little's successor as posts and telegraphs minister in the inter-party government, James Everett, admitted that a concert hall 'would be all to the good' in Dublin city and would be 'very necessary if we were living in normal times'. He argued, however, that the 'sketch plan' mentioned by Little had been estimated to cost £500,000 and the matter had been deferred on the basis of that potential cost to the state. Everett reiterated that the first duty of his government was 'to provide sanatoria for the poor patients in the country...and houses for those who have no accommodation' not 'luxury hotels or fancy buildings such as cinemas or halls'.<sup>212</sup>

This type of attitude was decried by the M.A.I. in 1949, who felt that most objections to advancements in cultural and musical development depended on the value put on such things by the government. The association claimed: 'Money can be found by the government for anything that is thought sufficiently important, and while we are aware that some of our proposals would involve a certain outlay, the sums would be nothing extraordinary in comparison with what is already spent on

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<sup>209</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxii, 831-2 (20 July 1948).

<sup>210</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610), p. 50-1.

<sup>211</sup> *I.T.*, 8 Jan. 1949.

<sup>212</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxii, 891 (20 July 1948).

relatively unnecessary things.<sup>213</sup> It claimed that if it were actually the case that the government 'really could not afford to build a concert hall, they could at least show some signs that they were interested'. 'Economy', it stated, 'is a myopic policy that may be compared with the economy of those who used to cut down the forests in Ireland, while they were too practical and realistic to plant new ones. As it is, little need for economy is felt in providing for purely political purposes'.<sup>214</sup>

The M.A.I. also contended that music was treated by the state, on the whole and as compared with any other civilised country, with an official contempt and a cynical indifference'.<sup>215</sup> This was evidenced by the fact the even the so-called 'arts act', which the inter-party government introduced towards the end of their administration in 1951, which ostensibly catered for 'painting, sculpture, architecture, music, the [sic] drama, literature, design in industry and the fine arts and applied arts generally', was intentionally focused on the 'visual arts'.<sup>216</sup> No provision was made for music at all.

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<sup>213</sup> M.A.I., 'Music & the nation', p. 68 - see appendix M.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>216</sup> Arts Act (1951/9) (8 May 1951). This was largely as a result of the influence of Thomas Bodkin and his *Report on the arts in Ireland* (1949), commissioned by the then taoiseach, John A. Costello, and which focused exclusively on the visual arts. See Kennedy, *Dreams & responsibilities*, pp 76-94 for a comprehensive treatment.

## CONCLUSION

Music is a practical prism through which to assess the efforts of the newly independent Irish state in attempting to 'build' the nation after 1922, as well as state attitudes to cultural endeavours and the arts. Music also provides an effective model with which to explore some of the key themes of early twentieth century Irish history, including the personalism of Irish politics, the centrality of the department of finance and the progress and pragmatism of successive Irish governments in their quest to legitimise and consolidate the nation-state.

Much of the relationship that the state had with music and musical activity was informed by the relationship of the state with the nation or perceptions of the nation. This was certainly the case with the army school of music, the first state initiative for the explicit purposes of the development of music and musical activity in the newly independent state conducted under the aegis of the department of defence in 1922. Because the 'nation-building' potential of the initiative became more apparent than the musical, and eventually more imperative, the policy of the Cumann na nGaedheal government was promptly revised for the explicit purposes of legitimising the nascent and volatile political state in a congenial cultural manner. Army bands sponsored by the state were used to gain support for its administration and the musical agenda was subjugated to the national.

Other attempts to express and project the nationality of the newly independent polity were made through 'national' events such as the Aonach Tailteann and the Eucharistic Congress. The manner in which music, musicians or music institutions were used as integral features of such events highlighted the fact that, for the most part, music functioned simply for the purposes of a colourful projection of the nation. Such events, however, also inadvertently highlighted the limited range of musical resources and the extent of musical education in the state.

Although the education system in independent Ireland remained very much as it had been under the British regime one vast change was effected in one area of education - the attempted revival of the Irish language. The building of Irish nationality seemed to require the restoration of the language and the education system, particularly the primary and vocational schools, were used by the state as political instruments for this purpose. Educational policy was subsumed by national concerns and developments in subjects such as music were restricted. Music

education in the primary level system, which was ostensibly free of syllabus, was stifled by the language requirement and the teaching of mechanical versions of Irish songs. On the other hand, music education was stifled at second level by the insistence on a particular curriculum in order for pupils to attain certification. Little or no provision was made for the development of music as an educational art form in itself within any level of the education system in independent Ireland in the years between 1922 and 1951. Ultimately, the focus on the national agenda without due care for the concurrent development of music as an academic subject meant that neither concern flourished in the schools.

Musical instruction, as opposed to music education, was provided by individual institutions and private teachers who were certified by a variety of different examining bodies of varying musical standards. The failure on the part of the state to incorporate music as part of a general education at all levels added to the competitive, individualistic nature of the art as practised in the independent state. National musical structures existed outside of state apparatus in the form of local centre examining bodies, private music teachers and a potential national academy which already dictated musical policy and developments to large degree through its membership and musical staff. Indeed, most of the important players in the music profession in independent Ireland from the 1930s had studied in, taught at or were affiliated in some way with the R.I.A.M.

Thus, while the relationship between state and music offers a fascinating window into the debates surrounding state formation and expressions or projections of nationality, particularly by a newly independent polity, it shows clearly that while music was harnessed for political objectives, little thought was ever put into the development of music, musical activity or the music profession itself. Throughout the discussions at state departmental level about the R.I.A.M., for example, nothing was mentioned about the actual types of music produced or the potential role that such an established institution could play in creating a national policy for music. While the focus was on the 'royal' title of the institution the musical implications of that title were never discussed.

Despite the protracted discussions about the national anthem and the repeated complications regarding copyright and publication no policy was adopted to ensure the safe-guarding of the rights of composers. For all the apparent nationalistic concern an anomalous musical situation was allowed to occur in independent Ireland

well beyond 1951; the rights granted to all composers, authors and publishers of musical works under copyright legislation were administered by the P.R.S. in London.

During the period in question here, no cohesive state policy existed which linked all musical activity, from the primary, secondary and vocational schools to the universities, from the various music institutions to the army, from private musicians and teachers to the national broadcasting service, for the mutual benefit of each activity. Any co-operation that did occur was initiative on the part of individuals or was simply out of necessity. Army bandsmen, for example, were affiliated with almost every national musical endeavour in the independent state including the national broadcasting service and the foundation of the national symphony orchestra. This was as a result of the enthusiasm of the army musicians and their leaders and the fact that there were few other musicians capable of playing brass, woodwind and percussive instruments to the standard to which they were trained. The army also provided the only facility in the state for the training of musical conductors but even these were found to be inadequate, by international standards, by the late 1940s.

The musical infrastructure to ensure that there were enough quality musicians or conductors experienced enough to create a national symphony orchestra had not been put in place after 1922 and these had to be found abroad. In addition, because the prevailing state attitude towards education in independent Ireland was that education served ethnic reinforcement and 'national' retrieval, and was not something that had its own merits, there were few mechanisms for encouraging any local civic interest, let alone investment in, education or the arts. The R.I.A.M., the C.S.M. and the D.M.S.M. were notable exceptions but these institutions functioned on financial provisions which had been made prior to 1922. These provisions were found to be increasingly inadequate in dealing with the increasing popularity of these institutions in the 1930s and 1940s.

The resulting relationship between state, nation and music, and particularly between state and music, then, was, as D.H. Akenson succinctly described the wider context, an 'interaction of myriad individual decisions with idiosyncratic governmental regulations'.<sup>1</sup> The makeshift nature of the state's relationship with music highlighted the ability of the state to capitulate to certain contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> D.H. Akenson, *A mirror to Kathleen's face: education in independent Ireland 1922-60* (Montreal & London, 1971), p. 83.

pressures while resisting others. Both capitulation and resistance were justified in the national interest. Cases in point included the continued taxation on musical instruments, certain exemptions and reductions in taxation on gramophone records, the introduction of foreign musicians to form a national symphony orchestra and even the introduction of more censorious legislation such as the Public Dance Halls Act. Yet, little or no finance was put back into the development of musical activity of better or more acceptable quality or even into the development of the educational apparatus to meet the musical needs of one symphony orchestra. It was little wonder, then, that the M.A.I., founded by prominent members of the music profession in 1948, was tempted to conclude that the independent Irish state appeared to be 'one of the most materialistic administrations this side of the Iron Curtain'.<sup>2</sup>

This begs the question of whether or not it was the duty of the state to cater for music or to support developments in music or musical activity or to have any relationship with music at all. This is answered by the fact that the state voluntarily engaged with such activity in certain innovative efforts on the part of more informed government ministers who viewed the cultural agenda as concurrent with political and national consolidation. Furthermore, the leading members of the music profession believed that the correct and most useful location for directing improvements in music, musical culture and musical activities in independent Ireland was with the government of the state. The financial resources needed to direct music policy were not available outside of state apparatus although the personnel and determination evidently were.

The R.I.A.M., from the outset, pleaded with the state to realise the importance of musical development on a national scale as a significant part of the nation-building process. John Larchet who presented his thoughts and schemes for the future of music in the new state managed to effect some development through his work with the army school of music and the department of education. Members of the M.A.I. continually offered advice to the government. Their 'Music and the nation' memorandum of 1949 offered a comprehensive assessment of the position of music in relation to the state and the nation and offered suggestions for equality within that relationship. Although members of the music profession wished for the state to make the provisions for a national music policy, they wished to direct it

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<sup>2</sup> M.A.I., 'Music and the nation' (N.L.I., MS 40,610). See appendix M.

themselves whilst remaining responsible to the government. Calls were made, for example, for broadcasting to be removed from government control and to be directed by an independent body that included musicians. It was felt that all music policy should be determined by a central academy which could identify the musical needs of the future and focus on ensuring that music education, in particular, was sufficient enough to provide for those needs. The views of the music profession in this regard appear to have had the general support of more informed members of Irish society.

This study has clearly shown, though, that there was a serious disinclination on the part of the state to engage with musicians and members of the music profession. Cosgrave expressed that reluctance in the early 1920s, worrying that co-operation with some members of the profession would alienate others. Members of the Fianna Fáil government also expressed concerns about exercising bureaucratic control over music. However, because of the lack of an overall music policy, bureaucratic restraint was exercised over certain aspects of musical activity.

The apparent reluctance on the part of the state in respect of a national project can be attributed, to a large extent, to the control exercised by the department of finance in independent Ireland in the years between 1922 and 1951. Departmental personnel viewed any other agenda, be it 'national' or musical, as subservient to the economic which was considered the main national priority. The finance department played a significant role, then, in the regulation of music and musical activity.

This was evidenced by a range of cases from taxation on imported musical instruments and gramophone records to 'entertainments' taxation. By maintaining taxes, which had been introduced under the British system for other purposes, on such items as musical instruments, those instruments available in independent Ireland appear to have been lesser in both quality and quantity than they should have been. By extending 'entertainments' taxation to a greater number of locations where musical activity occurred and where musicians were employed generally affected unemployment amongst musicians.

Although the taxes on various aspects of musical activity served to increase the government's revenue they were justified for a variety of purposes intended to serve the 'national' interest. Those on imported records, musical instruments and wireless apparatus, for example, were intended to encourage native manufacturing industries. Those on dancing and other entertainments were intended to preserve the values of Christian morality which were perceived as rudiments of Irish nationality.

The primary concern that the music profession had was that the finance raised through taxation on musical endeavour was rarely, if ever, solely invested back into music. Quite apart from the role that this would have had in improving the quality of musical education and activity, it might have actually increased revenue; better quality entertainment might have resulted in increased taxable musical activity.

Whilst the relationship between the state and music was defined by the parsimony of the department of finance, the department *was* able to take on certain musical projects when the national agenda persisted. Cases in point were the initiation of the Aonach Tailteann, the initial establishment of the army school of music and, particularly, the establishment of the national broadcasting service. This enterprise epitomised the notion that a project which enhanced the national pride and prestige of the new state could take precedence over economy. This was in spite of the fact that both the department of finance and the department of posts and telegraphs had objected to the project being a state undertaking. Moreover, the expansion of the musical facilities of the service at key political moments, particularly in the later 1940s, illustrated the inability of the department of finance to resist expenditure on a service which claimed to serve and project nationality.

However, this did not prevent the department from constantly pleading economy and effectively curbing the work which, however unwillingly, it had agreed to fund. More often than not, projects like the army school of music, the Aonach Tailteann or the broadcasting service proceeded under the strict control of the finance department which, in attempting to generate and sustain the intake of revenue, also managed to stifle the endeavours. Thus, the finance department, having the power to both encourage and constrain musical endeavours which ostensibly served the purpose of expressing and projecting nationality whilst consolidating and legitimising the apparatus of the state, played a key role in the relationship between the state and music.

The measures that were taken for the purposes of musical development, particularly in the area of broadcasting, also highlighted the personalism of Irish politics. The personal influence of government ministers with an interest in music, such as Richard Mulcahy or P.J. Little, could dictate state initiatives for music. However, such initiatives, being dictated by personal preference, were usually confined to one particular area of musical development, such as music in the army, or the development of a particular musical genre. In order to acquire parliamentary

acceptance and financial support, too, musical proposals often had to be couched in 'national' rhetoric.

When benevolence towards music prevailed and financial provisions were made for the purposes of 'national' development within more specific musical locations, these generally proved to be inadequate. Few provided any basis for shaping either national or musical development. Short-term provisions within specific musical locations, such as the army or broadcasting, tended to be inconsistently maintained across the period in question. Moreover, certain musical initiatives were not sustained when government ministers such as Mulcahy or Little lost their ministerial posts or the party which they represented fell from government. This reflected a structural failing on the part of the state which, regardless of the parsimony of the finance department, automatically restricted its relationship with music.

That there were state-effected developments in music in independent Ireland in the period in question was more incidental than intentional. The bands of the Irish army and the Garda Síochána, for example, played a particularly active role in inculcating both nationality and musicality in terms of their participation, in the Aonach Tailteann music competitions or the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. Under the directorate of the German, Colonel Fritz Brase, the army bands proved instrumental in a purely musical sense, in supporting other musical ensembles and provided wind instrumentation to augment ensembles to orchestra strength, standard and repertoire. They also recorded music on gramophone records, provided musicians and conductors to the national broadcasting service and eventually contributed to the formation of the first and only national symphony orchestra under the auspices of that state service.

This was the only other major state-sponsored music project in the period in question here. It was, like most state initiatives which involved musical activity, not intended as a means of developing musical activity but as a means of encouraging the trade and manufacture of electrical and wireless goods in the new state. The potential of broadcasting to develop musical culture, whether in the sharing of regional styles of traditional instrumentation and singing or in the national promulgation of 'art' music, was appreciated by few, particularly at state level. In the absence of verbal political propaganda, music broadcasting was an important implicit agent in the legitimating of the modern Irish state. In remaining almost solely a

musical endeavour it did not engage in political debate or give voice to any overtly political ideology and was thereby an essential element of cultural legitimisation and national integration. However, by promoting 'traditional' music, encouraging quality 'classical' music and dissuading 'jazz' at various stages, a more implicit form of Irish national propaganda was discernible. Yet the broadcasting project would prove, above all others, to be the most significant in terms of its effects on the development of music and musical activity in independent Ireland. As well as the particular musical interests of the relevant minister for posts and telegraphs, though, these developments were largely determined by the contemporary political and social climate.

The inadequacy of educational facilities for music in Ireland only came to be really discussed in Dáil Éireann once it was realised that foreign musicians and conductors would have to be imported by the Fianna Fáil government to provide world-class orchestral music through the broadcasting service in the late 1940s. In the absence of sufficiently qualified Irish persons, private music associations and institutions, like the R.I.A.M., had always sought foreign musicians to teach various musical subjects. However, while inconsistent with Fianna Fáil policies on self-sufficiency and safe-guarding 'Irishness', the practice adopted in the late 1940s highlighted the pragmatic political approach taken by the party when faced with the need to project musical competency outside of the state.

Assessing the elements of state, nation and music as three parts of the one process and determining the reciprocity within that relationship reveals that the controlling partner in that tripartite relationship was the state. The evidence shows that music and musical activity was generally regarded by the state either as a useful agent in the task of 'nation-building' or as a practical means of securing revenue. Short-term, myopic provisions substituted for a national music policy that might have served for the sake of the art itself as well as the national agenda.

Whilst there was no overall policy for music in the nation-building there was little or nothing done either to foster the dual relationship between music and nation or to ensure a role for nationality in music. The relationship between music and the nation, that being musicality in nationality and nationality in musicality was determined by each of their relationships with personal, governmental or institutional agents of the state. This suggests that the lethargy of successive independent Irish

governments in respect of musical and other cultural policies had a doughty ally in a wider reluctance respecting any great national project.

Perhaps this was related to an inherent Irish inferiority complex. The enlightened P.J. Little referred to this in *Dáil Éireann* in 1950:

We have a tradition which is a *damnosa haereditas* to live down because we were inflicted with a kind of iconoclasm, the product of British materialism, largely, where everything was on a commercial basis, and also a slave spirit. People felt that we were only a second-rate people, only a province, not able to produce good stuff. It is very remarkable that, in reaction against all that feeling, the two things that concerned Thomas Davis most were, first, freedom of the country and, secondly, the development of the culture of the country, which is the very substance of nationality. For that reason, there is no limit to what we should aim at in the development of our cultural activities.<sup>3</sup>

This inferiority complex appears to have generally manifested in the state sponsorship of the national agenda above any other. However, the question of what actually did and did not 'belong' to the Irish nation, in musical terms, was rarely, if ever, asked, let alone answered.

Preventing 'foreign' influences like 'jazz' from permeating the apparently traditional and therefore inherently 'national' values of the Irish nation tended to define the nationality of the independent state. This was in spite of the fact that few people, and certainly no government ministers, could or would define terms like 'jazz' or 'Irish music'. Thus, Irish nationality, particularly in music, was usually understood not by what it actually was but by what it was *not* perceived to be.

National self-consciousness resulted in an evident reluctance to discuss or re-assess those things, such as the R.I.A.M. and its 'royal' associations, which had evolved from or were inherited from the recent difficult past, from the time of British administration. These were consigned to continue as in the past. More discussion, at least, was afforded to aspects of Irish nationality that appeared to belong to a more ancient 'Gaelic' past, such as the Aonach Tailteann, things that could be rekindled, redeveloped or restored. Yet there was an inability and unwillingness to state how these aspects of Irishness and Irish nationality applied to the independent Irish state from the 1920s. Moreover, while the state appeared to take the cultural values and cultural ideals of Irish-Ireland, such as language and traditional music, from the poorer and more traditional rural communities, it did little, economically or

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<sup>3</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxxi, 617 (25 May 1950).

otherwise, to nurture some sense of pride in those communities about those traditions. Even at this level, music was politically exploited, rather transparently, by the state, when and where required for the purposes of national articulation.

It was felt, presumably, that to debate and consider public or informed opinion on certain issues, such as music, might have been interpreted as being somehow contrary to the views held by the state, or some officially accepted ideal of the Irish 'nation'. It was also to admit the possibility that the nation itself, or the people of the state, were not in accordance with the wishes of the government of the state about those ideals. This was especially noticeable at the time of the national anthem controversy in 1929.

The Cumann na nGaedheal administration, and particularly, its leader, W.T. Cosgrave, attempted to avoid officially declaring 'The soldier's song' as the anthem at every opportunity. The song itself, which was a pre-independence anthem and therefore appealed to the independent state, was offensive to the Unionists both in the state and in Northern Ireland. Evading making definite declarations of nationality in music and song clearly meant evading conflict with Unionists as much as it did with various types of musicians. However, the absence of a defined nationality in music meant that progress in music and musical composition was stalled as musicians tried to deal with these issues for decades after 1922.

However, it seems that an external appearance of unity had to be maintained to justify the independence of the state. National self-consciousness manifested itself, then, particularly under the Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail administrations, in the parading of the Irish nation and Irish nationality through cultural means, at every opportunity. It was the benefits that cultural developments could have for enhancing Ireland's cultural reputation abroad, rather than the cultural benefits which might accrue domestically, which led to certain cultural initiatives being taken after the Second World War. These initiatives included a national concert hall project, a shortwave radio project to service the Irish diaspora, and an advisory committee on the external presentation of Irish culture.

It was only the personal efforts of P. J. Little which ensured that the musical rather than the national agenda prevailed in broadcasting and a symphony orchestra was formed to provide public concerts within the state. However, the sixteen-member Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations, under the aegis of the

department of external affairs, did not contain one musician. The concert hall project was diluted and delayed by the hesitancy of the finance department.

The policy of catering to the international, rather than the domestic, audience was countered to some degree by the inter-party government who felt it more necessary to present a picture to the world of an economically respectable state rather than a culturally advanced nation. Plans for a concert hall and shortwave radio service were abandoned. The symphony orchestra was not affected because it was felt to be of domestic benefit. However, the public concerts which had made the orchestra popular and provided another outlet for musical activity and education were also abandoned.

This is not to say that there was no musical activity or a decline of that activity in the period in question here. Indeed, the evidence shows that there was actually an increasing interest and demand in Ireland from the 1920s for the teaching of music as a general art form. It also shows that in the absence of any such service being provided by the state, private persons and individual institutions such as the R.I.A.M. were taking it upon themselves to supply music education in the country. The R.I.A.M. continually reminded the government that they were responding to the perceived educational, popular and cultural needs of the new polity, and would, indeed, go on to supply some of the requirements of later musical developments in Ireland such as the formation of the national radio orchestra.

The support given by the state to the R.I.A.M., although financially inadequate, imbued the institution with a sense of national importance. This meant that it effectively functioned as a 'national academy' of music in terms of certification and influence. In fact, it functioned anomalously as an 'all-Ireland' body, holding local centre examinations in Northern Ireland and certifying musicians and teachers there as well as in the independent state. However, the lack of financial support and the absence of a national policy for music on the part of the state meant that it functioned outside of the educational system and served to enhance the notion that music education was equated with musical instruction.

Despite all of the criticisms about the state of music in the country across the period and the part that the state played, or was urged to play, in its development, there was increased musical activity. Whilst much of this was urban-based and confined to amateurs and certain branches or genres of music, choral singing in

particular, this was still musical activity.<sup>4</sup> Where the musical impetus came from the locality and was supported by the state a popular and successful local musical culture was usually created. This happened with adult vocational and commercial choirs in the late 1940s because musical activity there was not dictated by a state ideal, as in primary education, or a state syllabus, as in secondary education. It was the standard and direction of this activity though which concerned the music profession and contemporary commentators.

It is hoped that this study has succeeded in highlighting the need to rethink the task of Irish historiography in an exploration of representations of and engagements with the past in certain cultural and artistic fields such as music. It is also hoped that the possibilities that exist in terms of applying explorations of the artistic, the cultural, or the musical, to standard accounts of Irish history have been demonstrated.

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<sup>4</sup> Patrick Zuk has also written on this issue – see Patrick Zuk, ‘Words for music perhaps? Irishness, criticism and the art tradition’ in *Irish Studies Review*, xii, no.1 (2004), pp 11-27.

## APPENDIX A

### John F. Larchet, 'A plea for music: an analysis of the present position of music in Ireland, and the needs of the future' (n. d. [1922]).<sup>1</sup>

There is a traditional belief amongst the Irish people that we are a music loving nation; and the citizens of Dublin, in particular, are accustomed to arrogate to themselves a position unique in the world of artistic discrimination and musical criticism. That Ireland was once a musical nation cannot be denied, for we possess a heritage of folk music which can stand beside that of any other nation: but in music, no more than in any other sphere of human activity, is it possible to live a healthy life on the traditions of the past. In the latter half of the sixteenth century England was the leading musical nation in Europe, and our own period of creative ability is of considerably greater antiquity.

A dispassionate analysis of the present position of music in Dublin cannot fail to yield most unsatisfactory results. Dublin has no legitimate concert hall, good or bad, and is making no effort to acquire one. It has no permanent orchestra worthy of the name of a symphony orchestra. With the exception of two isolated visits by one of the English symphony orchestras there has not been an orchestral performance of any importance or educative value in Dublin during the last nine years. This means that the vast majority of people in Dublin have no knowledge whatever of the symphonic poems of Strauss, the great symphonies of Brahms, and an immense quantity of modern orchestral music. There are few who are acquainted with any important works of a later date than Wagner's 'Ring of the Nibelungen'.

The minimum of interest is taken in chamber music; indeed a large percentage of music supporters in Dublin have never even heard a string quartet. Solo instrumental recitals of classical song-recitals, are few and far between, and are only attended by a small circle of patrons of good music, and by those who are personally interested in the particular artist who has promoted the recital. Dublin cannot even claim to possess a permanent choral society of the dimensions adequate to produce any considerable choral work.

In such circumstances it is inevitable that Dublin should be unable to make any contribution to the support or the progress of music. The great musical festivals which one finds in practically all the principal continental cities and even in some English cities such as Leeds, Sheffield and Gloucester, annual, biennial or triennial, which are of such importance in fostering a knowledge and appreciation of music, (and incidentally a strong corporate spirit) are unknown in Dublin. The *Feis Ceoil*, and similar institutions throughout the country, cannot be regarded as musical festivals in the true sense of the words. They are purely of a competitive nature, and are intended to be only of educative value.

The only forms of musical enterprise that are supported in Dublin are ballad concerts and a certain type of opera.

The ballad concerts are of frequent occurrence, and are lavishly patronised. They are also of considerable profit to the promoters – generally English; but that is their sole value, and they are almost always a cause of injury rather than of benefit to

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<sup>1</sup> This version, which must have been compiled by Larchet and sent to the ministry of education in late 1922 or early 1923 for it to have been sent to the ministry of finance on 1 Feb. 1923, and can be viewed at the National Archives of Ireland (FIN/1/2794), differs slightly from the wording of that published in William G. Fitzgerald (ed.), *The voice of Ireland: a survey of the race and nation from all angles by the foremost leaders at home and abroad* (Dublin and London, n. d. [1924]), pp 508-11.

the musical taste of the city. The programme generally consists of two or three largely advertised vocalists, who all contribute the same style of music. A well known operatic aria is sung which is usually an example of either the florid school of Donizetti and the early Verdi, or the more cloying modern Italian school. The operatic aria has its own particular value, when taken in its own essential environment, but separated from the opera house, and from its indispensable orchestra and dramatic setting, it is entirely out of place.

The remaining items on the programme, whose educational value is nil, are all sentimental ballads, ending with what is popularly known as a 'top-note'. The top-note as far as the majority of the audience is concerned, is the beginning and the end of the song, and the sole excuse for the song. Even the final cadential harmonies of the accompaniment are usually drowned in an outburst of premature applause, and I have myself heard an artist interrupted in Dublin, in the middle of an item, to enable the audience to display their ill-timed admiration of a difficult piece of vocal gymnastics. I mention the incident principally to show the very low level of good taste and artistic appreciation prevalent in Dublin.

It is better to admit quite frankly that music, to the vast majority of Dubliners, means songs, and nothing else but songs. That is why they are so fond of a certain type of so-called 'ballad-opera'. It would be interesting to know how many people in Dublin could appreciate Beethoven's 'Fidelio' with its four great overtures, as a greater work of art than the 'Bohemian Girl' with its half dozen ballads.

The opinion of the musical visitors to Dublin will confirm this view. With the exception of a few great *virtuosi* like Kriesler, who refuse to debase their art, the concert promoter, the vocalist, the solo instrumentalist, the operatic manager, all provide the same style of music. How often are the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Hugo Wolf and Brahms, the four greatest song writers ever known, heard at these concerts? Very seldom indeed; few vocalists making a *debut* in Dublin would care to take such a risk.

Whether the standard of musical culture was ever higher in Dublin than it is at present is a very doubtful question. The older generation speak regularly of the days of Italian opera in the old Theatre Royal, of Madame Patti and her contemporaries, but the facts do not support their laments. Even when there was at least two good concert halls in Dublin, every orchestral or choral society which appeared underwent the same humiliating experience, the same mortifying and ceaseless struggle to find the necessary artistic and financial support for its bare existence, until it finally died of neglect. The further back one goes the more one is convinced that the same condition has always existed. For two centuries Dublin's musical reputation has apparently rested on the fact that the 'Messiah' was first performed in this city, in the presence of the composer. Whether this was due to Handel's appreciation of Dublin's real culture, or to the accident of his residence here at the time when that work happened to be finished, is a question which it is not now necessary to discuss. The important point is that the present generation will require to produce some more recent achievement to prove their love of music.

What is the cause of this signal lack of musical culture, and who is to blame? The usual answer is that it is due to the failure of the state, or of private individuals, to supply the necessary financial support, but this answer, in face of the real facts, is quite inadequate. Up to the year 1914, when the European war put an end to all such efforts, many good musicians had cheerfully sacrificed time and labour and many lovers of good music had subscribed generously in money, in a vain endeavour to create a feeling for classical music in Dublin. The history of their efforts is one long

record of failure, due to the apathy of the public, and Dublin has lost so many opportunities that it is unfair now to appeal for another. If there were any hope that the expenditure could justify itself, or could ever yield good results it is undoubtedly the duty of the state to come forward, if necessary, with assistance in the beginning; for the importance of art in a general scheme of education cannot be over estimated, and to the appeal of music, above all the arts, man is most responsive. But when the public have so many times shown themselves indifferent to the efforts made on their behalf, it is useless to raise such a plea.

Complaints are often made about the need for proper musical criticism, but that is the fault of the public themselves. Newspapers are mostly what their readers make them. The intelligent professional critic knows the situation quite well, but he is on the horns of a dilemma. If he says all he would like to say, he is abused for discouraging talent, yet on the other hand, if he over praises, he realises that he is doing more harm than good; he must sail on an even keel. But if a strong public opinion demanded honest, straightforward criticism, it would be forthcoming.

The real cause of the failure to appreciate good music in Dublin is that the people have never been taught to do so. Therein lies the cause of our apathy and our impoverished taste. Our system of musical education is not merely wrong; it is fundamentally unsound. Beginning with the primary and secondary schools, all the way up through the circuitous paths and by-ways of individual teaching and private endeavour, to the music institutions themselves, the whole mental attitude is at variance with common sense. It is not possible to foster a real love for music in our children and an ever developing taste, from a musical education that never aims at producing either.

The position allotted to music in most of our secondary schools is lamentable. There are, of course, a few honourable exceptions, but the subject is generally pushed into the darkest corner, the Cinderella of the curriculum. As a rule the children are lucky if the time allowed for it is not filched from their recreation, and their musical talent is being systematically stultified, and in the case of the boys, very successfully crushed.

A glance at the labours of the average fifteen year old girl, (who is usually better off than her brother), will fully illustrate the point. The whole of the scholastic year is devoted to the mastery, more or less, of the few unpretentious pieces she and her companions are trying to sing, or struggling to play on some instrument, and perhaps to, the parrot-like acquisition of some barren formulae, some sterile facts, totally unrelated to each other, ironically known as 'theory'. During the whole of that period she never hears any real music worth hearing, never learns any of the thousand and one interesting things about the lives and music of the great composers, which alone can give vitality to the subject, and make it really appeal to her as a living art. Music just means practising day after day the same dreary pieces, for no end but the annual examination, the *summum bonum* of her life. That child is not being taught music; she is only learning to dislike it.

The function of music is to portray, through the refining medium of art, the range of human thought and human emotion, not to afford an opportunity for a more or less imperfect display of vocal gymnastics and finger dexterity. The object in studying any art is not to acquire something of the technique of one of its minor branches, but to learn how to enjoy and appreciate, as far as possible, the masterpieces of its great immortals.

To attain this end music must occupy a dignified position on the school curriculum. The first necessity is the compulsory singing class, graded and

standardised like any other subject. The term 'singing class', which is an all-embracing one, embodies the teaching of the foundations of everything in music, namely ear training – a systematic development of the pitch sense and rhythmic sense – sight singing and theory. The theory of music (though it may sound a paradox) must be taught as practical music, that is through the medium of time and tune. Music that is not taught through sound is not music at all. In addition, there should be cultivated voice production, and the singing of songs in unison and parts.

The neglect of our own beautiful folk music is deplorable and our earliest efforts should be devoted to curing this defect. Our folk music should be part of our normal lives, and should form an important part of that mystic influence, that intangible bond, which creates a living sense of nationality, and binds together all over the world the members of the same race. The immediate necessity for its revival is to give us that sense of possession which is the surest incentive to further progress, and to furnish some criterion by which we can examine and learn to reject the outpouring of so-called 'music' from the cheap printing presses, which is rapidly destroying our musical sense and dragging our taste into the very mud.

The importance of the singing class must be strongly insisted on. It forms the basis of all musical culture, and is indispensable to further progress. The entire school should attend, for in them is represented the personnel of choirs and choral societies of the next generation.

But it is through the medium of the appreciation class that the future music supporting public will be created. One hours lecture on music every week to the whole school will do more to create a real love of music in our children than any other form of study. By the aid of the piano or pianola, and the full use of the gramophone, they can be taught the real scope of the art, and the full amount of pleasure to be extracted from it. A living knowledge of the works of the great masters, an intelligent survey of the progress of music and its development through the ages, is the only means by which an individual appreciation of good music can be developed, and the general musical taste of the community raised to the level at which it should stand.

The difficulties of the subject are by no means as great as they might appear to the uninitiated at first sight. A child is most readily susceptible to the influence of music, and in the hands of a tactful guide he can be brought to love what is beautiful in music and to realise the sources of pleasure comprehended in its pursuit. If the faculty of appreciation is strengthened and cultivated on proper lines, the boy or girl leaving school, at the age of say sixteen, has a good general knowledge of form in music, of the construction of melodies and of the outlines of history ; and after a course of judicious selections from the great masters, showing the development of music through the different periods, he has become an intelligent listener, and possesses a general acquaintance with the symphonies and chamber music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Best of all he has acquired a genuine love of music, based on its understanding, and a sympathy with the art which is of inestimable value to the community.

The difficulties of the present situation, and the necessary remedy, are summed up perfectly by an eminent English critic:-

It is really very difficult to play or sing well; not one person in five thousand can ever have any hope of doing so. Our whole system of musical education is at fault. We devote no end of time and money, public and private, to training pupils to be unintelligent performers, when what we ought to do is to train them to be intelligent listeners.

Children who wish to learn an instrument, the piano, or perhaps the violin, viola or 'cello, should be able to obtain instruction in school, at least up to a certain standard. This class provide the nucleus of a school orchestra, the formation of which should be encouraged whenever possible.

The school choir should be formed only from the best voices and sight readers in the singing classes; and under such conditions the choral items at the school concert will be much improved. As a matter of fact, with the development of true musicianship in both teachers and pupils, the annual event will be robbed of many of its 'horrors', and its inevitable blemishes will be considerably diminished.

The time required for the learning of an instrument, or for the orchestral or choral practises, must not under any circumstances be subtracted from the compulsory and all-important singing and appreciation classes.

It is obvious that we must cultivate a superior type of teachers, one who will be an enthusiastic progressive music student. The universities and music academies can help by rearranging their syllabuses to meet our requirements.

If the musical education of our children is developed on these lines, there will be no need in the future to yearn for lavish governmental endowments for symphony orchestra, chamber music and choral concerts, for the schools will have created for us a truly music-loving public, who will make our musical enterprise self-supporting.

There should be but one endowed musical establishment, namely a National Academy of Music. This centralising institution should not only be responsible for the training of the future professional musician and the gifted amateur, but should control the musical examinations and conduct the inspection of the music classes throughout the country.

There is no doubt that at this point many will protest against what they conceived to be such a waste of time in trying to make musicians of all, of some even against their will. The same objection applies with equal force to every subject which is not frankly and solely utilitarian, and if there be any value in a classical or literary education, music is of equal importance with every other factor, and is entitled to its rightful place of the programme. The question may also be raised as to the unmusical child, the child who hath no music in his soul. The answer is that such a child does not exist. It is a truism that the aesthetic sense is born in everybody, and only lies dormant, waiting to be cultivated; and the musical, (in some form or other), is all but universal.

The children of Ireland are as sensitive to the appeal of good music as those of any other country. The spirit of the bards still lives in them. Here indeed is fertile soil for the sower of seed. The future of music in our country is in the hands of our education boards, our schools and our teachers. When Ireland has fully developed her newly gained freedom, and demands her place amongst the great nations of the world, do not let the land of the Bards be found wanting in the art of music.

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## APPENDIX B: Aonach Tailteann and Feis Ceoil 1924 – competition categories

### 1. Music programme, Tailteann Games 1924 - competition categories and test pieces<sup>i</sup>

#### Military and police bands ~ Test pieces

- *Class I: Brass and reed bands* [John McCormack cup]  
(a) Overture, Mendelssohn's 'Fingal's cave', arr. Winterbottom (Hawkes); (b) Irish selection of own choice – original setting preferred
- *Class II: Pipe bands*  
March: 'The Kinnegad Slashers'; March: 'The drunken piper'; Reel (Irish): 'The gooseberry bush'.

#### Civilian bands ~ Test pieces

##### Brass and reed bands

- *Class I: numbering not more than 50 players*  
(a) Overture, Auber's 'Le domino noir', arr. Winterbottom (Hawkes); (b) Irish selection of own choice - original setting preferred
- *Class II: numbering not more than 35 players*  
(a) Overture, Flotow's 'Martha' (Boosey edition); (b) Irish selection of own choice – original setting preferred

##### Brass bands (No more than 25 players)

- (a) Selection of Beethoven's works (Boosey's *Brass Band Journal*); (b) Irish selection of own choice – original setting preferred

##### Flute bands

Both classes also to present an Irish selection of own choice – original setting preferred

- *Class I:* Selection from Balfe's 'Siege of Rochelle' (Boosey)
- *Class II:* Selection from Balfe's 'Talisman' (Hawkes)

##### String orchestra (numbering not more than 30 players)

- Elgar's 'Serenade' (Chester)

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<sup>i</sup> Particulars are as given for the 1924 competitions in the *Irish Independent*, 15 Apr. 1924. Some of the test pieces were changed for certain categories for the 1928 and 1932 music competitions. The military and police brass and reed bands, for example, were required to perform Smetana's 'Vltava' fantasia in 1928.

#### Wind instruments combinations

- *Class I: Trio (2 clarinets & bassoon)*. Hennessy's 'Swan'
- *Class II: Quintet*. Beethoven's 'Quintet in E flat' (clarinet, oboe, bassoon, horn & piano)
- *Class III: Sextet*. Mozart's 'Sextet in E flat' (2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons)
- *Class IV: Octet*. Mozart's 'Octet in E flat' (2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons)

#### Cinema bands

- *Cinema band*: Mozart's 'Magic Flute Fantasia', arr. Tavan
- *Piano & strings*: Tchaikovsky's 'Andante cantabile' from Quartette Opus XI arr. Adolf Schmidt (Hawkes)
- *Piano, strings & additional wind & percussion instruments*: Coleridge-Taylor's incidental music suite to 'Faust' (Boosey)

#### **Harp** ~ Test pieces

- Concert harp: (a) Hasselman's 'Berceuse', op. 2; (b) Hasselman's 'Elégie', op. 34 (Schott)
- Small harp: selection of *Irish melodies arranged for Irish harp* (Wintherop-Rogers)

#### **Traditional fiddle** ~ Test pieces

- Jig, reel and slow air of competitor's own selection. Airs to be named by competitor, also origin and source to be stated where possible.

#### **Pipes** ~ Test pieces

- Uilleann pipes<sup>ii</sup>  
Jig, reel and slow air of competitor's own selection. Airs to be named by competitor, also origin and source to be stated where possible.
- War pipes<sup>iii</sup> (individual)  
(a) Any four part 2/4 time march; (b) 'Moneymuck'; (c) Any Irish reel of competitor's choice
- Pipe bands<sup>iv</sup> (not less than eight pipes and two drums)  
(a) 'The Kinnegad Slashers'; (b) 'Strathspey'; (c) Any Irish reel of competitor's choice.

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<sup>ii</sup> These particularly Irish pipes are more correctly known as the 'Union' pipes although played with the 'uilleann' or elbow inflating the pipe-bag as opposed to the blowpipe used by players of the 'war' or 'bag' pipes. Have a two octave range and usually only played solo.

<sup>iii</sup> Played by means of a blowpipe and capable of playing only nine notes.

<sup>iv</sup> Consisted of players of the more limited war pipes only.

**Choirs (Gaelic) ~ Test pieces**

- *Class I* (mixed voices): (a) Esposito's 'Shan Glas'; (b) O'Dwyer's 'Sean Ó Duibhir'
- *Class II* (male voices): (a) O'Brien's 'Slán le Máigh'; (b) Hardebeck's 'Mise Raifterí'
- *Class III* (female voices): (a) O'Dwyer's 'Sho h-ín sho'; (b) 'Ban chnuic Éireann óigh'

**Choirs (English) ~ Test pieces**

- *Class I* (mixed voices): (a) Larchet's 'Legend of Lough Rea'; (b) C. Woods' 'Haymakers'.
- *Class II* (male voices): (a) Sullivan's 'The beleaguered'; (b) Woods' 'In yon summer vale'.
- *Class III* (female voices): (a) Stanford's 'On windy way'; (b) Seymour's 'To a seagull'.

**Choirs (Primary schools. Age limit: 15 yrs for boys, 17 yrs for girls) ~ Test pieces**

- *Class I* (infants up to 9 yrs): Action songs (a) Uiseo. mo leanbh / Amhrán mhuighe reola; (b) Hardebeck's 'Beidh ríl againn'; (c) 'Hush, here comes the dream-man'
- *Class II* (one teacher schools): (a) Sullivan's 'Sweet day, so cool' (No. 28, Curwen's *Melody Song Book*); (b) 'Duan na Saoirse' (*Ceoil ár sinnsear*, iii, Browne & Nolan)
- *Class III* (two teacher schools): (a) Bantock's 'The fairies are dancing' (two-part song); (b) 'Cáitlín ní Uallacháin' & 'Druimfhionn donn dílis' (Browne & Nolan)
- *Class IV* (three or more teacher schools): (a) Roland Rogers' 'The angel of the rain' (three-part song); (b) 'Follow me down to Carlow' (Irish folk-song, words by Fletcher); Annie Patterson's 'Go mairidh ár nGaedilg slán' (*Irish minstrel*, iii).

**Traditional singing ~ Test pieces**

- Two songs of competitor's choice, contrasting in character. Airs and origins to be named by competitor.

**Solo singing ~ Test pieces (to be sung in original keys. Language optional)**

- *Class I* (Soprano): (a) Recitative: Mozart's 'E Susanna non vien'; Aria: 'Dové sono' (Ascherberg); (b) a song by an Irish composer
- *Class II* (Mezzo-soprano): (a) Delibes' 'Lakme'; (b) a song by an Irish composer
- *Class III* (Contralto): (a) Recitative: Handel's 'Armida dispietata' & Aria: 'Lascia ch'io pianga' (Ascherberg); (b) a song by an Irish composer
- *Class IV* (Tenor): Mozart's 'Un aura amorosa'; (b) a song by an Irish composer
- *Class V* (Baritone): (a) Recitative: 'Hai gia vinto la causa'; Aria: 'Vedro ?? la sospire'; (b) a song by an Irish composer

## 2. Music programme, Feis Ceoil 1924 - competition categories and numbers of intending entrants <sup>v</sup>

| <u>Competition categories</u> | <u>No. of entrants</u> | <u>Competition categories</u>                 | <u>No. of entrants</u> | <u>Competition categories</u>           | <u>No. of entrants</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| <i>Choral Division I</i>      |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Mixed voice choirs          | 1 choir                | Denis O'Sullivan medal (open-Irish songs)     | 65                     | String orchestra                        | 3                      |
| • Male voice choirs           | 1 choir                | Joseph O'Mara cup (male voices)               | 19                     | Small orchestra with piano              | 2                      |
| • Female voice choirs         | 2 choirs               | Plunkett Greene cup (interpretation)          | 82                     | Flute & piano duet                      | 3                      |
| <i>Choral Division II</i>     |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Mixed voice choirs          | 1 choir                | Gervase Elwes cup (previous medallists)       | 19                     | Instrumental trios (A & B)              | 5                      |
| • Male voice choirs           | 1 choir                | R&R <sup>vi</sup> cup (dramatic solo singing) | 19                     | Violin & piano duets                    | 4                      |
| • Female voice choirs         | 4 choirs               | Solo sight-singing                            | 7                      | Elsner cup ('cello & piano duet)        | 4                      |
| <i>Other choirs</i>           |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Children's choirs           | 2 choirs               | Soprano solo                                  | 43                     | Junior harp                             | 1                      |
| • Church choir                | no entry               | Mezzo-soprano                                 | 77                     | Violin solo (A, B & C)                  | 71                     |
| <i>Vocal quartet</i>          |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Mixed voices                | 3 quartets             | Contralto                                     | 29                     | Eileen cup (advanced violin)            | 2                      |
| • Male voices                 | 4 quartets             | Tenor   | 27                     | Arthur Darley prize (unaccomp. violin)  | 6                      |
| • Females voices              | 9 quartets             | Baritone                                      | 24                     | 'Cello solo (A & B)                     | 17                     |
| <i>Vocal trio</i>             |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Female                      | 12 trios               | Bass  | 16                     | Viola                                   | 1                      |
| • Children                    | 9 trios                | Boys  | 6                      | Piano solo (A, B & C)                   | 181                    |
| <i>Quintet</i>                |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Female                      | 5 quintets             | <i>Singing in Irish</i>                       |                        |   |                        |
| <i>Duets</i>                  |                        |   |                        |   |                        |
| • Mixed                       | 10 duets               | - Choirs                                      | no entry               | Harty cup (Piano concerto)              | 2                      |
| • Male                        | 10 duets               | - Soprano                                     | 21                     | Pigott cup (Advanced piano)             | 6                      |
| • Female                      | 18 duets               | - Contralto                                   | 7                      | Larchet cup (Violin accomp. at sight)   | 12                     |
|                               |                        | - Tenor                                       | 5                      | Organ solo (A & B)                      | 16                     |
|                               |                        | - Bass  | 5                      | Fitzgerald cup (organ, extemporisation) | 5                      |
|                               |                        | - Mixed quartet                               | 2 quartets             | Wind instrument competitions            | 8                      |
|                               |                        | - Male quartet                                | 1 quartets             | - Irish pipes, flute,                   |                        |
|                               |                        | - Female trio                                 | 7 trios                |   |                        |

<sup>v</sup> Particulars are as given in the *Irish Times*, 19 Apr. 1924, one month prior to the commencement of the Feis Ceoil. Not all intending entrants actually participated in the feis when it occurred in May, however.

<sup>vi</sup> Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society.

## APPENDIX C:

### Known versions of the national anthem of Ireland published between 1922 and 1951<sup>i</sup>

| Year   | Publisher                         | Particulars  | Gramophone record        |
|--------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1928   | Talbot Press, Dublin              | <i>The soldier's song and other poems</i> – words only   | None                     |
| 1930   | Stationery Office                 | Music arranged by Colonel Fritz Brase in 30 parts for military brass and reed band <sup>ii</sup>               | 1931 (HMV)<br>1944 (HMV) |
| 1933   | Stationery Office                 | Arranged by Col. Brase in 12 parts for fife and drum band  | None                     |
| c.1933 | <i>Unpublished</i> <sup>iii</sup> | Arranged by Professor John Larchet for 2RN (later Radio Éireann) orchestra (16 parts) <sup>iv</sup>            | <i>None</i> <sup>v</sup> |
| 1934   | Stationery Office                 | Arranged by Col. Brase in 22 parts for orchestra <sup>vi</sup>   | None                     |
| 1935   | Stationery Office                 | Abbreviated version of the 1934 orchestral setting re-arranged by Col. Brase in 13 parts for 'salon orchestra' | None                     |
| 1935   | Stationery Office                 | Abbreviated version of the 1930 military band setting arranged by Col. Brase                                   | 1944 (HMV)               |
| 1935   | Stationery Office                 | Abbreviated version of the 1934 orchestral setting re-arranged by Col. Brase in 25 parts                       | None                     |
| 1935   | Unpublished                       | Arranged for orchestra by Professor Aloys Fleischmann <sup>vii</sup>   | None                     |
| c.1950 | Walton's, Dublin                  | A verse and refrain of 'The soldier's song' arranged for piano <sup>viii</sup>                                 | None                     |

Source: TAOIS/S3767B (National Archives of Ireland).

- <sup>i</sup> The official, that being government approved, version of the Irish national anthem comprised the music of the three verse & refrain of 'The soldier's song' until 1933 and the refrain thereafter.
- <sup>ii</sup> This version and the abbreviated version of 1935 were used by the army and Garda Síochána bands from about 1929 until December 1952 when an official revised arrangement by Col. J. M. Doyle, director of the army school of music, was published by the Stationery Office. This new version in 26 parts for military or brass band also incorporated a presidential salute and a Taoiseach's salute for use on official occasions.
- <sup>iii</sup> This version was published by Pigott's in Dublin after 1951.
- <sup>iv</sup> The arrangement was commissioned by Vincent O'Brien, musical director at 2RN, sometime after the augmented station orchestra began to give public concerts in Dublin in 1927. When exactly the arrangement was scored is unknown although it appears to have copied for the radio music library around 1932.
- <sup>v</sup> Whilst no recording was made during the period under consideration here, a non-commercial record of Larchet's arrangement played by the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra was made for the station by HMV in 1952 replacing an old American recording of a version of the song used by the Fighting 69<sup>th</sup> regiment of New York that had been played nightly at the close-down of the national broadcasting station since the 1930s.
- <sup>vi</sup> Due to demand and because separate parts had not been written for voices or other instruments, the Stationery Office later broke up this orchestral score and sold the piano and violin parts, both without words, separately.
- <sup>vii</sup> Used by various orchestras under Fleischmann's direction since the 1930s. Official permission granted for the use and publication of his arrangement in 1955.
- <sup>viii</sup> No official permission was granted for this arrangement, with words, by Patrick A. Walton, B.Mus.

## APPENDIX D

### The Royal Irish Academy of Music (R.I.A.M.) I: Patrons, presidents, vice-presidents, governors, boards of studies and subscribing members, 1922-51.

**Table 1: Patrons and presidents of the R.I.A.M., 1922-51**

| Title, name and accreditations <sup>i</sup>               | Years of affiliation  |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Patrons</b>  |                       |
| Their Majesties the King [George V] & Queen [Mary]        | 1922-30 <sup>ii</sup> |
| Her majesty Queen Alexandra <sup>iii</sup>                | 1922-25               |
| <b>Vice-Patrons</b>                                       |                       |
| The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, K.G. <sup>iv</sup>  | 1922-30               |
| <b>President</b>  |                       |
| The governor-general of the Irish Free State <sup>v</sup> | 1922-37               |
| <b>Vice-Presidents <i>Ex officio</i><sup>w</sup></b>      |                       |
| The ex-lord mayor of Dublin                               |                       |
| The high sheriff of Dublin city                           | 1922-24               |
| The incumbent lord mayor of Dublin <sup>vii</sup>         | 1922-24               |
| Commissioner Seamus O Murchadha <sup>viii</sup>           | 1924-30               |

Sources: *Royal Irish Academy of Music annual reports, 1922-1952* [hereafter cited as R.I.A.M. annual reports, 1922-52]; Richard Pine and Charles Acton (eds.) *To talent alone: the Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998* (Dublin, 1998), appendix 1, p.520 [hereafter cited as Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*].

<sup>i</sup> As detailed in the R.I.A.M. annual reports for the years 1922 to 1951.

<sup>ii</sup> From 1930 the R.I.A.M. did not publish the fact that the British monarchy were patrons of the institution.

<sup>iii</sup> Alexandra of Denmark, mother of George V, died in 1925.

<sup>iv</sup> Prince Arthur, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, third son of Queen Victoria, brother of Edward VII, uncle of King George V.

<sup>v</sup> The presidency of the academy, which was held by the lord-lieutenant of Ireland prior to 1922, became vacant in 1937 when the office of his representative, the governor-general, was abolished and remained so until the 1980s when the R.I.A.M. constitution was amended to appoint a chairman and director. The governors-general of the Irish Free State, 1922-37 were: Timothy Michael Healy 1922-27; James Mc Neill 1927-32; Domhnall Ua Buachall 1932-37.

<sup>vi</sup> In addition to the patrons detailed above, the governing body of the R.I.A.M. consisted of nine vice-presidents, three who acquired the title by virtue of their office outside of the academy.

<sup>vii</sup> The Lord Mayors of Dublin for the relevant period were: Laurence O'Neill, 1922-24; Alfred Byrne, 1930-39; Caitlin Bean Uí Chléirigh, 1939-41; Peadar Sean Ua Dubhghaill, 1941-43 and 1945-46; Martin O' Sullivan, 1943-45; John Mc Cann, 1946-47; Patrick Joseph Cahill, 1947-48; John Breen, 1948-49; Cormac Breathnach, 1949-50; John Belton, 1950-51. In May 1924, the Irish Free State executive council dissolved Dublin Corporation, and thereby the position of Lord Mayor, and terminated the membership of all persons appointed by the corporation as members on certain public bodies, such as the R.I.A.M., whereupon three commissioners were appointed to administer the city of Dublin and from July 1925, until the re-instatement of Dublin Corporation in October 1930.

<sup>viii</sup> The chief commissioner appointed to administer Dublin city from 1924 and who acted as a governor of the R.I.A.M. until the reinstatement of the corporation in 1930.

**Table 2: Elected vice-presidents of the R.I.A.M., 1922-51**

| Title, name and accreditations <sup>i</sup>           | Tenure <sup>ii</sup> |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Vice-Presidents Elected<sup>iii</sup></b>          |                      |
| Lord Arthur Hill, P.C., D.L.                          | 1922-31              |
| → <i>John F. Larchet</i> , Mus.D., T.C.D., F.R.I.A.M. | 1931-51              |
| James W. Drury, M.A.                                  | 1922-28              |
| → <i>Dermod O' Brien</i> , President R.H.A.           | 1928-45              |
| → <i>Liam Paul</i>                                    | 1950-51              |
| → <i>Timothy Walshe</i>                               | 1951                 |
| Captain Sir Stanley H. Cochrane, Bart., D.L.          | 1922-49              |
| → <i>T. S. C. Dagg</i> , M.A., L.L.B., B.L.           | 1949-51              |
| Lord Shandon, Ignatius O'Brien                        | 1922-30              |
| → <i>Edmund Lupton</i> , K.C.                         | 1930-42              |
| → <i>Mrs W. J. M. Starkie</i>                         | 1942-51              |
| Lord Glenavy  | 1922-31              |
| → Count John Mc Cormack, Mus.D. (Hon.) N.U.I.         | 1931-45              |
| → <i>Maud Aiken</i> , A.R.A.M.                        | 1950-51              |
| Commendatore Michele Esposito, Mus.D., T.C.D.         | 1924-29              |
| → Sir Hamilton Harty, K.B.E., Mus.D., T.C.D.          | 1929-42              |
| → <i>Denis McCullough</i> , T.D.                      | 1942-51              |

Sources: R.I.A.M. annual reports 1922-52;  
Pine and Charles Acton, (eds.), *To talent alone*, p.518

<sup>i</sup> As detailed in the R.I.A.M. annual reports for the period 1922-51; Post-nominal letters refer to offices or honours acquired at any time throughout the period in question and may not have applied when a position was first taken up at the R.I.A.M. Selected post-nominal abbreviations: **K.B.E.**: Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire; **J.P.**: Justice of the Peace; **P.C.**: Privy Counsellor; **K.C.**: King's Counsel; **D.L.**: Deputy Lieutenant; **T.D.**: Teachta Dála, member of Dáil Éireann; **R.H.A.**: Royal Hibernian Academy; **L.L.B.**: Bachelor of laws; **M.A.**: Master of arts; **Mus D.**, **T.C.D.**: Doctorate in music, Trinity College Dublin; **F.R.I.A.M. (Hon)**: Honorary fellowship of the R.I.A.M.; **A.R.C.M.**: Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London.

<sup>ii</sup> The years referred to here are academic years (September to September) within the period 1922-51. However, it was not always possible to determine the exact dates for the tenure of some vice-presidents because the subsequent relevant calendar year or the date of nomination or election was often noted in the records as opposed to the date on which the term of office actually commenced (which usually coincided with the beginning of the new academic year). There was also sometimes a hiatus of a number of years between the cessation of the tenure of one vice-president and the election of a successor.

<sup>iii</sup> The governing body of the R.I.A.M. consisted of nine vice-presidents, three who acquired the title by virtue of their office outside of the academy and six elected by the governing body itself. Names in *italics* are those who served as governors of the R.I.A.M. prior to their election as vice-president. The symbol → denotes succession to vice-presidency.

**Table 3a: Governors of the R.I.A.M., 1922-51**  
(representing the Coulson endowment & the R.I.A.M. board of studies)

| <b>Governors<sup>i</sup></b>  |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Title (where applicable), name and accreditations<sup>ii</sup></b> | <b>Tenure</b> |
| <b><i>Coulson endowment</i><sup>iii</sup></b>                         |               |
| Captain T. M. Gerrard, M.B.E.   | 1922-28       |
| → <i>Captain Arthur Whewell</i>                                       | 1929-31       |
| → <i>Alice B. Griffith</i>  | 1932-33       |
| → Frederick (Frank) P. Griffith                                       | 1938-39       |
| → Edith Boxwell   | 1939-43       |
| → Edgar M. Deale  | 1943-51       |
| Frank Browning,   | 1922-23       |
| → <i>Sir John Irwin</i> , J.P.  | 1923-35       |
| → Nora Sidford Fannin, A.R.I.A.M.                                     | 1935-48       |
| → <i>Rev. Dr Richard MacNevin</i> , D.D.                              | 1949-51       |
| A. W. W. Baker, F.R.C.S.I.  | 1922-24       |
| → <i>William Ireland</i> , J.P.                                       | 1924-31       |
| → <i>Frank Wynne</i>  | 1931-39       |
| → Alice Yoakley   | 1940-44       |
| → Richard Midgeley, L.R.I.A.M.  | 1944-51       |
| <b><i>Professors/Board of Studies</i></b>                             |               |
| B. Warburton Rooke, Mus. B., T.C.D.                                   | 1922-30       |
| → T. H. Weaving, F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)                                    | 1931-51       |
| → Rhona Marshall  | 1951          |

Sources: R.I.A.M. annual reports 1922-52;  
Pine & Acton (eds.), *To talent alone*, pp 519-21.

<sup>i</sup> As well as patrons and presidents, the governing body of the R.I.A.M. also consisted of representative governors from four different constituencies: R.I.A.M. Members, Dublin Corporation, the Coulson endowment and the professorial and teaching staff. Names noted in *italics* signify those who served as governors in other constituencies, or who were re-elected after a number of years, whilst those in ***bold italics*** are those whose tenure as governor ended upon election to the vice-presidency of the R.I.A.M. The symbol → indicates 'succeeded by'

<sup>ii</sup> As given in the annual reports of the R.I.A.M. for the period 1922-51. Post-nominal letters refer to offices or honours acquired at any time throughout the period in question and may not have applied when a position was first taken in the R.I.A.M. Selected post-nominal abbreviations: **M.B.E.**: Member of the Order of the British Empire; **J.P.**: Justice of the Peace; **D.D.**: Doctor of Divinity; **F.R.C.S.I.**: Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland; **Mus.B.**, **T.C.D.**: Bachelor of Music, Trinity College Dublin; **L.R.I.A.M.**: Licentiate member of the R.I.A.M.; **A.R.I.A.M.**: Associate member of the RIAM; **F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)**: Honorary fellow of the R.I.A.M.

<sup>iii</sup> The years referred to here are academic years within the period 1922-51. However, it was not always possible to determine the exact dates for the tenure of some governors because the next relevant calendar year or the date of nomination or election was often noted in the records as opposed to the date on which the term of office actually commenced.

<sup>iii</sup> By the terms of the Educational Endowments (Ireland) act of 1885, under which the structure and governance of the R.I.A.M. was established, three governors represented the a substantial endowment by Elizabeth Coulson to the R.I.A.M.

**Table 3b: Governors of the R.I.A.M., 1922-51  
(representing Dublin Corporation)**

| <b>Governors</b>   | <b>Tenure</b> |
|--|---------------|
| <b>Title (where applicable), name and accreditations</b> |               |
| <b>Dublin Corporation 1922 – 1929</b>                    |               |
| 1. Coghlan Briscoe                                       | 1922-24       |
| 2. Alderman Mrs Kathleen Clarke                          | 1922-24       |
| 3. Miss Sarah Harrison                                   | 1922-24       |
| 4. William Paul, J.P.,                                   | 1922-24       |
| 5. George Prescott, A.M.I.E.E.                           | 1922-24       |
| 6. J. Russell Stritch, J.P.                              | 1922-24       |
| 7. Richard H. White, J.P.                                | 1922-23       |
| → Alderman B. F. Shields, M.A.                           | 1923-24       |
| 8. Laurence Raul   | 1922-24       |
| Commissioner Dr Dwyer                                    | 1924-30       |
| Commissioner P. J. Hernon                                | 1924-30       |
| <b>Dublin Corporation 1930 – 1951</b>                    |               |
| 1. Councillor (Cllr) Caffrey, B.A.                       | 1930-34       |
| → Mrs Frank Mc Donnell                                   | 1934-48       |
| → Cllr Thomas Doyle                                      | 1948-49       |
| → Patrick Coughlan                                       | 1949-51       |
| 2. Alderman Hubbard Clarke                               | 1930-48       |
| → William J. Colman                                      | 1948-51       |
| 3. Frank Cluskey   | 1930-32       |
| → David Coyle  | 1932-34       |
| → Senator Kathleen Clarke                                | 1934-38       |
| → J. J. Byrne, Jnr.                                      | 1938-50       |
| → Cllr Harold Douglas, P.C.                              | 1950-51       |
| 4. Mrs Terry (O'Connor) Glasgow                          | 1930-32       |
| → Alderman Robert Benson                                 | 1932-33       |
| → Alderman Ernest Benson                                 | 1933-39       |
| → Maud Aiken, A.R.A.M.                                   | 1939-50       |
| → Fr Leo Mc Cann   | 1950-51       |
| 5. Mrs W. O'Hara   | 1930-49       |
| → Cllr Catherine Byrne                                   | 1949-51       |
| 6. Cllr. J. Ryan, P.C.                                   | 1930-32       |
| → Matthew Fitzpatrick                                    | 1932-39       |
| → Rev. J. Fennelly                                       | 1940-45       |
| → Alderman Bernard Butler, T.D.                          | 1945-51       |
| 7. Lorcan Sherlock, L.L.D.                               | 1930-34       |
| → John Mc Cann   | 1934-39       |
| → James P. Kennedy                                       | 1939-43       |
| → J. Keogh-Clarke, P.C.                                  | 1943-51       |
| 8. Dónal O'Sullivan                                      | 1930-34       |
| → Martin O'Sullivan                                      | 1934-44       |
| → Joseph Brown   | 1944-48       |
| → Cllr. John J. Phelan                                   | 1948-51       |

Sources: R.I.A.M. annual reports 1922-52;  
Pine & Acton (eds.), *To talent alone*, pp 519-20.

Eight representatives of Dublin Corporation sat as governors of the R.I.A.M. However, after the dissolution of the corporation by the Irish Free State executive council in 1924, commissioners (Dwyer & Hernon) appointed to administer the city of Dublin sat as representative governors until the re-instatement of Dublin Corporation in 1930.

**Table 3c: Governors of the R.I.A.M., 1922-51 (representing R.I.A.M. members)**

| Title (where applicable), name and accreditations <sup>i</sup>  | Tenure <sup>ii</sup>   |  | Tenure  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Members</b>  |  | <b>Members</b>   |   |
| W. H. Brayden, O.B.E.<br>→ <i>Liam Paul</i><br>→ John O'Donovan   | 1922-33<br>1933-50<br>1950-51                                  | <i>Edmond Lupton</i> , K.C.<br>→ Edwin Bradbury, F.R.I.A.I.<br>→ <i>Lorcan Sherlock</i> , LL.D.<br>→ John J. Nolan<br>→ P. J. Kinsella<br>→ J. A. Hurson, Ph.C., M.P.S.I.<br>→ Harvey Lyon | 1922-30<br>1930-36<br>1936-38<br>1938-44<br>1944-47<br>1947-49<br>1949-51 |
| P. C. Cowan, D. Sc.<br>→ John E. Geoghegan,<br>→ William Lemass<br>→ Percy E. Greene<br>→ Noel Reid, LL.B., B.L.  | 1922-23<br>1923-32<br>1932-42<br>1942-50<br>1950-51            | Senator James Moran<br>→ <i>Mrs W. J. M. Starkie</i><br>→ Michael Dalton   | 1922-25<br>1925-41<br>1941-51   |
| W. De Courcy Millar,<br>→ Lennox Robinson,<br>→ Joseph Holloway, F.R.I.A.I.<br>→ <i>Timothy Walshe</i><br>→ Hugh Smith  | 1922-26<br>1926-32<br>1932-44<br>1944-50<br>1950-51            | Sir W. Taylor, C.B., K.B.E., F.R.C.S.I.<br>→ <i>Denis McCullough</i> , T.D.<br>→ <i>Rev. Dr. Richard MacNevin</i> ,<br>→ M. J. Costelloe   | 1922-26<br>1926-42<br>1942-49<br>1949-51                                  |
| Albert R. Foot, B.A.<br>→ Raoul C. De Versan, K.C.<br>→ <i>J. Hubbard Clarke</i> ,<br>→ Raymond Victory<br>→ <i>A. Edward Smith</i> , F.S.I.<br>→ J. J. Shiel | 1922-24<br>1924-27<br>1927-30<br>1930-36<br>1936-39<br>1939-51 | <i>Major Arthur Whewell</i><br>→ Mrs Edith Best, A.R.C.M.<br>→ Michael W. O' Reilly, P.C.  | 1922-26<br>1926-32<br>1932-51   |
| <i>William Ireland</i> , J.P.<br>→ <i>Dr John Larchet</i> , F.R.I.A.M.<br>→ Gerald Horan<br>→ Maestro Caval. Adelio Viani,<br>F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)               | 1922-25<br>1925-31<br>1931-32<br>1932-51                       | Alexander Williams, R.H.A.<br>→ <i>George Prescott</i> , A.M.I.E.E.<br>→ <i>A. Edward Smith</i> , F.S.I.<br>→ John J. O'Connor<br>→ Christopher Burgess                                    | 1922-26<br>1926-42<br>1942-45<br>1945-49<br>1949-51                       |
| <i>Sir John Irwin</i> , J.P.<br>→ <i>Dermod O'Brien</i> , D.L., R.H.A.<br>→ <i>T.S.C. Dagg</i> , M.A., L.L.B.,<br>→ James Callery                             | 1922-23<br>1923-28<br>1928-49<br>1950-51                       | <i>Frank Wynne</i><br>→ <i>Ms Alice B. Griffith</i><br>→ Judge Cahir Davitt<br>→ J. J. Mooney, B.L.<br>→ Dr Pádraig Breathnach, R.I.A.<br>→ Sean Breathnach                                | 1922-25<br>1925-31<br>1931-34<br>1934-48<br>1948-51<br>1951               |

Sources: R.I.A.M. annual reports, 1922-52;  
Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, pp 518-519.

<sup>i</sup> As given in the annual reports of the R.I.A.M. for the period 1922-51. Post-nominal letters refer to offices or honours acquired at any time throughout the period in question and may not have applied to the duration of tenure at the academy. Selected post-nominal abbreviations: **K.B.E.**: Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire; **O.B.E.**: Officer of the Order of the British Empire; **C.B.**: Companion of the Order of the Bath; **J.P.**: Justice of the Peace; **P.C.**: Privy Counsellor; **K.C.**: King's Counsel; **D.L.**: Deputy Lieutenant; **T.D.**: Teachta Dála, member of Dáil Éireann; **R.H.A.**: Royal Hibernian Academy; **R.I.A.**: Royal Irish Academy; **L.L.B.**: Bachelor of Laws; **M.A.**: Master of Arts; **B.D.**: Bachelor of Divinity; **D.D.**: Doctor of Divinity; **D. Sc.**: Doctor of Science; **M.B.**: Bachelor of Medicine; **F.R.C.S.I.**: Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland; **B.A.**: Bachelor of arts; **F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)**: Honorary fellow of the R.I.A.M.; **A.R.C.M.**: Associate of the Royal College of Music, London.

<sup>ii</sup> The years referred to here are academic years within the period 1922-51. However, it was not always possible to determine the exact dates for the tenure of some governors because the next relevant calendar year or the date of nomination or election was often noted in the records as opposed to the date on which the term of office commenced.

Table 4: Members of the R.I.A.M. board of studies, 1922-51

| Board of studies [A-Z]<br>Name and musical accreditations <sup>i</sup> | Main teaching subjects at<br>R.I.A.M.                  | Tenure on<br>Board <sup>ii</sup> |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <b><i>Best, Mrs Edith (née Oldham)</i></b> A.R.C.M.                    | Piano  | 1922-32                          |
| Biggs, Claud   | Piano  | 1930-47                          |
| Broderick, Rita B.Mus., L.R.A.M.                                       | Harmony/composition/theory<br>etc <sup>iii</sup>       | 1951                             |
| Copeman, Dina L.R.A.M.   | Piano  | 1949-51                          |
| Du Chastain, Jean  | Piano; chamber music                                   | 1929                             |
| Engel, Francis   | Piano  | 1949-51                          |
| <b><i>Esposito, Commendatore Michele</i></b><br>Mus.D., T.C.D.         | Piano; chamber music;<br>orchestra                     | 1922-28                          |
| Grossi, Feruccio   | Violin; viola; chamber music                           | 1926-47                          |
| Hewson, George H. P. Mus.D., T.C.D.                                    | Organ  | 1922-51                          |
| Irwin, Annie   | Singing  | 1922-39                          |
| <b><i>Larchet, John F.</i></b><br>Mus.D., T.C.D., F.R.I.A.M.           | Harmony/composition/theory<br>etc; orchestra           | 1922-51                          |
| Larchet, Mrs Madeleine (née Moore)<br>F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)                | Violin; orchestra                                      | 1926-47                          |
| Lord, Annie F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)  | Piano  | 1926-38                          |
| Lord, Nancie   | Violin   | 1950-51                          |
| <b><i>Marshall, Rhona</i></b> L.R.A.M.                                 | Piano  | 1949-51                          |
| O'Hea, Alice   | Piano; singing   | 1926-36                          |
| O'Hea, Margaret  | Piano; organ   | 1922-28                          |
| Schofield, Joseph  | 'Cello   | 1922-30                          |
| <b><i>Starkie, Mrs Ida (née O'Reilly)</i></b>                          | 'Cello   | 1930-4?                          |
| Stokes, Dorothy L.R.A.M.   | Harmony/composition/theory<br>etc; orchestra           | 1951                             |
| Twelvetrees, Clyde   | 'Cello   | 1930-51                          |
| Vaneček, Jaroslav  | Violin   | 1949-51                          |
| <b><i>Viani, Maestro Cav. Adelio G.</i></b><br>F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.)       | Singing  | 1922-51                          |
| <b><i>Warburton Rooke, B.</i></b><br>Mus.B., T.C.D., F.R.I.A.M. (Hon.) | Harmony/composition/theory<br>etc; piano; organ        | 1922-37                          |
| Watson, Joshua F.  | Violin   | 1922-25                          |
| <b><i>Weaving, Thomas H.</i></b><br>FRIAM (Hon.)                       | Harmony/composition/theory<br>etc; piano; organ; choir | 1925-51                          |

Sources: *R.I.A.M. annual reports*, 1922-1952;  
Pine & Acton (eds), *To talent alone*, pp 518-19.

<sup>i</sup> As given in the annual reports of the R.I.A.M. for the period in question. Post-nominal letters in bold type refer to honours acquired at any time throughout the period in question and may not have applied when a position was first taken in the R.I.A.M. Names in bold italics are those who served as governors in any constituency or as vice-presidents. Selected musical post-nominal abbreviations: **A.R.C.M.**: Associate of the Royal College of Music, London; **B.Mus.**: Bachelor of Music; **L.R.A.M.**: Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music, London; **F.R.I.A.M.**: Fellow of the RIAM; **F.R.I.A.M. (Hon)**: Honorary fellow of the R.I.A.M.; **Mus.D., T.C.D.**: Doctor of music, Trinity College Dublin; **M.A.**: Master of Arts.

<sup>ii</sup> The years referred to here are academic years within the period 1922-51. However, it was not always possible to determine the exact dates for the tenure of some members of the board because the date of nomination or election or the relevant calendar year was often noted in the records as opposed to the date on which the term of office commenced.

<sup>iii</sup> This particular faculty had different designations over the period in question and conducted a variety of classes in harmony, counterpoint, elements/rudiments of music, theory, composition and musicianship.

Table 5a: List of members of the R.I.A.M., 1922

| Members <sup>i</sup><br>Surname, title (where applicable), name,<br>accreditations, address <sup>ii</sup>   | [A-K]   | Members<br>Surname, title (where applicable), name,<br>accreditations, address | [L-W] |
|---|---|--|-------|
| <p>Arnott, Sir John, Bart., 12 Merrion Square<br/>Beauclerk, Lady Osborne, Waterford.<br/>Baker, A. W. W., FRCSI, 59 Merrion Square<br/>Best, Mrs, ACRM, 57 Upper Leeson Street<br/>Bestic, A. R., 19 Clarinda Park, Kingstown.<br/>Brady, Lady, Sorrento, Dalkey.<br/>Brayden, W. H., OBE, 28 Adelaide Road.<br/>Bridge, John, 1 Lower Leeson Street.<br/>Browning, Frank, Kingstown.<br/>Butler, R. J., 5 South Circular Road.<br/>Clarke, Lt.-Col., CMG, CBE, Rathfarnham.<br/>Cowan, P.C., DSc., Rockmount, Castleknock.<br/>Crampton, Mrs, 18 Argyle Road, Herbert Park.<br/>De Versan, Raoul, Clyde House, Clyde Road.<br/>Delaney, P., Leinster Club, Dublin.<br/>Dix, Leopold M'Clintock, Ferndale, Shankill.<br/>Dockrell, Sir M., JP, Camolin, Monkstown.<br/>Donoughmore, Earl, 5 Chesterfield Gardens, London?<br/>Drury, J. W., Farnagh, York Rd, Kingstown.<br/>Dunville, J. D., DL, Sion, Navan, Co Meath.<br/>Esposito, Commendatore M., St Ronan's Sandford Rd.<br/>Foot, Albert, BA, BL, 57 Northumberland Rd.<br/>Pottrell, Sir George, KCB, Nth Gt. Georges St.<br/>Geoghegan, W. P., Rockfield, Blackrock.<br/>Geoghegan, J. E., Belcamp, Raheny.<br/>Gerrard, Capt. T.M, MBE, 25 Westmoreland St.<br/>Griffith, Miss, Rathmines Castle.<br/>Hewson, George H.P., Mus.D, 1 Ashbook Tce, Ranelagh<br/>Hicks, F. G., FRIAI, The Tower, Malahide.<br/>Hill, Rt. Hon. Lord A., 53 Eaton Place, London<br/>Hill, Lady Arthur, 53 Eaton Place, London.<br/>Inglis, James, JP, 64 Upper Leeson Street.<br/>Ireland, Wm, JP, 48 Lower Baggot Street.<br/>Iveagh, Rt. Hon. Earl, 5 Grosvenor Pl., London.<br/>Irwin, Sir J., JP, Newbrook Hse, Rathfarnham.<br/>Irwin, George, 46 Dartmouth Sq., Leeson Park<br/>Jacob, C. E., JP, Enderley, Dalkey.<br/>Kaye, Lady, 8 Fitzwilliam Square.<br/>Keating, Reginald, OBE, Bramberg, Sutton.<br/>Keys, Miss A., St Nessan's, Howth.</p> | <p>Larchet, J. F., Mus.D., 8 St Mary's Road.<br/>Lea, James, 10 Everton Ave., Nth Circular Rd.<br/>Lupton, Edmond, KC, 8 Herbert Street.<br/>Lupton, Mrs Edmond, 8 Herbert Street.<br/>Lyster, G. H., Milverton, Eglinton Road.<br/>Madden, Rt.Hon. D.H., Nutley, Booterstown.<br/>Maguire, W. R., Tower Hill Lodge, Dalkey.<br/>Millar, Hon. Mrs, Bray, Co. Wicklow<br/>Millar, de Courcy, St Nessan's, Howth.<br/>Millar, Mrs de Courcy, St Nessan's, Howth.<br/>Miley, D. O' C., Ailesbury Road.<br/>Moran, Senator J., JP, Hollybrook Park, Clontarf<br/>O' Brien, Dermod., DL, PRHA, 65 Fitzwilliam Sq.<br/>O'Neill, Lord, Shane's Castle, Co. Antrim.<br/>O'Neill, Lady, Shane's Castle, Co. Antrim.<br/>O'Neill, Rev. G. SJ, 35 Lower Leeson Street.<br/>Pigott and Co. Ltd., Grafton Street.<br/>Place, G. W., 9 Ailesbury Road.<br/>Potterton, Mrs, Palmerston Park.<br/>Prescott, George, 20 Strand Road, Merrion.<br/>Queckett, A S., LLB, Wellington Road.<br/>Rooke, B, Warburton, MusB., Cranleigh, Monkstown<br/>Schofield, J., Arbourfield, Windy Arbour, Dundrum<br/>Shandon, Rt. Hon., Lord, St Lawrence, Isle of Wight.<br/>Solomons, Bethel, MD, FRCSI, 42 Fitzwilliam Sq.<br/>Solomons, M. E., JP, 42 Fitzwilliam Square.<br/>Smyly, Sir Wm, MD, 58 Merrion Square.<br/><b>Students' Musical Union, RLAM.</b><br/>Taylor, Sir Wm., KBE, MB, FRCSI, 47 Fitzwim Sq.<br/>Tomlinson, R. G., 5 Ashbrook Tce, Ranelagh.<br/>Tullo, J., St Brendan's, Coolock.<br/>Warham, Wm., Williamstead, Belmont Terrace.<br/>Watson, J. F., Herbert Park, Ballsbridge.<br/>Whewell, Maj. Arthur, 60 Moyne Road.<br/>Wilkinson, George, Marie Ville, Appian Way.<br/>Williams, Alexander, RHA, 4 Hatch Road.<br/>Wilson, C. W., 80 Waterloo Road.<br/>Woods, Sir Robert, MB, FRCSI, 39 Merrion Sq.<br/>Wynne, Frank, 10 Heathfield Road, Terenure.</p> |  |       |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report for the year 1922*, pp 36-40.

<sup>i</sup> Members of the R.I.A.M. were those who subscribed 'not less than £1 per annum' to the academy and could attend general meetings, R.I.A.M. concerts and elect representatives to the governing body. These members included vice-presidents, governors, teaching staff, and former pupils of the R.I.A.M. as well as a variety of 'high society' figures in Ireland.  
<sup>ii</sup> All addresses given are in Dublin city or county, unless otherwise stated.

**Table 5b: List of members of the R.I.A.M., 1951**

| Annual Members <sup>1</sup>                                 | [A-M] | Annual Members  | [M-W] |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| Acton, Charles, 2, The Hill, Monkstown.                     |       | Marken, Miss A., 8 Upper Cherryfield Ave, Ranelagh.     |       |
| Beegan, Francis, 40 Cross Ave., Dun Laoghaire.              |       | Marken, Miss S., 8 Upper Cherryfield Ave, Ranelagh.     |       |
| Best, Dr. R. I., 57 Upper Leeson Street.                    |       | McArdle, Eamonn, 16 New Street, Skerries.               |       |
| Boydell, James, Ballybride, Shankill.                       |       | McCann, Rev. Fr. L., C.C., 85 Iona Rd., Glasnevin.      |       |
| Boydell, Miss E. M., 8 Raglan Road.                         |       | McCarthy, Peter, 33 Orwell Park, Rtaghar.               |       |
| Breatnach, Dr P., 66 Iona Rd, Glasnevin.                    |       | McEvoy, Arthur, 34 Charlemont Road, Clontarf.           |       |
| Breatnach, Miss N., 18 Hollybrook Rd, Clontarf.             |       | McGrath, Joseph, Cabinteely House, Caninteely.          |       |
| Breatnach, Sean, BL, 207 Griffith Avenue.                   |       | Miley, John, 4 Ailesbury Road.                          |       |
| Brennan, Joseph, Crinken House, Shankill.                   |       | <i>Mineral Waters Distributors, Ltd., Nassau Place.</i> |       |
| Bretland, Mrs L. A., Seapark, Malahide.                     |       | Morrison, Mrs G., 57 Cowper Road, Rathmines.            |       |
| Broderick, Frank, Kilbogget Hse, Cabinteely.                |       | Morrison, Miss S., ARIAM, 57 Cowper Road.               |       |
| Burgess, Christopher, 10 Cowper St., N. C. Road.            |       | Mulligan, Miss Myra, 15 Lower Fairview Avenue.          |       |
| Byrne, Miss E., 22 Kenilworth Pk, Harolds Cross.            |       | Murphy, Miss Agnes, Arthurstown, Co Wexford.            |       |
| Callery James, 43, Glandore Road, Griffith Avenue           |       | Nesbitt, George J., Bessborough, Kimmage Road East.     |       |
| Crampton, Mrs E., 18 Argyle Road, Donnybrook.               |       | O'Carroll, Miss May, 42 Haddington Road.                |       |
| Clarke, J. H., Inverclyde, Iona Park, Glasnevin.            |       | O'Donovan, John, 10 Upper Mount Pleasant Avenue.        |       |
| Corrigan, Miss E., Montpelier, Orwell Pk, Rathgar           |       | O' Donovan, Mrs Vera, 10 Upper Mt Pleasant Avenue.      |       |
| Costelloe, Matthew, 44 Haddington Road.                     |       | O'Hara, Mrs W. J., 19 Chancery Street.                  |       |
| Costelloe, Mrs M., 44 Haddington Road.                      |       | O'Keeffe, Miss N., 6 Kenilworth Road., Rathgar.         |       |
| Crean, Liam, 4 Beaumont Road, Drumcondra.                   |       | O'Leary, David, Seabank House, Malahide.                |       |
| Creedon, G. A., Brighton Road, Foxrock.                     |       | O'Leary, Diarmuid, Seabank House, Malahide.             |       |
| Cullen, Miss T., 1 Upr. Beechwood Ave, Ranelagh             |       | O'Leary, Miss Joan, Seabank House, Malahide.            |       |
| Dagg, T.S.C., MA, BL, LLB, 60 Waterloo Road.                |       | O'Leary, Miss Maud, Seabank House, Malahide.            |       |
| Dalton, Michael, PC, Palmerston Rd, Rathmines               |       | O'Reilly, John, 11 Lower Leeson Street.                 |       |
| Daly, Miss B., 2 St Lawrence Cottages, Howth.               |       | O'Reilly, Joseph, 11 Lower Leeson Street.               |       |
| Davin, Miss Mina, 39 Fitzwilliam Place.                     |       | O'Riordan, Brendan, 265 Blackhorse Ave, N. C. Road.     |       |
| Deale, Edgar M., 51 Lower Leeson Street.                    |       | O'Shea, Con, 144 Griffith Ave, Drumcondra.              |       |
| Dowling, J. G., 32 Belmont Gardens, Donnybrook              |       | O'Sullivan, Michael, 29 Leinster Road, Rathmines.       |       |
| Dowling, Mrs J. G., 32 Belmont Gardens, D'brook             |       | O'Toole, J. J., Catherine Street, Limerick.             |       |
| Engel, Francis, 12 Landsdowne Road.                         |       | Oulton, J. G., Clontarf Castle.                         |       |
| Flood, Justice, M., 27 Myrtle Pk, Dun Laoghaire.            |       | Payne, Benjamin, 8 Grove Park, Rathmines.               |       |
| Fogarty, Edward L., Yellow Walls Rd, Malahide.              |       | Quinlan, J., 135 Fortfield Road, Terenure.              |       |
| Foster, Maj. W. N., Lismara, Killiney.                      |       | Reddy, William, Parkhurst, Palmerston Park.             |       |
| Fraser, Mrs E., 65 Northumberland Road.                     |       | Redmond, Miss S., 37 Goldsmith Place, Phibsboro         |       |
| Gernon, Edward, 4 Shandon Drive, Phibsboro.                 |       | Reid, Noel, LLB, 51 Greenlea Road, Terenure.            |       |
| Gernon, Margaret, 4 Shandon Drive, Phibsboro.               |       | Ruddell, Mr, 'Llanabaer', Merton Road.                  |       |
| Gernon, Miss E., 4 Shandon Drive, Phibsboro.                |       | Ruddell, Mrs, 'Llanabaer', Merton Road.                 |       |
| Gernon, Patrick, 4 Shandon Drive, Phibsboro.                |       | Sheil, John J., 18 Bachelor's Walk.                     |       |
| Goldsborough, Miss J., Fethard, Co Tipperary.               |       | Shott, E. J., 26 Ailesbury Road.                        |       |
| Greene, Percy E., 71 Clonkeen Rd., Deansgrange.             |       | Smith, A. E., Sherlockstown, Sallins, Co. Kildare.      |       |
| Hartnell, Noel C., 21 Idrone Terrace, Blackrock.            |       | Smith, Hugh, 14 Blackheath Park, Clontarf.              |       |
| <i>Hibernian Fire &amp; General Insurance Co., Dame St.</i> |       | St Albans, Duchess of, Newtown Anner, Co Tipperary      |       |
| <i>Irish Glass Bottle Co., Charlotte Quay.</i>              |       | Starkie, Mrs W.J.M., 4 Landsdowne Road.                 |       |
| Kelly, Thomas V., Roebuck Ave., Blackrock.                  |       | <b>Students' Musical Union, RIAM.</b>                   |       |
| <i>Lamb Brothers Ltd., Inchicore.</i>                       |       | Ticher, Mrs E., 16 Zion Road, Rathgar.                  |       |
| Larchet, J. F., Mus.D., FRIAM, 8 St Mary's Road.            |       | Vanacek, Jaroslav, 27 Westland Row.                     |       |
| Larchet, Mrs Madeleine, FRIAM, 8 St Mary's Rd.              |       | Viani, Maestro Cav. Adelio, FRIAM, 18 St Mary's Rd.     |       |
| Leahy, Mrs C., 8 Landsdowne Road.                           |       | Walsh, Mrs E.W., 65 Northumberland Road.                |       |
| Lennon, Mrs T., 26 Lower Abbey Street.                      |       | Walshe, Timothy, 42 Upper O'Connell Street.             |       |
| Lyon, Harvey, 86 St Lawrence Road, Clontarf.                |       | Waterstone, Mrs. E. C. C., Fonthill, Palmerston.        |       |
| MacNevin, Rev. Dr R., 83 Marlborough Street.                |       | Watt, W. F., Cliff House, Dunmore East, Co Waterford    |       |
| Maguire, Miss Irene, 303 North Circular Road.               |       | Wright, Miss Margaret, 53 Beechwood Ave., Ranelagh      |       |
| Maher, John, 69 Grosvenor Road.                             |       | Wright, Miss Mary, 53 Beechwood Ave., Ranelagh.         |       |
| Marcantonio, L., 8 Upper Cherryfield Avenue,                |       | Wright, Miss Patricia, 53 Beechwood Ave., Ranelagh.     |       |
| Ranelagh  |       | Wright, Miss Sara, 53 Beechwood Ave., Ranelagh.         |       |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report for the year 1951*, pp 23-6.

There was also a small number of 'life members' who paid a one-off £20 subscription rather than an annual subscription of £1. These were: Mrs Charles Acton, Brian Boydell, Mrs Rita Broderick, Eric R. J. Crowe, H. M. Dockrell, T.D., A. T. Lee, Mrs Rhona Marshall, Matthew McCabe and Joseph Wilson. All addresses given are in Dublin city or county, unless otherwise stated.

## APPENDIX E

Numbers detailed in census reports 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911; customs duties on musical instruments, gramophone records etc 1941-51; excise duties on 'entertainments', 1946-51; licence fees, advertising receipts & customs duties on wireless sets, 1925-51

**Table 1:**  
Numbers of those at work in various music related industries or services  
- in the area of the Irish Free State only for each of the years 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911<sup>i</sup>

| Industry or service category as per census publications  | 1881         |            |              | 1891       |            |              | 1901       |            |              | 1911       |            |              |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
|  | Males        | Females    | Total        | Males      | Females    | Total        | Males      | Females    | Total        | Males      | Females    | Total        |
| <i>I: Persons engaged in Professional Occupations:</i>   |              |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |
| 7. Artists: Musician; Music Master/Mistress  | 1,073        | 432        | 1,505        | 925        | 640        | 1,565        | 809        | 811        | 1,620        | 681        | 680        | 1,361        |
| Art, Music Theatre-service etc   | 73           | 26         | 99           | 53         | 15         | 68           | 67         | 23         | 90           | 123        | 45         | 168          |
| <b>Total number [available in census reports] of those employed as professional musicians etc</b>    | <b>1,146</b> | <b>458</b> | <b>1,604</b> | <b>978</b> | <b>655</b> | <b>1,633</b> | <b>876</b> | <b>834</b> | <b>1,710</b> | <b>804</b> | <b>725</b> | <b>1,529</b> |
| <i>V.9: Persons working &amp; dealing in books, prints &amp; maps</i>                                |              |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |
| 1. Books: Music – Publisher, seller, printer   | 45           | 8          | 53           | 14         | 8          | 22           | 9          | 3          | 12           | 20         | 5          | 25           |
| <i>V.10: Persons working &amp; dealing in machines &amp; implements</i>                              |              |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |            |            |              |
| 6. Musical instruments: Musical instrument-maker, dealer   | 86           | 1          | 87           | 152        | 6          | 158          | 159        | 3          | 162          | 160        | 3          | 163          |
| <b>Total number [available in census reports] of those employed in the 'music' industrial sector</b> | <b>131</b>   | <b>9</b>   | <b>140</b>   | <b>166</b> | <b>14</b>  | <b>180</b>   | <b>168</b> | <b>6</b>   | <b>174</b>   | <b>180</b> | <b>8</b>   | <b>188</b>   |

Source: *Census of population, 1926.*

<sup>i</sup> The figures contained within the 1926 census publication relative to the years 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 refer only to the area of the island of Ireland then known as the Irish Free State, later Éire or also as the twenty-six counties, and now known as the Republic of Ireland

**Table 2: Net receipts from customs duties on musical instruments and parts, gramophones and records imported into the Irish state, 1941/2-50/1**

| Year    | Musical instruments | Piano parts | Gramophones & records | Total customs duties | Total duties on musical instruments etc | % of total customs duties |
|---------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------|
|         | £                   | £           | £                     | £                    | £                                       | %                         |
| 1941/42 | 5,126               | 0           | 1,587                 | 11,026,127           | 6,713                                   | 0.06                      |
| 1942/43 | 2,543               | 0           | 2,413                 | 10,718,890           | 4,956                                   | 0.05                      |
| 1943/44 | 843                 | 0           | 1,498                 | 11,272,418           | 2,341                                   | 0.02                      |
| 1944/45 | 993                 | 1           | 1,537                 | 11,343,096           | 2,531                                   | 0.02                      |
| 1945/46 | 3,604               | 0           | 1,303                 | 12,905,059           | 4,907                                   | 0.04                      |
| 1946/47 | 9,439               | 2           | 1,992                 | 16,707,943           | 11,433                                  | 0.07                      |
| 1947/48 | 22,032              | 0           | 2,787                 | 21,932,347           | 24,819                                  | 0.10                      |
| 1948/49 | 14,641              | 3           | 2,731                 | 23,933,510           | 17,375                                  | 0.07                      |
| 1949/50 | 22,298              | 31          | 4,998                 | 25,206,855           | 27,327                                  | 0.11                      |
| 1950/51 | 31,497              | 41          | 6,487                 | 27,272,439           | 38,028                                  | 0.14                      |

Source: *Annual report of the revenue commissioners, 1947-51.*

**Table 3: Net receipts from excise duties on 'entertainments', 1946/7-50/1 \***

| Year    | Dances  | Cinemas   | Other   | Total excise duties | Total ents duties | % of total excise Duties | Dances as % of total excise duties |
|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
|         | £       | £         | £       | £                   | £                 | approx.%                 | approx.%                           |
| 1946/47 | †15,601 | 524,100   | 101,648 | 9,657,032           | 641,349           | 6.6                      | 0.2                                |
| 1947/48 | -137    | 791,721   | 96,250  | 11,036,932          | 887,834           | 8.0                      | 0.0                                |
| 1948/49 | 297     | 997,950   | 131,296 | 12,716,150          | ‡1,129,543        | 8.9                      | 0.0                                |
| 1949/50 | §76,621 | 999,154   | 158,544 | 12,638,398          | 1,234,319         | 9.8                      | 0.6                                |
| 1950/51 | 92,462  | 1,026,309 | 158,684 | 13,197,429          | 1,277,455         | 9.7                      | 0.7                                |

Source: *Annual report of the revenue commissioners, 1947-51.*

\* Under the Finance (New Duties) Act, 1916, excise duty was imposed on all payments for admission to any 'entertainment', which included any exhibition, performance, amusement, game or sport to which persons were admitted as spectators or members of an audience for payment. Payments for admission to entertainments promoted for charitable, philanthropic or educational purposes were in certain circumstances exempted from liability to duty.

† The entertainments duty chargeable on payments for admission to balls and dances was revoked with effect from 1 August 1946.

‡ Certain entertainments consisting mainly of personal performances which had been exempted in 1932 were again made liable to the duty from 1 June 1948. Exemptions enjoyed by patent theatres were continued.

§ From 1 July 1949, entertainments duty was once again charged on any ball or dance to which persons were admitted, whether as spectators or participants. The duty was, however, not chargeable on entertainments held in towns which had, according to the latest census, a population of less than five hundred.

**Table 4: Net receipts from customs duties on wireless telegraphy apparatus, licence fees and advertising, 1925-51**

| Year *  | Wireless telegraphy apparatus † | Advertising fees etc | Licence Fees  | No. of licences issued ‡ |
|---------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|         | £                               | £                    | £             |                          |
| 1925/26 | -                               | -                    | 7,823 §       | 7,823                    |
| 1926/27 | 20,019                          | 204                  | 9,684         | c.22,000                 |
| 1927/28 | 26,578                          | 101                  | 12,071        | c.24,000                 |
| 1928/29 | 27,178                          | 50                   | 13,411        | X                        |
| 1929/30 | 30,565                          | 119                  | 13,050        | c.26,000                 |
| 1930/31 | 34,663                          | 509                  | 13,408        | X                        |
| 1931/32 | 43,347                          | 1,329                | 14,725        | 28,645                   |
| 1932/33 | 64,682 **                       | 220                  | 17,296        | 33,083                   |
| 1933/34 | 71,728                          | 22,827               | 26,497        | c.50,500                 |
| 1934/35 | 88,248 ††                       | 13,225               | 33,847 ††     | c.66,200                 |
| 1935/36 | 87,063                          | 23,438               | 43,861        | c.87,200                 |
| 1936/37 | X                               | c.27,000             | c.52,000      | 103,320                  |
| 1937/38 | X                               | c.35,000             | c.70,000      | 139,534                  |
| 1938/39 | X                               | c.35,000             | c.72,500      | 166,275 §§               |
| 1939/40 | X                               | c.20,000             | X             | 182,694                  |
| 1940/41 | X                               | c.16,000             | c.109,500 *** | 183,303                  |
| 1941/42 | 26,962                          | c.2,000 †††          | c.109,000     | 174,550                  |
| 1942/43 | 27,775                          | c.2,500              | c.106,000     | 167,671                  |
| 1943/44 | 9,130                           | c.3,500              | c.109,000     | 172,042                  |
| 1944/45 | 8,274                           | c.3,700              | c.107,000     | 170,514                  |
| 1945/46 | 39,733                          | c.15,000             | c.109,000     | c. 175,000               |
| 1946/47 | 79,963 †††                      | c.41,100             | c.112,500     | 186,727                  |
| 1947/48 | 157,202                         | c.64,000             | c.122,000     | 261,321                  |
| 1948/49 | 93,555                          | c.42,000             | c.169,000     | 280,270                  |
| 1949/50 | 70,331                          | c.47,000             | c.181,000     | 288,495                  |
| 1950/51 | 27,903                          | 45,325               | c.193,395     | c.310,000 §§§            |

Source: Departmental file TAOIS/S3532A (N.A.I); *Annual report of the revenue commissioners, 1947-51*; *Dáil Éireann deb., 1926-51*.

X Figures not available

\* Most of the figures given refer to the financial year ending 31 March.

† These figures include revenue paid on commercial imports and that paid by the government itself for importations for the state including wireless apparatus for the army and the department of posts and telegraphs itself. See *Irish Times*, 23 Apr. 1927; see also *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xix, 2273 (11 May 1927) for an example of a parliamentary debate on this issue.

‡ This figure includes new wireless licenses and those issued as annual licence renewals, as required by law, during the year in question. It must be borne in mind that licence evasion was prevalent.

§ The basic licence fee introduced in March 1925 was £1 but this was reduced to the same rate as in Britain, 10s. in August 1926.

\*\* This figure included £12,000 from customs duty on the components of the high power station at Athlone opened in 1932.

†† The revenue from customs duties on wireless imports was not reported in *Dáil Éireann* from 1934 onwards.

††† On 1 October 1934, £5 licence fees for hotels, restaurants etc, and the £1 licence fee for schools and other institutions were abolished and an all-round licence fee of 10 shillings introduced.

§§ This was about 1/17 of the population and forty per cent of these were resident in the Dublin area.

\*\*\* The licence fee was raised from 10s. to 12s. 6d. in June 1940.

††† Cessation of sponsored programmes.

†††† Minor changes in duties as of 18 May 1946.

§§§ The exact figure for the number of licences held in June 1951 was 315, 231 according to Seamus Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the broadcasting service' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ire.*, p.198.

**APPENDIX F**  
**Musicians in independent Ireland: details from census reports 1926, 1936, 1946 & 1951**

**Table 1: Numbers of musicians in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Total population of Ireland</b> | <b>Total number of musicians *</b> | <b>Number of male musicians</b> | <i>As % of total no. of musicians</i> | <b>Number of female musicians</b> | <i>As % of total no. of musicians</i> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1926        | 2,971,992                          | 857                                | 492                             | 57                                    | 365                               | 43                                    |
| 1936        | 2,968,420                          | 662                                | 468                             | 71                                    | 194                               | 29                                    |
| 1946        | 2,955,107                          | 710                                | 526                             | 74                                    | 184                               | 26                                    |
| 1951        | 2,960,593                          | 810                                | 648                             | 80                                    | 162                               | 20                                    |

Source: *Census of population* for the years 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

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\* These figures include those 'out of work', retired, in hospitals or in other institutions at the time that the census was taken.

**Table 2: Male and female musicians in each county in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Province            | County           | 1926 |        |       | 1936 |        |       | 1951 |        |       |
|---------------------|------------------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|
|                     |                  | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Leinster            | <i>Carlow</i>    | 3    | 3      | 6     | 0    | 0      | 0     | 1    | 1      | 2     |
|                     | <i>Dublin</i>    | 231  | 158    | 389   | 223  | 90     | 313   | 322  | 86     | 408   |
|                     | <i>Kildare</i>   | 11   | 8      | 19    | 11   | 2      | 13    | 10   | 2      | 12    |
|                     | <i>Kilkenny</i>  | 8    | 3      | 11    | 7    | 3      | 10    | 5    | 5      | 10    |
|                     | <i>Laois</i>     | 3    | 5      | 8     | 11   | 2      | 13    | 3    | 0      | 3     |
|                     | <i>Longford</i>  | 0    | 8      | 8     | 3    | 0      | 3     | 4    | 0      | 4     |
|                     | <i>Louth</i>     | 12   | 13     | 25    | 12   | 8      | 20    | 7    | 7      | 14    |
|                     | <i>Meath</i>     | 7    | 3      | 10    | 9    | 1      | 10    | 10   | 0      | 10    |
|                     | <i>Offaly</i>    | 5    | 5      | 10    | 5    | 0      | 5     | 3    | 3      | 6     |
|                     | <i>Westmeath</i> | 6    | 2      | 8     | 3    | 2      | 5     | 4    | 1      | 5     |
|                     | <i>Wexford</i>   | 4    | 8      | 12    | 6    | 4      | 10    | 4    | 3      | 7     |
|                     | <i>Wicklow</i>   | 6    | 8      | 14    | 4    | 7      | 11    | 7    | 3      | 10    |
| Munster             | <i>Clare</i>     | 1    | 5      | 6     | 5    | 1      | 6     | 4    | 1      | 5     |
|                     | <i>Cork</i>      | 75   | 43     | 118   | 56   | 26     | 82    | 58   | 14     | 72    |
|                     | <i>Kerry</i>     | 7    | 7      | 14    | 21   | 6      | 27    | 11   | 3      | 14    |
|                     | <i>Limerick</i>  | 27   | 19     | 46    | 26   | 7      | 33    | 56   | 3      | 59    |
|                     | <i>Tipperary</i> | 17   | 20     | 37    | 10   | 5      | 15    | 32   | 7      | 39    |
|                     | <i>Waterford</i> | 15   | 8      | 23    | 14   | 5      | 19    | 4    | 2      | 6     |
| Connacht            | <i>Galway</i>    | 13   | 6      | 19    | 5    | 2      | 7     | 15   | 5      | 20    |
|                     | <i>Leitrim</i>   | 0    | 1      | 1     | 0    | 1      | 1     | 9    | 1      | 10    |
|                     | <i>Mayo</i>      | 11   | 7      | 18    | 14   | 7      | 21    | 33   | 6      | 39    |
|                     | <i>Roscommon</i> | 10   | 6      | 16    | 7    | 0      | 7     | 14   | 1      | 15    |
|                     | <i>Sligo</i>     | 11   | 5      | 16    | 6    | 1      | 7     | 5    | 1      | 6     |
| Ulster<br>(part of) | <i>Cavan</i>     | 2    | 3      | 5     | 3    | 2      | 5     | 3    | 0      | 3     |
|                     | <i>Donegal</i>   | 7    | 5      | 12    | 7    | 8      | 15    | 18   | 6      | 24    |
|                     | <i>Monaghan</i>  | 0    | 6      | 6     | 0    | 4      | 4     | 6    | 1      | 7     |
|                     | <b>Totals</b>    | 492  | 365    | 857   | 468  | 194    | 662   | 648  | 162    | 810   |

Source: Census of population for the years 1926, 1936 and 1951. No relevant information available in the 1946 census publications.

**Table 3: Numbers of musicians at work in various industries or services in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Industry or service category as per census publications  | 1926  |         |       | 1936  |         |       | 1946  |         |       | 1951  |         |       |
|--|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|  | Males | Females | Total |
| <b>Professions:</b><br>Musicians (organists etc)   | 40    | 58      | 98    | 0     | 68      | 68    | 42    | 57      | 99    | 41    | 39      | 80    |
| <i>As % of total number of musicians</i>   | 8%    | 16%     | 11%   | 0%    | 35%     | 10%   | 8%    | 31%     | 14%   | 6%    | 24%     | 10%   |
| <b>Other professional services, including trade, labour and other associations:</b><br>Musicians | 19    | 11      | 30    |       |         |       |       |         |       |       |         |       |
| <i>As % of total number of musicians</i>   | 4%    | 3%      | 4%    |       |         |       |       |         |       |       |         |       |
| <b>Entertainments &amp; Sports:</b><br>Cinemas, Theatres, etc* - Musicians                       | 198   | 139     | 337   | 126   | 32      | 158   | 187   | 56      | 243   | 323   | 71      | 394   |
| Other Entertainments & Sport - Musicians   | 149   | 81      | 230   | 201   | 57      | 258   | 197   | 40      | 237   | 215   | 31      | 246   |
| <i>As % of total number of musicians</i>   | 71%   | 60%     | 66%   | 70%   | 46%     | 63%   | 73%   | 52%     | 68%   | 83%   | 63%     | 79%   |
| <b>Total number of musicians [100%]</b>  | 492   | 365     | 857   | 468   | 194     | 662   | 526   | 184     | 710   | 648   | 162     | 810   |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

\* The title of this particular industrial category was 'Pictures Palaces, theatres' in the 1926 census publications and 'Cinemas, theatres, film producing etc' in the 1936 and 1946 publications. In the 1951 census publications however, the category was divided into 'Cinemas and film producing, etc' and 'Broadcasting, theatres & related services'. Details of the numbers of musicians engaged in these areas were given for the latter only.

Table 4: Occupational status of musicians in Ireland in the period 1922-1951

| Occupational status              | 1926  |         |       |     | 1936  |         |       |     | 1946  |         |       |     | 1951  |         |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|
|                                  | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total |
| Employees                        | 323   | 260     | 583   | 68  | 259   | 127     | 386   | 58  | X     | X       | X     | X   | 421   | X       |       |
| Self-employed                    | 117   | 66      | 183   | 21  | 148   | 48      | 196   | 30  | X     | X       | X     | X   | 174   | X       |       |
| Unemployed                       | 37    | 25      | 62    | 7   | 51    | 13      | 64    | 10  | X     | X       | X     | X   | 28    | X       |       |
| Employers                        | 3     | 0       | 3     |     | 0     | 2       | 2     |     | X     | X       | X     | X   | 18    | X       |       |
| Assisting relatives              | 2     | 7       | 9     | 4   | 3     | 4       | 7     | 2   | X     | X       | X     | X   | 2     | X       |       |
| Others                           | 10    | 7       | 17    |     | 7     | 0       | 7     |     | X     | X       | X     | X   | 5     | X       |       |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b> | 492   | 365     | 857   | 100 | 468   | 194     | 662   | 100 | 526   | 184     | 710   | 100 | 648   | 162     | 810   |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926, 1936 and 1951.  
 No relevant information available in the 1946 census publications.

**Table 5: Conjugal status of musicians in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Conjugal status                  | 1926       |            |            | 1936       |            |            | 1946       |            |            | 1951       |            |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                  | Males      | Females    | Total      |
| Married                          | 238        | X          | X          | 221        | X          | X          | X          | X          | X          | 365        | X          | X          |
| Single                           | 232        | X          | X          | 224        | X          | X          | X          | X          | X          | 269        | X          | X          |
| Widowed                          | 22         | X          | X          | 23         | X          | X          | X          | X          | X          | 14         | X          | X          |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b> | <b>492</b> | <b>365</b> | <b>857</b> | <b>468</b> | <b>194</b> | <b>662</b> | <b>526</b> | <b>184</b> | <b>710</b> | <b>648</b> | <b>162</b> | <b>810</b> |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

**Table 6: Stated religion of musicians in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Religion                         | 1926  |         |       |     | 1936  |         |       |     |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|
|                                  | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total | %   |
| Catholic                         | 364   | 288     | 652   | 76  | 377   | 135     | 512   | 77  |
| Protestant Episcopalians         | 99    | 61      | 160   | 19  | 74    | 44      | 118   | 18  |
| Presbyterians                    | 6     | 4       | 10    | 5   | 3     | 7       | 10    | 5   |
| Methodists                       | 5     | 3       | 8     |     | 0     | 1       | 1     |     |
| Jews                             | 11    | 8       | 19    |     | 7     | 6       | 13    |     |
| Other religion                   | 7     | 1       | 8     |     | 7     | 1       | 8     |     |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b> | 492   | 365     | 857   | 100 | 468   | 194     | 662   | 100 |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926 and 1936.  
 No relevant information available in either the 1946 or 1951 publications.

**Table 7: Stated place of birth of musicians in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Place of birth                     | 1926       |            |            |            | 1936       |            |            |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                    | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          |
| Saorstát Éireann/ Éire/26 counties | 315        | 297        | <b>612</b> | <b>71</b>  | 316        | 164        | <b>480</b> | <b>73</b>  |
| Northern Ireland/ 6 counties       | 30         | 14         | <b>44</b>  | <b>5</b>   | 28         | 7          | <b>35</b>  | <b>5</b>   |
| England, Scotland, Wales*          | 122        | 42         | <b>164</b> | <b>19</b>  | 98         | 17         | <b>115</b> | <b>17</b>  |
| United States of America           | 1          | 4          | <b>5</b>   |            | 2          | 1          | <b>3</b>   |            |
| Germany                            | 9          | 0          | <b>9</b>   | <b>5</b>   | 0          | 1          | <b>1</b>   | <b>5</b>   |
| India                              | 4          | 4          | <b>8</b>   |            | 0          | 2          | <b>2</b>   |            |
| Other countries †                  | 11         | 4          | <b>15</b>  |            | 24         | 2          | <b>26</b>  |            |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b>   | <b>492</b> | <b>365</b> | <b>857</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>468</b> | <b>194</b> | <b>662</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926 and 1936.  
 No relevant information available in either the 1946 or 1951 publications.

\* Including Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

† Including France, Russia, and other British Dominions.

**Table 8: Musicians and the Irish language in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Spoken language                  | 1926  |         |       | 1936  |         |       | 1946  |         |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|                                  | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total |
| Irish speakers                   | 32    | 40      | 72    | 28    | 18      | 46    | 64    | 22      | 86    |
| Non-Irish speakers               | 460   | 325     | 785   | 440   | 176     | 616   | 462   | 162     | 624   |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b> | 492   | 365     | 857   | 468   | 194     | 662   | 526   | 184     | 710   |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926, 1936 and 1946.  
No relevant information available in the 1951 census publications.

\* The 1926 census differentiates between 'Irish speakers only', 'non-Irish speakers' and 'Irish & English speakers'. The subsequent census publications detail only 'Irish speakers' and 'non-Irish speakers', the category of 'Irish speakers' including those with any knowledge of Irish and another language, usually English.

**Table 9: Numbers of musicians in various age categories in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Age category                     | 1926       |            |            | 1936       |            |            | 1946       |            |            | 1951       |            |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                  | Males      | Females    | Total      |
| 14-19 years                      | 21         | X          |            | 13         | X          |            |            |            |            | 16         | X          |            |
| 20-24 years                      | 72         | X          |            | 49         | X          |            |            |            |            | 79         | X          |            |
| 25-29 years                      | 86         | X          |            | 88         | X          |            |            |            |            | 103        | X          |            |
| 30-34 years                      | 46         | X          |            | 72         | X          |            |            |            |            | 91         | X          |            |
| 35-44 years                      | 107        | X          |            | 108        | X          |            |            |            |            | 175        | X          |            |
| 45-54 years                      | 75         | X          |            | 67         | X          |            |            |            |            | 108        | X          |            |
| 55-64 years                      | 58         | X          |            | 46         | X          |            |            |            |            | 53         | X          |            |
| 65 years and over                | 26         | X          |            | 25         | X          |            |            |            |            | 19         | X          |            |
| <b>Total number of musicians</b> | <b>492</b> | <b>365</b> | <b>857</b> | <b>468</b> | <b>194</b> | <b>662</b> | <b>526</b> | <b>184</b> | <b>710</b> | <b>648</b> | <b>162</b> | <b>810</b> |

Source: *Census of population* for each of the years 1926, 1936 and 1951.  
 No relevant information available in the 1946 census publications.

X Numbers unavailable.

## APPENDIX G

Correspondence between prominent Irish musicians and J. J. Walsh, 1924;  
inaugural state radio programme, 1926; sample radio programmes 1928 & 1938

### Letter from Irish musicians to the postmaster-general, J. J. Walsh, 4 Feb. 1924 \*

A chara,

At a meeting of representative musicians held in Dublin on Saturday, 2nd inst., to discuss broadcasting in Ireland, it was intimated that there was a possibility that no broadcasting station would be established in Dublin, or that if one were set up it would be under a control that would not inspire confidence.

This possibility gave rise to a feeling of alarm, and it is desired, therefore, that the matter should at once be brought before you with a view to obtaining some assurance that, in this matter of broadcasting, Ireland will have equal facilities of broadcasting her music, arts, etc., as every other country.

We are of the opinion that the only means by which our native music, art literature, drama, etc., can be given equal opportunities of reaching other countries is by a broadcasting station being set up in Dublin, under the control of Saorstát Éireann, and we appeal to you as Postmaster-General to use every influence at your disposal to guard the interests of our native talent in this matter.

We feel confident that the serious injury which would be inflicted by Ireland being overlooked, or by an unsympathetic control, need only be brought before you, in order to enlist your esteemed help, and that in your hands this important matter will receive that care and attention, and able treatment that has characterised all your public actions since you have been called upon to fulfil your exalted position.

[Signed]

Vincent O'Brien

G. Hewson, Mus. Doc.

J. F. Larchet, Mus. Doc.

Brendan Rogers

T. F. Marchant

T. H. Weaving

Arthur Darley

C. P. Fitzgerald

Harold R. White

Denis McCullough

Louis O'Brien

J. Clarke Barry

D. J. Delaney

M. J. Lynch

John Moody

F. G. Mooney, Acting Hon. Secretary

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\* Source: *Irish Times*, 13 Feb. 1924.

## Reply from J. J. Walsh to the representative body of musicians †

A chara,

In reply to your letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, I am happy to give you my assurance that I laid it down from the outset as an essential of any broadcasting scheme here, that whatever broadcasting should be done by a distinct Irish broadcasting station, under a control which would ensure the fullest use of Irish artistes and the fullest expression of Irish cultural activity, and the fact that the Broadcasting Committee in its interim report recommended the establishment of a separate station here was, I think, in no small measure due to the evidence given by myself and the officers of the Post Office.

I believe that broadcasting, although its progress here will be rather more slow than anywhere else, holds tremendous possibilities for the future, and that its potentiality in strengthening and promulgating Irish national culture is hardly yet realised by most people here. I should regard it as absolutely fatal from every point of view if a station were set up here not under preponderatingly Irish-Ireland control, and as even worse if no stations were set up at all and we were left at the mercy of the British Broadcasting Company for our broadcasting programme.

And the scheme which I recommended to the Dáil was framed from that point of view, and, as those interested in the suggested company were practically all well-known Irish-Irelanders, it safeguarded the essential principles which both you and I have in common. Whatever amendment may be made in that scheme as a result of the final report of the Broadcasting Committee, I have no fear that any scheme which does provide for a separate station under Irish-Ireland control will be considered by the Dáil.

At the same time, the issue is by no means as secure as I should like it to be. In the mass of press correspondence on broadcasting which has taken place in these last months the Irish-Ireland element has been absolutely silent, and a clear field has been given to those who, not caring a *thráneen* about Ireland, want only to receive London and Paris, and see no necessity for an Irish station, and to those who, distrusting their own countrymen, want the concession to be given to one of the well-established English companies.

The danger of this is accentuated by the fact that the Broadcasting Committee called for the immediate issue of licenses in advance of the setting up of an Irish station. That, of course, means that everybody who buys a set will have grown accustomed to the English programme, and will not want to have Irish programmes substituted, and it will strengthen the agitation in favour of allowing broadcasting to be used as a means of further Anglicising this country.

You make take it, however, that the policy of the Post Office has from the beginning been governed by the same considerations which you urge, that I have fought every suggestion which tended to hamper either the establishment of a separate Irish station or the effective Irish-Ireland control of that station, and that I shall continue to fight any such suggestion.

Mise, le meas,  
James J. Walsh,  
Aire an Phuist.

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† *Irish Times*, 13 Feb. 1924.

### Inaugural state radio programme, 2RN, 2 January 1926.<sup>‡</sup>

|          |   |                               |
|----------|---|-------------------------------|
| 7.45 pm  | Inauguration speech   | Dr Douglas Hyde               |
| 8.00 pm  | ‘Irish Fantasia, no. 1’ (Brase)   | Army No.1 Band                |
| 8.15 pm  | Amhráin Gaedhilge/Gaelic songs:<br>‘An goirtín eornan’, ‘Brighid gheal bhan’, ‘Cill Mhuire’.  | Seamus Clandillon             |
| 8.25 pm  | Violin solo (Irish airs):<br>‘O’Donnell abú’, ‘Savourneen deelish’, ‘The west’s awake’.   | Arthur Darley                 |
| 8.35 pm  | Songs:<br>‘Down by the sally gardens’ (Hughes),<br>‘I wish I were on yonder hill’, ‘The minstrel boy’<br>(arrangement by Hubert Rooney).                            | Joan Burke                    |
| 8.45 pm  | Harp solo:<br>‘Battle hymn’, ‘Go where glory waits thee’,<br>‘Avenge and bright’.   | Annie Fagan                   |
| 8.55 pm  | ‘Lament for youth’ (Larchet), ‘Molly on the shore’ (Grainger)   | Army No.1 Band                |
| 9.05 pm  | Songs:<br>‘The willow tree’ (Boosey ed.),<br>‘The bard of Armagh’, ‘Turn ye to me’ (old Gaelic air).  | Joseph O’Mara                 |
| 9.15 pm  | Irish pipes:<br>‘The blackbird’ (air), ‘The blackbird’ (dance time),<br>‘The walls of Liscarroll (double jig),<br>‘The green mountain’ (reel), ‘Dunphy’s hornpipe’. | James Ennis &<br>Liam Andrews |
| 9.25 pm  | Amhráin Gaedhilge/Gaelic songs:<br>‘An beinsín Luachra’ ‘Cois Abba Móire’,<br>‘Caoine Cill Cáis’.   | Maighréad Ní Annagáin         |
| 9.35 pm  | Piano solo:<br>‘Nocturne in G, no.12’ (Field), ‘Polonaise in E flat’ (Chopin).  | Dina Copeman                  |
| 9.45 pm  | Songs:<br>‘Love thee, dearest’ (Moore), ‘Little Mary Cassidy’<br>(Somerville Cramer).   | J. C. Doyle                   |
| 9.55 pm  | Violin solo:<br>‘Romance’ in D (Wolff), ‘Boree (Moffatt)  | Arthur Darley                 |
| 10.05 pm | Weather report  |                               |
| 10.10 pm | Choir:<br>‘Sanctus’ & ‘Benedictus’ from <i>Missa Papae Marcelli</i><br>(Palestrina), ‘Regina Coeli’ (Aichenger)   | Conductor: Dr V. O’Brien      |
| 10.20 pm | ‘Prelude’ & ‘Liebestod’ from <i>Tristan und Isolde</i><br>(Wagner), ‘The Solder’s Song’.  | Army No.1 Band                |

<sup>‡</sup> Sources: *Irish Independent*, 1 Jan. 1926; *Irish Times*, 2 Jan. 1926. All musical descriptions, titles of musical works and details of composers and/or arrangements used are as given in these newspaper reports. The piano accompanist was Lieutenant Arthur Duff of the army school of music.

Sample radio programmes for Thursday, 10 May 1928 <sup>§</sup>

**2RN Dublin:**

**1.30-2.00 pm:** Stock Exchange list; weather forecast; Gramophone record selection  
**6.00 pm:** Gramophone records; **6.15 pm:** 'Uair i dTír na nÓg' (Hour in the Land of the Youth): Gertrude Quinn, Patrick Kirwan, Ann Penballow; **7.00 pm:** Gramophone records; **7.10 pm:** News; **7.30 pm:** French: Mademoiselle Guidicelli; **7.45 pm:** History talk: Seamus Mac Cathmhaoil; **8.00 pm:** Gerard Crofts (tenor): 'The ploughman' (words, anon.; music, J. M. Crofts); 'The wayfarer' (words, P. Pearse; music, J. M. Crofts); 'How dear to me the hour when daylight dies' (words, Moore; music, J. M. Crofts); 'The leprechaun' (words, M.C. McDowell; music, J. M. Crofts); **8.15 pm:** Station orchestra; **8.35 pm:** The Dublin Repertory Society: 'Grey Ash' (L. Thornbrer) – A radio play in one act; **9.00 pm:** Jack Collins (tenor): 'Has sorrow thy young days jaded' (Moore); 'My heart's first home' (Wallace); 'Soft and pure' (Flotow); **9.15 pm:** Mick Browne and his band; **10.30 pm:** News

**2LO London and 5XX Daventry:**

**10.15 am:** Religious service; **10.30 am** Time; weather; **11.00 am:** Gramophone records; **12.00 noon:** The Gersham Parkington Quintet; Maud Nelson (contralto); **1.00 pm:** Gramophone records; **2.30 pm:** Talk: Out of doors from week to week: Eric Parker - Spring Butterflies; **3.00 pm:** Evensong from Westminster Abbey; **3.45 pm:** Talk: The Dog in the home: Miss Nancy Rose – The Puppy; **4.00 pm:** Fred Kitchen's Orchestra; **5.00 pm:** Organ Recital: Pattman; **5.15 pm:** Children; **6.00 pm:** Agriculture bulletin; Market prices; **6.20 pm:** Music; **6.30 pm:** Time; weather; news; **6.45 pm:** Talk: Philip Mercer-Wright - 'An eye-witness account of the installation of the Knights of the Bath at Westminster Abbey'; **7.00 pm:** Francis Toy: 'Music in the theatre'; **7.15 pm:** Chopin studies played by Solomon (Piano); **7.25 pm:** Talk: Sir Henry Strakosch - 'Financial problems and the League'; **7.45 pm:** Sketch in one act by William Pollack; **8.30 pm:** Duets for two pianofortes: C. Pollard and Isabella Gray; **9.00 pm:** News; **9.15 pm:** Talk: Vernon Bartlett – 'The way of the world'; **9.30 pm:** Shipping forecast; **9.35 pm:** Charlot's hour; **10.35 pm-12 midnight:** Dance music

**5GB Daventry experimental:**

**3.00 pm:** Bournemouth Municipal Symphony Orchestra (50 players with Tom Bromley on piano); **4.30 pm:** Lozells Picture House Orchestra with James Doherty (baritone) & Frank Newman (organ); **5.45 pm:** Children; **6.30 pm:** Time, news; **6.45 pm:** BBC Dance Orchestra; **7.00 pm:** 'The mastersingers', Act I; **8.15 pm:** Folk songs: Harry Hopewell (baritone); Recital: Gladys Ward; Duets for two cornets: Richard Merriman & Ernest Middleton; Piano: Wolseley Charles; **9.15 pm:** National Orchestra of Wales with Dorothy Bennett (soprano); **10.00 pm:** Weather; news; **10.15-11.15 pm:** 'The sons of Tiadatha' – Epic of the Great War by Owen Ruttled: Birmingham Studio Orchestra and Chorus.

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<sup>§</sup> *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1928. All descriptions, titles of programmes and of works performed and details of authors, composers &/or arrangements used are as given in these newspaper schedules.

**2RN radio programme to European stations, Thursday, 17 March 1938 \*\***

**8.00 – 9.00 pm:**

Irish radio orchestra conducted by Lieut. D. P. O'Hara & vocal quartet of Violet Pearson (soprano), Máirín Fenning (contralto), Robert McCullagh (tenor), Sam Mooney (baritone):

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Orchestra &amp; quartet</b> | National Anthem  |
|                                | 'Mo thír' (march, arr. Rogers)   |
| <b>Orchestra only</b>          | 'The wearing of the green'; National marches (arr. V. O'Brien): 'The eagle's whistle'; 'Óró 'sé do bheatha bhaile'; 'Fianna marches'.                |
| <b>Orchestra &amp; quartet</b> | The spirit of the nation:<br>'Step together', 'Three thousand miles away',<br>'A shamrock from the Irish shore', 'O the sight entrancing' (Stanford) |
| <b>Orchestra only</b>          | 'Brian Ború's March' (arr. V. O'Brien)   |

Uilleann pipes played by Leo Rowsome

Tunes from olden times: 'The dear little shamrock' (air); 'St Patrick was a gentleman' (reel); 'St Patrick's day' (set-dance)

Sean Curtéis (tenor) with orchestra

'Goltraidhe, geantraidhe, suantraidhe: an raibh tú ag an gcarraig?' (lament); 'Gáire na mban' (love song); 'Seo leo thoil' (lullaby, arr. E. Ó Gallchobhair)

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Orchestra only</b>          | 'Irish rhapsody' (Victor Herbert)  |
| <b>Quartet only</b>            | 'Avenging and bright' (arr. Balfe)   |
| <b>Orchestra only</b>          | 'Irish fantasia' (Hardebeck)   |
| <b>Orchestra &amp; quartet</b> | 'At the mid hour of night' (J. F. Larchet)<br>'The Irish reel' (Jozé, arr. V. O'Brien) |

Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilidhe Band conducted by Superintendent O'Donnell-Sweeney:

'Miss Forbes' farewell', 'My love is but a lassie yet', 'Charlie's welcome' (set dances)  
'The cliff', 'The navvies' hornpipe', 'The sweeps' (hornpipes); National Anthem

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\*\* *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*, 17 Mar. 1938. All descriptions and titles of works performed & details of authors, composers &/or arrangements used are as given in these newspaper schedules. Whilst the special 'European' programme was an hour in length, 2RN continued to transmit until 12 midnight. The rest of schedule was as follows:

**9.00pm:** Cór na gCuig Cuigí directed by Nan Mulligan – Ladies choir: 'Cáit ní Dhuibhir' & 'Fhiseógín ruadh' (arr. Hardebeck); Mixed choir: 'Duan na saoirse' (O Duibhir) & 'Speic Seoidheach' (Hardebeck); Ladies choir: 'Barbaro' (Ua Braoin) & 'An chuilfhoinn' (Hardebeck); Mixed choir: 'A Éire míl is uasal' (O Duibhir) & 'Preab san ól' (Hardebeck);  
**9.15pm:** Mr De Valera speaks to exiles; **9.30pm:** Sponsored programme; **10.30pm:** News;  
**10.45pm:** Dublin Metropolitan Garda Céilidhe Band: Irish dance music.

## APPENDIX H:

**Music in secondary education: Intermediate & Leaving Certificate exam programmes, 1929/30; numbers studying music, 1931-51, numbers & details of individual music exams, 1925-51; details bonus grants paid to schools for choirs or orchestras, 1924-51**

### Document 1:

#### Secondary school music examination programme, 1929/30<sup>i</sup>

##### General regulations

In order to pass in music, candidates must satisfy the examiners in the oral examination (A), in the written examination (B), and in the practical examination (C)<sup>ii</sup> in one of the instruments – piano, violin, violoncello, or harp.<sup>iii</sup>

The marks are allotted as follows: (A), 50; (B), 150; (C), 100.<sup>iv</sup>

Failure in one part may, in some case, be compensated by exceptional excellence in the other parts, but a distinction will not be awarded to a candidate who fails any part of the examination.

Each candidate shall send to the office, along with his entrance form for the examination, the names of twelve Irish melodies of which he has made a special study.

##### Intermediate certificate

###### A.

A candidate may be asked:-

1. To write down in staff notation a short phrase played (or sung) by the examiners.
2. To sing at sight a simple melody
3. To write down, in the key in which it has been learned, any of the 12 melodies selected for special study, and to answer questions on the structure of the same.
4. To recognise common chords in root position and cadential idioms formed by these chords

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<sup>i</sup> Sources: *Regulations regarding curricula, certificates, examinations and scholarships with Programme for the year 1929-30*, pp 62 -70; *Secondary schools' programme, 1941-2*, pp 58-66; *ibid.*, 1942-3, pp 61-8; *Rules and regulations for secondary schools (including programme of courses) 1944-5*, pp 70-77; *Rules and programme for secondary schools 1946-7*, pp 69-76; *ibid.*, 1947-8; *ibid.*, 1948-9, pp 74-82; *ibid.*, 1949-50 and 1950-1. There were some minor changes in requirements and instrumental test pieces over these years but the general format remained unchanged.

<sup>ii</sup> Most of the instrumental test piece lists were altered slightly each year with a work by one composer substituted by another similar one or a choice of a different selection or movement within a work given. However, there was no change at all in the test pieces for the harp or the organ.

By the 1940s the organ had been added as a further instrumental choice with examinations in scales, arpeggios & sight reading and test pieces such as Mendelssohn's 'First sonata', 2<sup>nd</sup> movement & 'Fourth sonata', 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, Bach's 'Preludes and Fugues', nos. 1, 2,4 or 8, choices from Smart's *Compositions for organ*, vol. i, Parry's 'Preston' (Intermediate Certificate) and Stanford's *Short postludes for organ*, Bach and Mendelssohn fugues, Darke's 'Choral-Prelude for organ, no.1', Wolstenholme's 'Romanza in A minor' (Leaving Certificate).

<sup>iv</sup> This was amended to (A), 60; (B), 200; (C), 140, in 1948, to give a total of 400 marks.

5. To recognise changes of key to dominant and relative minor
6. To write down, on one note, the musical rhythm corresponding to the rhythm of a piece of poetry read aloud by the examiners (only the simpler forms of rhythm will be required).

## B.

1. Practical exercises in rhythm, grouping and phrasing, barring, time, rests, clefs, keys, scales, transposition, chords, triads and ornaments. Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the usual musical notation and terminology.
2. Melodic structure. Composition of simple melodies on a given rhythmic structure.
3. Counterpoint. To add a part in first or second species above or below a short passage (*canto firmo*). Major and minor modes.
4. Harmony. Common chords in root position and their first inversions, major and minor modes. To add two or three parts to a given bass. Harmonising a melody in three or four parts. Elementary principles of part-writing. Cadences, including cadential 6/4.
5. History. A general knowledge of the following composers: Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, Debussy, and Strauss.<sup>1</sup> To be studied under the following heads: Period, Nationality, Outstanding features of life, Style and character of music, Principal works.
6. Pupils may be asked questions on the instruments they have chosen for their practical examination (e.g. questions on touch, tone production, etc.)

## C.

### Piano

1. *Scales*. All major, harmonic minor, and chromatic scales in similar motion (compass three octaves), and in contrary motion (compass two octaves). All major scales in double octaves in similar motion (wrist staccato; compass two octaves).
2. *Arpeggios*. All major and minor common chords with their inversions, extended position, with compass of three octaves in similar motion and two octaves in contrary motion.
3. *Studies*. Scarlatti: *Studies* no. 5 and 7 (Pigott edition)
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select three of the following numbers, one from each of A, B & C:-

#### *List A*

1. Clementi: 'Sonata in B flat', op. 47 (No.2, C. E. edition);
2. Mozart: 'Sonata in F, no. 3' (C. E. edition), 1<sup>st</sup> movement only;
3. Mozart: 'Sonata in C minor, no.6' (C. E. edition), 1<sup>st</sup> movement only;
4. Beethoven: 'Sonata in E, no. 9', op. 14, no. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> movement only (C. E. edition);
5. Beethoven: 'Sonata in G, no. 10', op.14, no.2, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement only (C. E. edition).

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<sup>1</sup> The composers Field, Grieg, Wagner and Brahms were later added.

### **List B**

6. Field: 'Nocturne no.1, in E flat' (C. E. edition); 7. Field: 'Nocturne in G, no.7' (C. E. edition); 8. Mendelssohn: 'Songs without words, no.1'; 9. Mendelssohn: 'Songs without words, no.19'; 10. Rubinstein: 'Romance in E flat' (C. E. edition); 11. Schumann: 'Slumber song' (C. E. edition).

### **List C**

12. Esposito: No. 1 of 'Four sketches' (Pigott edition); 13. Mendelssohn: No.2 of 'Two musical sketches' (C. E. edition); 14. Schubert: 'Impromptu in A flat', op. 142 (C. E. edition); 15. Schumann: 'Horseman's song' (C. E. edition); 16. Schumann: 'Kinderscenen', op. 15, nos. 4 and 5.

(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.

5. *An easy sight reading test.*

### **Violin**

1. *Scales*. All major and minor scales from G to C, in three octaves, commencing on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, detached, and slurred one octave to each bow. Scales above C in two octaves. Chromatic scales commencing on G and A (4<sup>th</sup> string) in two octaves, slurred one octave to each bow.
2. *Arpeggios*. All major and minor arpeggios (common chords) from G to C in three octaves, commencing on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, detached, and slurred one octave to each bow. Same above C in two octaves.
3. *Studies*. Candidates to select either (a) or (b):- (a) Mazas: *Special Studies*, op. 36, book i, no. 15 in C and no. 22 in A (Augener 7607 A); (b) Kreutzer: *42 Studies*, no. 6 in C and no. 11 in E (Augener 5671).
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select one of the following numbers:-
  1. D. Ó Braoin: 'Amhrán an bhádóra' (O'Sullivan & Co., Cork); Fiocco: 'Allegro, no.3' of *Seven pieces* arranged by A. Bent & N. O'Neill (Schott).
  2. A. Simonetti: 'Cavatina' (Schott); Dittersdorf-Kreisler: 'Scherzo' (Schott).
  3. Schubert: 'Sonata in G minor', op. 137, no.3, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> movements only (Schott).
  4. Elgar: 'Chanson de matin', op. 15, no.2 (Novello); Max Mossel: 'Minuet in A' (Hawkes & Son).
  5. Couperin-Kreisler: 'La Précieuse' (Schott); Granom-Moffat: 'Harlequin' (Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew).<sup>i</sup>(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.
5. *An easy sight reading test.*

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<sup>i</sup> By the mid-1940s John Larchet's *Irish airs* and a selection of compositions, such as 'Fonn', 'Caoin', 'Ríl' and 'Rinnce', by Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair had become a staple feature of this particular category.

## Violoncello

1. *Scales*. Major scales of C, G, D, A, E, F, B flat, E flat, A flat. Both forms of minor scales of A, E, B, F sharp, C sharp, D, G, C, F, with compass of two octaves; detached, and slurred one octave to each bow. The scales to be played in quavers. Chromatic scales beginning with C, G, D, A, detached, and slurred four notes to each bow (compass, two octaves).
2. *Arpeggios*. The major and minor common chords of above scales. Compass, two octaves, (a) detached, and (b) slurred in sixes.
3. *Studies*. Candidates to select either (a) or (b): (a) Lee: *40 Studies*, op. 31, book i, nos. 5 & 15; (b) Lee: *40 Studies*, op. 131, book i, nos. 4 & 7.
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select one from each group:

### **Group A**

1. Bach: *6 sonatas*, Bourrées 1 & 2 from 'Sonata no. 3' (Schroeder).
2. Marcello: 'Sonata in E minor' (Augener 5512).
3. Stiasni: 'Andante Cantabile' (Augener 5509).

### **Group B**

1. Bruch: Op. 55, 'Canzone' (Chester)
2. Barnett: 'Pensée melodique' (Chester)
3. Fischer: 'Au bord du Fuisseau' (Schott)
4. Squire: Op. 24, 'Bourrée' (Augener)<sup>i</sup>

(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.

5. *An easy sight reading test*.

## Harp

1. *Scales*. Major and harmonic minor scales; compass, 3 octaves. The same in 6ths, and 10ths; compass 2 octaves. The same in 3rds and 6ths, contrary motion.
2. *Arpeggios*. Major and minor common chords, with their inversions; compass 3 octaves. Chords of the dominant and diminished 7ths, with inversions, compass 2 octaves.
3. *Studies*. Candidates to select either (a) or (b): (a) Thomas: nos. 3 & 4 of *Six Studies*, series 1 (Schott); (b) Bochsa: nos. 20 & 22 of *Introductory Studies*, book ii (Ashdown).
4. *Pieces*. (a) Two of the following to be selected by the candidate:-
  1. Zabel: Op. 30, 'Demande et réponse' (Durand)
  2. Hasselmans: 'Barcarolle' (Durand).
  3. Hasselmans: 'Romance' (Durand).
  4. Zabel: op. 27, 'Un moment heureux' (Durand).(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.
5. *An easy sight reading test*

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<sup>i</sup> The choices of test pieces for 'cello had doubled by the 1940s and included composers such as Saint-Saens, Brahms and Dunhill as well as arrangements of Moore's *Irish melodies*.

## Leaving certificate

### A.

A candidate may be asked:-

1. To write down in staff notation a short phrase played (or sung) by the examiners.
2. To sing at sight a simple melody
3. To write down, to a given key signature, one of the 12 melodies selected for special study, and to answer questions on the structure of the same.
4. To recognise common chords (including chord of the dominant seventh), their inversions and cadences
5. To recognise simple changes of key in passages played by the examiners.
6. To write down, on one note the musical rhythm corresponding to the rhythm of a piece of poetry read aloud by the examiners (only the simpler forms of rhythm will be required).

### B.

1. Melodic form. Analysis of given melody. Composition of a melody to a given short stanza of poetry.
2. Harmony, using common chords, dominant seventh, and their inversions. Use of passing and auxiliary notes. Suspensions. Modulation. To harmonise a melody for four voices, or to write a pianoforte accompaniment to a given melody.
3. Free composition of a melody, consisting of about 16 bars, the opening phrase being given.
4. Elements of counterpoint. Five species in two parts.
5. General musical history, with more detailed treatment of one of the following periods:- (a) The age of Bach and Handel; (b) The times of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (excluding Schubert); (c) From Schubert to the death of Schumann.<sup>i</sup>
6. Pupils may be asked questions on the instruments they have selected for their practical examination (e.g., questions on touch, tone production, etc.)

### C.

#### Piano

1. *Scales*. All major, minor and chromatic scales in similar motion with compass of four octaves, and in contrary motion with compass of four octaves. All major scales in thirds and sixths. All major and harmonic minor scales in double octaves (wrist staccato).
2. *Arpeggios*. All major and minor common chords with their inversions, in extended position, with compass of four octaves for similar motion and two octaves for contrary motion. Chords of dominant seventh and diminished seventh, without inversions, in similar motion (compass of two octaves).
3. *Studies*. Esposito, *Progressive Studies*, book ii, nos. 13 and 14 (Pigott edition)
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select three of the following numbers, one from each of the lists, A, B, and C:-

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<sup>i</sup> By 1940, the requirements here had been reduced to 'as in Intermediate certificate course'.

### **List A**

1. Clementi: Lento e Presto from 'Sonata in F sharp minor' (C. E. edition);
2. Beethoven: 'Sonata in F minor, no.1', op.2, no.1, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (C. E. edition);
3. Beethoven: 'Sonata in C minor, no.5', op.10, no.1, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (C. E. edition);
4. Beethoven: 'Sonata in G, no.10', op. 14, no.2, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (C. E. edition);
5. 'Sonata in B flat, no. 11', op. 22, 1<sup>st</sup> movement (C. E. edition)

### **List B**

6. Chopin: 'Nocturne in F minor, no. 15', op. 55, no.1 (C. E. edition);
7. Chopin: 'Nocturne in G minor, no. 11', op. 37, no.1 (C. E. edition);
8. Esposito: 'Berceuse' (Ricordi edition);
9. Field: 'Nocturne, no. 6 in A' (C. E. edition);
10. Field: 'Nocturne no. 5 in A' (C. E. edition);
11. Liszt: 'Consolation no.3 in D flat' (C. E. edition);
12. Schumann: 'Des abends', fantasiestuecke no.1;
13. Schumann: 'Romance in F sharp major' (C. E. edition).

### **List C**

14. Bach: 'Fugue in A minor' (*Classics Book V*, Pigott);
15. Chopin: 'Waltz in E minor' (C. E. edition);
16. Chopin: 'Waltz in D flat', op. 64, no. 1 (C. E. edition);
17. Debussy: either of the 'Deux Arabesques';
18. Mendelssohn: 'Caprice', op. 33, no. 1;
19. Schubert: 'Impromptu in E flat', op. 90 (C. E. edition);
20. Schumann: 'Arabeske' (C. E. edition);
21. Schumann: 'Novelette, no.1' (C. E. edition);
22. Scarlatti: 'Toccata in F' (C. E. edition).

(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.

### 5. *Sight reading test*

## **Violin**

1. *Scales*. All major, and both forms of minor scales, detached and slurred one and three octaves to each bow. Compass three octaves. Chromatic scales, commencing on any note from G to C on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, slurred one and two octaves to each bow. Compass, two octaves. The scale of G major in 3rds, 6ths, and 8ths detached. Compass, two octaves.
2. *Arpeggios*. All major and minor common chords, detached, and slurred three octaves to each bow. Compass, three octaves.
3. *Studies*. Candidates to select **one** of the following numbers: (1) Mazas: *Special Studies*, op. 36, book i, no. 25 in A (Augener 7606A) & Fiorillo: no. 10 in D of *36 Studies* (Augener 5654); (2) Kreutzer: No. 12 in A minor of *42 Studies* (Augener 5671) & Rode: No.4 in G of *24 Caprices* (Augener 5679).
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select two of the following numbers (one, at least, of the selected pieces to be a concerto):-
  1. P. Delaney: 'Irish airs' (Moore Smith)
  2. Bach: 'Concerto in A minor', 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> movements only (Novello)
  3. Wieniawski: 'Romance', op. 22 (Schott) & Handel: 'Passacaglia' (arr. Hamilton Harty)
  4. J. Wolff: 'Romance in D' (Schott) & Kreisler: 'Liebesfreud' (Schott)
  5. Rode: 'Concerto no. 4 in A', 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> movements only (Augener)
  6. Kreutzer: 'Concerto no. 19 in D minor', 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> movements only (Augener)

7. Beethoven: 'Romance in F' & Wieniawski: 'Kuyawiak' (Augener 7493)  
(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.

5. *Sight reading test*

### Violoncello

1. *Scales*. All major and minor scales (both forms) detached, and slurred one and three and octaves to each bow, with compass of three octaves. Chromatic scales beginning on C,G,D,A,E,F,B, detached, and slurred eight notes to each bow, with compass of three octaves. The scale of C major in thirds, detached (two octaves). The major scales of C,G,D,A, in sixths, detached (one octave).
2. *Arpeggios*. All major and minor common chords, detached, and slurred eight notes to each bow. (Compass three octaves)
3. *Studies*. Candidates to select (a) or (b): (a) Grutzmacher, op.38, book i, nos. 4 and 10 (Peters 1417a); (b) Lee, op. 31, book ii, nos. 1 and 2.
4. *Pieces*. (a) Candidates to select (a), (b) or (c):
  - (a) Boccherini: 'Rondo'; Marcello: 'Sonata' (Augener 5510)
  - (b) Bruch: 'Kol Nidrei' (Lengnick); Lalo: 'Concerto in D minor', 1<sup>st</sup> movement only
  - (c) Hamilton Harty: 'Wood-stillness' (Houghton); Popper: op.54, no.5, 'Vito' (Schott)<sup>1</sup>(b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.

5. *Sight reading test*

### Harp

1. *Scales*. Major and harmonic minor in 8ths, 6ths, and 10ths (three octaves). The same in 3rds and 6ths, contrary motion (two octaves). The same in 8ths, hands separate (two octaves)
  2. *Arpeggios*. Major and minor common chords, with inversions, extended form (three octaves). Dominant and diminished sevenths, with inversions (three octaves). Major and minor common chords in contrary motion from the keynote.
  3. *Studies*. Candidates to select either (a) or (b): (a) Thomas: *Six Studies* (series 2), nos. 9 and 11 (Schott); (b) Boscha: *Forty Studies* (book i), nos. 6 and 10 (Ashdown)
  4. *Pieces*.
    - (a) Candidates to select three of the following:
      - Zabel: 'Reve d'amour', op. 21 (Chester)
      - Thomas: 'Echoes of a waterfall' (Schott)
      - Zabel: 'Legende', op. 18 (Schott)
      - Hasselmans: 'La source', op. 44 (Durand)
    - (b) A piece of the candidate's own selection, which should be not less difficult than the easiest of the above.
5. *Sight reading test*

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The choices of test pieces for 'cello had doubled by the 1940s and included composers such as Fauré, Godard, Duport, Franchomme and Saint-Saens as well as 'Irish' pieces such as Arnold Trowell's 'Irish lullaby' and Herbert Hughes's 'Bard of Armagh'.

**Table 1:**  
**Numbers of pupils studying music in Irish secondary schools 1931/2-1950/1** <sup>ii</sup>

| Academic year | Leaving Certificate Boys | Leaving Certificate Girls | Intermediate Certificate Boys | Intermediate Certificate Girls | Total number of pupils |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1931/2        | 28                       | 21                        | 212                           | 744                            | 1,005                  |
| 1932/3        | 12                       | 235                       | 54                            | 790                            | 1,091                  |
| 1933/4        | 6                        | 189                       | 113                           | 260                            | 568                    |
| 1934/5        | 13                       | 158                       | 103                           | 512                            | 786                    |
| 1935/6        | 3                        | 130                       | 48                            | 537                            | 718                    |
| 1936/7        | 4                        | 142                       | 39                            | 581                            | 766                    |
| 1937/8        | 6                        | 208                       | 40                            | 656                            | 910                    |
| 1938/9        | 3                        | 196                       | 169                           | 708                            | 1,076                  |
| 1939/40       | 45                       | 168                       | 408                           | 516                            | 1,137                  |
| 1940/1        | 89                       | 91                        | 278                           | 385                            | 843                    |
| 1941/2        | 92                       | 93                        | 297                           | 391                            | 873                    |
| 1942/3        | 92                       | 196                       | 500                           | 578                            | 1,366                  |
| 1943/4        | 4                        | 206                       | 408                           | 712                            | <sup>i</sup> 1,126     |
| 1944/5        | 19                       | 140                       | 451                           | 636                            | 1,246                  |
| 1945/6        | 33                       | 236                       | 49                            | 611                            | 929                    |
| 1946/7        | 11                       | 179                       | 262                           | 606                            | 1,058                  |
| 1947/8        | 12                       | 149                       | 33                            | 599                            | 793                    |
| 1948/9        | 61                       | 209                       | 5                             | 129                            | 404                    |
| 1949/50       | 7                        | 88                        | 9                             | 315                            | 419                    |
| 1950/1        | 10                       | 108                       | 56                            | 322                            | 496                    |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1931/2-1950/1.*

<sup>i</sup> Total as given in *Report of the department of education, 1943/4*. The total of the other figures as given in the report is in fact 1,330.

<sup>ii</sup> This number is a composite figure representing those studying music in all years of the Intermediate and Leaving Certificate individual examination programmes and includes those who presented for choral and orchestral examinations.

**Table 2:**  
**Numbers of pupils who took individual music examinations in Irish secondary schools in the academic years 1925/6-1950/1**

| Academic Year | Intermediate Certificate |                     |             | Leaving Certificate   |                     |             |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|               | Total number examined    | Total number passed | % pass rate | Total number examined | Total number passed | % pass rate |
| 1925/6        | 29                       | 24                  | 83          | 8                     | 8                   | 100         |
| 1926/7        | 53                       | 45                  | 85          | 2                     | 2                   | 100         |
| 1927/8        | 49                       | 38                  | 78          | 7                     | 7                   | 100         |
| 1928/9        | 45                       | 37                  | 82          | 6                     | 6                   | 100         |
| 1929/30       | 48                       | 44                  | 92          | 11                    | 11                  | 100         |
| 1930/1        | 48                       | 39                  | 81          | 17                    | 12                  | 71          |
| 1931/2        | 45                       | 29                  | 64          | 11                    | 9                   | 82          |
| 1932/3        | 38                       | 26                  | 68          | 16                    | 14                  | 88          |
| 1933/4        | 44                       | 38                  | 86          | 11                    | 9                   | 82          |
| 1934/5        | 54                       | 40                  | 74          | 11                    | 10                  | 91          |
| 1935/6        | 45                       | 34                  | 76          | 14                    | 11                  | 79          |
| 1936/7        | 32                       | 24                  | 75          | 10                    | 10                  | 100         |
| 1937/8        | 33                       | 32                  | 97          | 11                    | 11                  | 100         |
| 1938/9        | 43                       | 36                  | 84          | 13                    | 13                  | 100         |
| 1939/40       | 52                       | 52                  | 100         | 14                    | 14                  | 100         |
| 1940/1        | 52                       | 42                  | 81          | 14                    | 13                  | 93          |
| 1941/2        | 72                       | 61                  | 85          | 34                    | 33                  | 97          |
| 1942/3        | 82                       | 58                  | 71          | 24                    | 20                  | 83          |
| 1943/4        | 84                       | 77                  | 92          | 38                    | 32                  | 84          |
| 1944/5        | 94                       | 84                  | 89          | 39                    | 38                  | 97          |
| 1945/6        | 76                       | 62                  | 82          | 37                    | 33                  | 89          |
| 1946/7        | 58                       | 57                  | 98          | 40                    | 39                  | 98          |
| 1947/8        | 61                       | 54                  | 89          | 30                    | 29                  | 97          |
| 1948/9        | 104                      | 96                  | 92          | 44                    | 44                  | 100         |
| 1949/50       | 110                      | 108                 | 98          | 40                    | 39                  | 98          |
| 1950/1        | 130                      | 116                 | 89          | 49                    | 49                  | 100         |

Source: Report of the department of education, 1925/6-1950/1.

**Table 3a:**  
**Leaving Certificate music examination results of male candidates in Irish secondary schools for the academic years 1925/6-1950/1**

| Academic year | Leaving Certificate – males |                           |                       |                |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|               | Total number examined       | Total examined in Honours | % passed with Honours | Total % passed |
| 1925/6        | 0                           | -                         | -                     | -              |
| 1926/7        | 1                           | 1                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1927/8        | 0                           | -                         | -                     | -              |
| 1928/9        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1929/30       | 0                           | -                         | -                     | -              |
| 1930/1        | 3                           | 2                         | 50                    | 33             |
| 1931/2        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1932/3        | 3                           | 1                         | 100                   | 67             |
| 1933/4        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1934/5        | 1                           | 1                         | 0                     | 0              |
| 1935/6        | 2                           | 1                         | 0                     | 100            |
| 1936/7        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1937/8        | 1                           | 1                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1938/9        | 3                           | 3                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1939/40       | 1                           | 1                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1940/1        | 2                           | 1                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1941/2        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1942/3        | 2                           | 2                         | 50                    | 100            |
| 1943/4        | 2                           | 1                         | 0                     | 0              |
| 1944/5        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1945/6        | 3                           | 3                         | 67                    | 100            |
| 1946/7        | 2                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1947/8        | 5                           | 5                         | 80                    | 100            |
| 1948/9        | 3                           | 2                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1949/50       | 1                           | 0                         | 0                     | 0              |
| 1950/1        | 4                           | 3                         | 100                   | 100            |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1925/6-1950/1.*

**Table 3b:**  
**Leaving Certificate music examination results of female candidates in Irish secondary schools for the academic years 1925/6-1950/1**

| Academic year | Leaving Certificate – females |                           |                       |                |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|               | Total number examined         | Total examined in Honours | % passed with Honours | Total % passed |
| 1925/6        | 8                             | 6                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1926/7        | 1                             | 1                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1927/8        | 7                             | 7                         | 57                    | 100            |
| 1928/9        | 4                             | 4                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1929/30       | 11                            | 10                        | 70                    | 100            |
| 1930/1        | 14                            | 14                        | 79                    | 79             |
| 1931/2        | 9                             | 7                         | 86                    | 78             |
| 1932/3        | 13                            | 11                        | 100                   | 92             |
| 1933/4        | 9                             | 9                         | 67                    | 78             |
| 1934/5        | 10                            | 9                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1935/6        | 12                            | 11                        | 73                    | 75             |
| 1936/7        | 8                             | 8                         | 100                   | 100            |
| 1937/8        | 10                            | 10                        | 100                   | 100            |
| 1938/9        | 10                            | 10                        | 100                   | 100            |
| 1939/40       | 13                            | 13                        | 100                   | 100            |
| 1940/1        | 12                            | 11                        | 100                   | 92             |
| 1941/2        | 32                            | 31                        | 94                    | 97             |
| 1942/3        | 22                            | 21                        | 81                    | 82             |
| 1943/4        | 36                            | 34                        | 82                    | 89             |
| 1944/5        | 37                            | 32                        | 97                    | 97             |
| 1945/6        | 34                            | 33                        | 78                    | 88             |
| 1946/7        | 38                            | 34                        | 91                    | 97             |
| 1947/8        | 25                            | 24                        | 92                    | 96             |
| 1948/9        | 41                            | 37                        | 100                   | 100            |
| 1949/50       | 39                            | 37                        | 100                   | 100            |
| 1950/1        | 45                            | 45                        | 91                    | 100            |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1925/6-1950/1.*

**Table 4a:**  
**Intermediate Certificate music examination results of male candidates in Irish secondary schools for the academic years 1925/6-1950/1**

| Academic year | Intermediate Certificate - males |                                |                         |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
|               | Total number examined            | Percentage passed with Honours | Total percentage passed |
| 1925/6        | 0                                | -                              | -                       |
| 1926/7        | 2                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1927/8        | 3                                | 0                              | 100                     |
| 1928/9        | 1                                | 0                              | 100                     |
| 1929/30       | 1                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1930/1        | 5                                | 80                             | 100                     |
| 1931/2        | 8                                | 50                             | 50                      |
| 1932/3        | 1                                | 0                              | 100                     |
| 1933/4        | 4                                | 50                             | 100                     |
| 1934/5        | 5                                | 40                             | 60                      |
| 1935/6        | 6                                | 17                             | 33                      |
| 1936/7        | 2                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1937/8        | 4                                | 25                             | 75                      |
| 1938/9        | 5                                | 60                             | 60                      |
| 1939/40       | 0                                | -                              | -                       |
| 1940/1        | 4                                | 50                             | 50                      |
| 1941/2        | 1                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1942/3        | 6                                | 67                             | 83                      |
| 1943/4        | 5                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1944/5        | 3                                | 67                             | 67                      |
| 1945/6        | 6                                | 67                             | 83                      |
| 1946/7        | 1                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1947/8        | 2                                | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1948/9        | 11                               | 73                             | 91                      |
| 1949/50       | 13                               | 85                             | 92                      |
| 1950/1        | 3                                | 33                             | 33                      |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1925/6-1950/1.*

**Table 4b:**  
**Intermediate Certificate music examination results of female candidates in Irish**  
**secondary schools for the academic years 1925/6-1950/1**

| Academic year | Intermediate Certificate – females |                                |                         |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
|               | Total number examined              | Percentage passed with Honours | Total percentage passed |
| 1925/6        | 29                                 | 76                             | 83                      |
| 1926/7        | 51                                 | 67                             | 84                      |
| 1927/8        | 46                                 | 39                             | 76                      |
| 1928/9        | 44                                 | 57                             | 82                      |
| 1929/30       | 47                                 | 66                             | 92                      |
| 1930/1        | 43                                 | 61                             | 79                      |
| 1931/2        | 37                                 | 62                             | 68                      |
| 1932/3        | 37                                 | 40                             | 68                      |
| 1933/4        | 40                                 | 65                             | 85                      |
| 1934/5        | 49                                 | 71                             | 76                      |
| 1935/6        | 39                                 | 69                             | 82                      |
| 1936/7        | 30                                 | 67                             | 73                      |
| 1937/8        | 29                                 | 93                             | 100                     |
| 1938/9        | 38                                 | 82                             | 87                      |
| 1939/40       | 52                                 | 100                            | 100                     |
| 1940/1        | 48                                 | 75                             | 83                      |
| 1941/2        | 71                                 | 73                             | 85                      |
| 1942/3        | 76                                 | 49                             | 70                      |
| 1943/4        | 79                                 | 79                             | 91                      |
| 1944/5        | 91                                 | 73                             | 90                      |
| 1945/6        | 70                                 | 71                             | 81                      |
| 1946/7        | 57                                 | 95                             | 98                      |
| 1947/8        | 59                                 | 80                             | 88                      |
| 1948/9        | 93                                 | 83                             | 93                      |
| 1949/50       | 97                                 | 97                             | 99                      |
| 1950/1        | 127                                | 82                             | 91                      |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1925/6-1950/1.*

**Table 5a:**  
**Secondary schools in receipt of department of education bonus grants for choirs and/or orchestras in each county in the Irish Free State, 1924/5-1931/2**<sup>i</sup>

| Province<br>County                         | Number of secondary schools |                      |                    |                    |                   |                     |                     |                     |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|  | 1924/5                      | 1925/6               | 1926/7             | 1927/8             | 1928/9            | 1929/30             | 1930/1              | 1931/2              |
| <b>Leinster</b>                            |                             |                      |                    |                    |                   |                     |                     |                     |
| Carlow                                     | 2                           | 2                    | 2                  | 2                  | 2                 | 2                   | 2                   | 2                   |
| Dublin                                     | 26                          | 27                   | 24                 | 24                 | 26                | 28                  | 27                  | 26                  |
| Kildare                                    | 1                           | 1                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                 | 1                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Kilkenny                                   | 2                           | 3                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                 | 3                   | 2                   | 2                   |
| Laois                                      | 1                           | 1                    | 2                  | 2                  | 3                 | 2                   | 4                   | 4                   |
| Longford                                   | 1                           | 1                    | 1                  | 1                  | 2                 | 0                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Louth                                      | 1                           | 2                    | 0                  | 0                  | 1                 | 1                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Meath                                      | 1                           | 1                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                 | 1                   | 1                   | 2                   |
| Offaly                                     | 1                           | 2                    | 1                  | 2                  | 2                 | 2                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Westmeath                                  | 2                           | 1                    | 2                  | 1                  | 1                 | 2                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Wexford                                    | 2                           | 2                    | 1                  | 1                  | 2                 | 3                   | 3                   | 3                   |
| Wicklow                                    | 3                           | 3                    | 3                  | 3                  | 3                 | 3                   | 3                   | 3                   |
| <b>Munster</b>                             |                             |                      |                    |                    |                   |                     |                     |                     |
| Clare                                      | 1                           | 1                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                 | 0                   | 1                   | 2                   |
| Cork                                       | 8                           | 9                    | 7                  | 5                  | 7                 | ii 8                | 4                   | 5                   |
| Kerry                                      | 1                           | 1                    | 0                  | 0                  | 1                 | 1                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Limerick                                   | 1                           | 0                    | 0                  | 0                  | 0                 | 1                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Tipperary                                  | 4                           | 5                    | 3                  | 3                  | 3                 | 5                   | 5                   | 4                   |
| Waterford                                  | 2                           | 1                    | 1                  | 1                  | 1                 | 2                   | 2                   | 2                   |
| <b>Connacht</b>                            |                             |                      |                    |                    |                   |                     |                     |                     |
| Galway                                     | 4                           | 3                    | 3                  | 3                  | 3                 | 4                   | 3                   | 2                   |
| Leitrim                                    | 0                           | 0                    | 0                  | 0                  | 0                 | 0                   | 0                   | 0                   |
| Mayo                                       | 2                           | 3                    | 4                  | 2                  | 5                 | 5                   | 5                   | 3                   |
| Roscommon                                  | 0                           | 0                    | 0                  | 0                  | 0                 | 0                   | 0                   | 0                   |
| Sligo                                      | 4                           | 4                    | 2                  | 2                  | 4                 | 3                   | 3                   | 3                   |
| <b>Ulster (part of)</b>                    |                             |                      |                    |                    |                   |                     |                     |                     |
| Cavan                                      | 0                           | 0                    | 0                  | 0                  | 0                 | 0                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Donegal                                    | 0                           | 1                    | 0                  | 0                  | 1                 | 1                   | 1                   | 1                   |
| Monaghan                                   | 2                           | 2                    | 2                  | 2                  | 2                 | 2                   | 2                   | 2                   |
| <b>Total number of schools paid grants</b> | <b>72</b>                   | <b>76</b>            | <b>62</b>          | <b>58</b>          | <b>73</b>         | <b>80</b>           | <b>76</b>           | <b>74</b>           |
| <b>Total amount of grants paid</b>         | <b>£1,008 1s 0d</b>         | <b>£1,014 8s 11d</b> | <b>£991 13s 9d</b> | <b>£999 13s 6d</b> | <b>£958 7s 2d</b> | <b>£1,000 0s 0d</b> | <b>£1,000 0s 0d</b> | <b>£1,000 0s 0d</b> |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1924/5-1931/2.*

<sup>i</sup> The amount of the bonus varied from school to school depending on the number of choirs, orchestras or pupils.

<sup>ii</sup> From the academic year 1929/30, Cork City Grammar School and the Girl's High School in Cork city were treated as one school in the *Report of the department of education.*

**Table 5b:**  
**Secondary schools in receipt of departmental bonuses for music in each county [C-D] in  
the Irish Free State for the period 1924/5-1931/2 <sup>i</sup>**

| County [C-D]   | School  |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Carlow</b>  | Convent of Mercy, Carlow<br>Brigidine Convent, Tullow   |
| <b>Cavan</b>   | Loreto College, Cavan   |
| <b>Clare</b>   | Convent of Mercy, Ennis<br>Convent of Mercy, Ennistymon   |
| <b>Cork</b>    | Convent of Mercy, Charleville<br>Ursuline Convent, Blackrock<br>Loreto Convent, Fermoy<br>Christian Brothers' College, Cork city<br>CBS, Our Lady's Mount, Cork city<br>CBS, Sullivan's Quay, Cork city<br>Grammar School, Cork city<br>Girl's High School, Cork city<br>Rochelle School, Cork city<br>St Aloysius' School, St Marie's of the Isle  |
| <b>Donegal</b> | Loreto Convent, Letterkenny   |
| <b>Dublin</b>  | Loreto Convent, Balbriggan<br>Masonic Girl's School, Ballsbridge<br>Dominican Convent, Sion Hill, Blackrock<br>Blackrock College<br>St Mary's Dominican Convent, Cabra<br>St Joseph's Convent, Mount Sackville, Chapelizod<br>Loreto Abbey, Dalkey<br>St Mary's Dominican College, Donnybrook<br>Dominican Convent, Dun Laoghaire<br>Holy Faith Convent, Haddington Rd, Pembroke<br>St Margaret's Hall, Mespil Rd, Pembroke<br>Loreto Convent, Rathfarnham<br>Norfolk College, Rathgar<br>Convent of St Louis, Rathmines<br>Nightingale Hall Ltd., Wellington Place<br>Alexandra College<br>Alexandra School<br>Bertrand Intermediate School, Eccles St<br>CBS, North Brunswick St<br>CBS, Synge St<br>Diocesan School, Adelaide Rd<br>Dominican College, Eccles St<br>Scoil Caitriona, Dominican College, Eccles St<br>Holy Faith Convent, Clarendon St<br>Holy Faith Convent, Dominick St<br>Holy Faith Convent, 117 The Coombe<br>Holy Faith Convent, Clontarf<br>Holy Faith Convent, Glasnevin<br>Kenmare College, North Great George's St<br>Kenmare College, 10-11 Gardiner Place<br>Loreto College, St Stephen's Green<br>Loreto Convent, North Great George's St<br>O'Brien Institute, Fairview<br>Wesley College |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1924/5-1931/2*

<sup>i</sup> Not all of these schools received bonuses in each of the years between 1924/5 and 1931/2.

**Table 5c: Secondary schools in receipt of departmental bonuses for music in each county [G-W] in the Irish Free State for the period 1924/5-1931/2<sup>i</sup>**

| County [G-W]     | School   |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Galway</b>    | Dominican Convent, Galway city<br>St Mary's College, Galway city<br>Kylemore Abbey School, Kylemore<br>Presentation Convent, Tuam<br>Convent of Mercy, Tuam<br>Scoil Brighde, Tuam                                   |
| <b>Kerry</b>     | Loreto Convent, Killarney  |
| <b>Kildare</b>   | Collegiate School, Celbridge   |
| <b>Kilkenny</b>  | Brigidine Convent, Goresbridge<br>Loreto Convent, Kilkenny<br>Kilkenny College   |
| <b>Laois</b>     | Brigidine Convent, Abbeyleix<br>Brigidine Convent, Mountrath<br>CBS, Portlaoise<br>Presentation College, Mountmellick  |
| <b>Limerick</b>  | Laurel Hill Convent, Limerick  |
| <b>Longford</b>  | Convent of Mercy, Longford<br>Convent of Mercy, Ballymahon   |
| <b>Louth</b>     | Dundalk Grammar School   |
| <b>Mayo</b>      | St Louis' Convent, Balla<br>St Louis' Convent, Kiltimagh<br>Convent of Mercy, Castlebar<br>Convent of Mercy, Westport<br>Convent of Jesus and Mary, Gortnor Abbey, Crossmolina<br>Scoil na Choirde Naomtha, Westport |
| <b>Meath</b>     | Loreto Convent, An Uaimh<br>Gilson Endowed School, Oldcastle   |
| <b>Monaghan</b>  | St Louis' Convent, Carrickmacross<br>St Louis' Convent, Monaghan   |
| <b>Offaly</b>    | St Joseph's Convent, Ferbane<br>Gallen Priory, Ferbane<br>Mount St Joseph's College, Roscrea   |
| <b>Sligo</b>     | The High School, Sligo<br>Ursuline Convent, Sligo<br>Marist Convent, Tubbercurry   |
| <b>Tipperary</b> | Convent of Mercy High School, Carrick-on-Suir<br>Loreto Convent, Clonmel<br>CBS, Nenagh<br>St Mary's Convent School, Nenagh<br>Ursuline Convent, Thurles   |
| <b>Waterford</b> | Ursuline Convent, Waterford<br>Newtown School, Waterford<br>Sacred Heart Convent, Ferrybank  |
| <b>Westmeath</b> | Convent of Mercy, Moate<br>Loreto Convent, Mullingar<br>La Sainte Union Convent, Athlone   |
| <b>Wexford</b>   | Loreto Convent, Enniscorthy<br>Loreto Convent, Gorey<br>Loreto Convent, Wexford  |
| <b>Wicklow</b>   | St Mary's College, Convent of Mercy, Arklow<br>Loreto Convent, Bray<br>Dominican Convent, Wicklow  |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1924/5-1931/2.*

<sup>i</sup> Not all of these schools received bonuses in each of the years between 1924/5 and 1931/2.

**Table 5d:**  
**Total amount paid in bonus grants by the department of education to secondary schools for choirs and/or orchestras in independent Ireland, 1932/33 - 1950/1**

| Academic Year | Bonus amount       |    |   |
|---------------|--------------------|----|---|
|               | £                  | s  | d |
| 1932/3        | 1,000              | 0  | 0 |
| 1933/4        | 1,000 <sup>1</sup> | 0  | 0 |
| 1934/5        | 1,067              | 0  | 0 |
| 1935/6        | 1,100              | 0  | 0 |
| 1936/7        | 1,152              | 0  | 0 |
| 1937/8        | 1,216              | 0  | 0 |
| 1938/9        | 1,248              | 0  | 0 |
| 1939/40       | 1,318              | 0  | 0 |
| 1940/1        | 1,449              | 0  | 0 |
| 1941/2        | 1,446              | 5  | 0 |
| 1942/3        | 1,562              | 19 | 0 |
| 1943/4        | 1,682              | 10 | 0 |
| 1944/5        | 1,728              | 10 | 0 |
| 1945/6        | 1,800              | 15 | 0 |
| 1946/7        | 1,821              | 10 | 0 |
| 1947/8        | 1,890              | 5  | 0 |
| 1948/9        | 1,895              | 10 | 0 |
| 1949/50       | 1,948              | 0  | 0 |
| 1950/1        | 1,999              | 0  | 0 |

Source: *Report of the department of education, 1932/3-1950/1.*

<sup>1</sup> The figure given here is an approximation as the exact figure itself is unavailable in the annual reports

**APPENDIX I: Department of education summer school of music, 1946-51**

| Course subject                                | Numbers participating in courses |            |            |            |            |            |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | 1946                             | 1947       | 1948       | 1949       | 1950       | 1951       |
| Choral training <sup>1</sup>                  | 123                              |            |            |            |            |            |
| Adult choir training <sup>2</sup>             |                                  | 34         | 27         | 30         | 35         | 38         |
| School choir training <sup>3</sup>            |                                  | 90         | 84         | 82         | 126        | 99         |
| Adult orchestral conducting <sup>4</sup>      | 35                               | 11         | 8          | 12         | 10         | 4          |
| School orchestra conducting <sup>5</sup>      | 62                               | 59         | 39         | 47         | 60         | 33         |
| Music composition <sup>6</sup>                | 15                               | 6          | 10         | 10         | 5          | -          |
| Chamber music, violin & viola <sup>7</sup>    | 25                               | 26         | 15         | 16         | 14         | 13         |
| Piano <sup>8</sup>                            | 20                               | 25         | 24         | 24         | 11         | 12         |
| Military & brass band conducting <sup>9</sup> |                                  | 5          | 8          | -          | -          | -          |
| Singing & voice production <sup>10</sup>      |                                  | 13         | -          | -          | -          | -          |
| Violoncello <sup>11</sup>                     |                                  | 6          | -          | -          | -          | -          |
| Music appreciation <sup>12</sup>              |                                  |            | *          | *          | *          | -          |
| Ceol na hÉireann <sup>13</sup>                |                                  |            |            |            | *          | *          |
| <b>Total number enrolled <sup>14</sup></b>    | <b>167</b>                       | <b>175</b> | <b>162</b> | <b>150</b> | <b>191</b> | <b>143</b> |

Sources: *Report of the department of education, 1945/6 - 1950/1*; 'The department of education's summer school of music, 1946-1949', in Aloys Fleischmann (ed.) *Music in Ireland* (Cork, 1952), pp 118-21.

- <sup>1</sup> *Course lecturer*: A.C. Keaton, (B.Mus., F.R.C.O.) in 1946. Attended by school teachers, choir-masters & musical society directors and owing to vast interest in this course, it was divided into separate 'adult choir training' & 'school choir training' courses the following year.
- <sup>2</sup> *Course lecturers*: Charles Kennedy-Scott (1947); Dr Thomas Armstrong, Oxford University (1948, 1949), Leslie Woodgate (1950); Emile Passani (1951).
- <sup>3</sup> *Course lecturers*: B.W. Appleby (organiser of school's music in Doncaster) (1947, 1948); James Dawes (1949); Cyril Winn (1950); Abbé René Reboud (1951).
- <sup>4</sup> *Course lecturers*: Jean Martinon (1946, 1947, 1948); Dr Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt (1949); Monsieur Lindenburg (1950); Louis Martin (1951). Practical demonstrations provided by the Radio Éireann Orchestra.
- <sup>5</sup> *Course lecturers*: Dr. Hubert Clifford (1946); Dr. Harold Hind (director of music, Cardiff) (1947); Leslie Regan (Royal Academy of Music, London) (1948, 1949); Noel Hale (1950); Dr. Hubert Clifford (1951). Practical demonstrations by an orchestra of the Dublin Municipal School of Music.
- <sup>6</sup> *Course lecturer*: Sir Arnold Bax (1946); Jean Martinon (1947, 1948); Alan Rawsthorne (1949, 1950).
- <sup>7</sup> *Course lecturer*: Henry Holst (recitalist & former leader of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra) (1946, 1947); André de Ribaupierre (Swiss violinist) (1948); Jean Fournier (1949, 1950 & 1951).
- <sup>8</sup> *Course lecturer*: Herbert Fryer (Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, London & Fellow-Professor of the Royal College of Music, London) (1946, 1947), Kendall Taylor (recitalist) (1948, 1949); Ginette Doyen (1950 and 1951).
- <sup>9</sup> *Course lecturers*: Harry Mortimer (1947) and Dr Denis Wright (1948).
- <sup>10</sup> *Course lecturer*: Frederick Austin (1947). After 1947, this course appears to have been assimilated into the choral training courses.
- <sup>11</sup> Course given by Anthony Pini (1947 only).
- <sup>12</sup> Lecture series to which students taking other courses & the general public were admitted. Lectures entitled 'The listener's part', 'The 48', 'The making of song', 'The making of music' & 'The meaning of music' amongst others were given by Dr Thomas Armstrong, Lecturer in Music at the University of Oxford (1948, 1949) and Dr Hubert Clifford (1950). \* denotes 'total attendance figure unknown'.
- <sup>13</sup> This course entitled 'Music of Ireland' was given by Fr C. O' Flynn in 1950 and 1951. Like the 'music appreciation' course it was attended by students taking other courses & the general public.
- <sup>14</sup> The majority of students at the summer school attended more than one course. The figure here is the total number of students enrolled at the school, regardless of the number of courses taken by each.

## APPENDIX J

### Music teachers in independent Ireland: details from census reports 1926, 1936, 1946 & 1951

**Table 1: Numbers of music teachers in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Year | Total population of Ireland | Total no. of music teachers | No. of male music teachers | <i>As % of total no. of music teachers</i> | No. of female music teachers | <i>As % of total no. of music teachers</i> |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| 1926 | 2,971,992                   | 748                         | 127                        | 17   | 621                          | 83   |
| 1936 | 2,968,420                   | 811                         | 134                        | 17   | 677                          | 83   |
| 1946 | 2,955,107                   | 626                         | 111                        | 18   | 515                          | 82   |
| 1951 | 2,960,593                   | 569                         | 92                         | 16   | 477                          | 84   |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

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These figures include those 'out of work', retired, in hospitals or in other institutions at the time that the census was taken and are clearly differentiated from 'teachers (not music teachers)' in all census publications throughout the period in question.

**Table 2a: Numbers of male and female music teachers in each county in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Province            | County           | 1926 |        |       | 1936 |        |       | 1946 |        |       | 1951 |        |       |
|---------------------|------------------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|
|                     |                  | Male | Female | Total |
| Leinster            | <i>Carlow</i>    | 1    | 1      | 2     | 0    | 4      | 4     | 0    | 1      | 1     | 0    | 1      | 1     |
|                     | <i>Dublin</i>    | 54   | 308    | 362   | 50   | 285    | 335   | 43   | 186    | 229   | 41   | 181    | 222   |
|                     | <i>Kildare</i>   | 3    | 4      | 7     | 1    | 4      | 5     | 2    | 8      | 10    | 2    | 4      | 6     |
|                     | <i>Kilkenny</i>  | 3    | 7      | 10    | 2    | 6      | 8     | 0    | 3      | 3     | 2    | 3      | 5     |
|                     | <i>Laois</i>     | 0    | 9      | 9     | 2    | 13     | 15    | 0    | 7      | 7     | 0    | 6      | 6     |
|                     | <i>Longford</i>  | 1    | 1      | 2     | 1    | 3      | 4     | 0    | 1      | 1     | 0    | 2      | 2     |
|                     | <i>Louth</i>     | 1    | 11     | 12    | 0    | 17     | 17    | 0    | 15     | 15    | 0    | 17     | 17    |
|                     | <i>Meath</i>     | 3    | 7      | 10    | 0    | 10     | 10    | 1    | 7      | 8     | 1    | 5      | 6     |
|                     | <i>Offaly</i>    | 3    | 1      | 4     | 4    | 5      | 9     | 2    | 4      | 6     | 1    | 3      | 4     |
|                     | <i>Westmeath</i> | 1    | 5      | 6     | 2    | 9      | 11    | 2    | 12     | 14    | 1    | 9      | 10    |
|                     | <i>Wexford</i>   | 0    | 9      | 9     | 2    | 9      | 11    | 0    | 6      | 6     | 1    | 6      | 7     |
|                     | <i>Wicklow</i>   | 1    | 10     | 11    | 1    | 11     | 12    | 3    | 16     | 19    | 1    | 8      | 9     |
| Munster             | <i>Clare</i>     | 1    | 6      | 7     | 2    | 10     | 12    | 1    | 5      | 6     | 0    | 4      | 4     |
|                     | <i>Cork</i>      | 20   | 88     | 108   | 21   | 96     | 117   | 18   | 76     | 94    | 13   | 64     | 77    |
|                     | <i>Kerry</i>     | 0    | 12     | 12    | 4    | 14     | 18    | 4    | 14     | 18    | 3    | 3      | 6     |
|                     | <i>Limerick</i>  | 16   | 29     | 45    | 18   | 37     | 55    | 17   | 21     | 38    | 11   | 22     | 33    |
|                     | <i>Tipperary</i> | 6    | 17     | 23    | 8    | 22     | 30    | 3    | 21     | 24    | 1    | 22     | 23    |
|                     | <i>Waterford</i> | 2    | 14     | 16    | 5    | 16     | 21    | 3    | 17     | 20    | 4    | 12     | 16    |
| Connacht            | <i>Galway</i>    | 1    | 13     | 14    | 2    | 16     | 18    | 2    | 22     | 24    | 2    | 20     | 22    |
|                     | <i>Leitrim</i>   | 1    | 0      | 1     | 1    | 4      | 5     | 1    | 1      | 2     | 0    | 0      | 0     |
|                     | <i>Mayo</i>      | 0    | 12     | 12    | 2    | 15     | 17    | 3    | 27     | 30    | 2    | 21     | 23    |
|                     | <i>Roscommon</i> | 0    | 7      | 7     | 0    | 12     | 12    | 1    | 8      | 9     | 2    | 9      | 11    |
|                     | <i>Sligo</i>     | 3    | 5      | 8     | 2    | 5      | 7     | 2    | 9      | 11    | 2    | 13     | 15    |
| Ulster<br>(part of) | <i>Cavan</i>     | 2    | 6      | 8     | 1    | 16     | 17    | 0    | 8      | 8     | 1    | 13     | 14    |
|                     | <i>Donegal</i>   | 4    | 24     | 28    | 3    | 19     | 22    | 3    | 14     | 17    | 1    | 19     | 20    |
|                     | <i>Monaghan</i>  | 0    | 15     | 15    | 0    | 19     | 19    | 0    | 6      | 6     | 0    | 10     | 10    |
|                     | <b>Totals</b>    | 127  | 621    | 748   | 134  | 677    | 811   | 111  | 515    | 626   | 92   | 477    | 569   |

Source: *Census of population, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1956.*

**Table 2b: Male and female music teachers in the principal urban centres in the Irish Free State, 1926**

| Cities and principal towns in the Irish Free State 1926 | Male music teachers | Female music teachers | Total no. of music teachers |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dublin  | 29                  | 156                   | 185                         |
| Rathmines and Rathgar                                   | 7                   | 70                    | 77                          |
| Pembroke  | 8                   | 25                    | 33                          |
| Blackrock   | 1                   | 11                    | 12                          |
| Dun Laoghaire   | 2                   | 18                    | 20                          |
| <b>Sub-total</b>  | <b>47</b>           | <b>280</b>            | <b>327</b>                  |
| Cork  | 9                   | 40                    | 49                          |
| Limerick  | 6                   | 13                    | 19                          |
| Waterford   | 2                   | 9                     | 11                          |
| Galway  | 0                   | 8                     | 8                           |
| Dundalk   | 0                   | 4                     | 4                           |
| Drogheda  | 1                   | 3                     | 4                           |
| Wexford   | 0                   | 5                     | 5                           |
| Sligo   | 3                   | 4                     | 7                           |
| Tralee  | 0                   | 2                     | 2                           |
| Kilkenny  | 1                   | 4                     | 5                           |
| <b>Sub-total</b>  | <b>22</b>           | <b>92</b>             | <b>114</b>                  |
| Total of the 14 Irish towns with 5,000-10,000 people    | 6                   | 26                    | 32                          |
| Total of the 76 Irish towns with 1,500-5,000 people     | 18                  | 97                    | 115                         |
| Remainder of the country                                | 34                  | 126                   | 160                         |
| <b>Totals</b>   | <b>127</b>          | <b>621</b>            | <b>748</b>                  |

Source: *Census of population, 1926.*

**Table 3: Numbers of music teachers at work in various industries or services in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Industry or service category as per census publications                                   | 1926       |            |            | 1936       |            |            | 1946       |            |            | 1951      |            |            |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
|   | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males     | Females    | Total      |
| <b>Professions:</b><br>Education (not government or local authority): Teachers of music * | 99         | 563        | 662        | 113        | 651        | 764        | 93         | 477        | 570        | 61        | 417        | 478        |
| <i>As % of total number of music teachers</i>   | <i>78</i>  | <i>91</i>  | <i>89</i>  | <i>84</i>  | <i>96</i>  | <i>94</i>  | <i>84</i>  | <i>93</i>  | <i>91</i>  | <i>66</i> | <i>87</i>  | <i>84</i>  |
| <b>Total number of music teachers [100%]</b>  | <b>127</b> | <b>621</b> | <b>748</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>677</b> | <b>811</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>626</b> | <b>92</b> | <b>477</b> | <b>569</b> |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

Includes university lecturers, all persons engaged in private schools, tutors or governesses etc, in addition to those engaged to teach music in secondary schools recognised by the department of education.

**Table 4: Occupational status of music teachers in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Occupational status                   | 1926  |         |       |     | 1936  |         |       |     | 1946  |         |       |     | 1951  |         |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|-----|-------|---------|-------|
|                                       | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total | %   | Males | Females | Total |
| Employees                             | 44    | 177     | 221   | 30  | 38    | 137     | 175   | 22  | 32    | 130     | 162   | 26  | X     | 170     |       |
| Self-employed                         | 78    | 429     | 507   | 68  | 89    | 535     | 624   | 77  | 70    | 375     | 445   | 71  | X     | 297     |       |
| Unemployed                            | 5     | 3       | 8     |     | 2     | 2       | 4     |     | 3     | 5       | 8     |     | X     | 3       |       |
| Employers                             | 0     | 3       | 3     | 2   | 1     | 0       | 1     | 1   | 2     | 1       | 3     | 3   | X     | 0       |       |
| Others *                              | 0     | 9       | 0     |     | 4     | 3       | 7     |     | 4     | 4       | 8     |     | X     | 7       |       |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | 127   | 621     | 748   | 100 | 134   | 677     | 811   | 100 | 111   | 515     | 626   | 100 | 92    | 477     | 569   |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

\* Includes those retired, those in hospitals and other institutions, etc  
 x Numbers unavailable

**Table 5: Conjugal status of music teachers in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Conjugal status                       | 1926  |         |       | 1936  |         |       | 1946  |         |       | 1951  |         |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
|                                       | Males | Females | Total |
| Married                               | 64    | 37      | 101   | 58    | 42      | 100   | 50    | 32      | 82    | X     | 39      | X     |
| Single                                | 52    | 551     | 603   | 66    | 612     | 678   | 53    | 466     | 519   | X     | 422     | X     |
| Widowed                               | 11    | 33      | 44    | 10    | 23      | 33    | 8     | 17      | 25    | X     | 16      | X     |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | 127   | 621     | 748   | 134   | 677     | 811   | 111   | 515     | 626   | 92    | 477     | 569   |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.

**Table 6: Stated religion of music teachers in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Religion                              | 1926       |            |            |            | 1936       |            |            |            | 1946       |            |            |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                       | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          |
| Catholic                              | 93         | 407        | 500        | 67         | 103        | 534        | 637        | 79         | 88         | 421        | 509        | 81         |
| Protestant Episcopalians              | 29         | 148        | 177        | 24         | 25         | 98         | 123        | 15         | 19         | 64         | 83         | 13         |
| Presbyterians                         | 1          | 21         | 22         | 9          | 1          | 19         | 20         | 6          | 1          | 14         | 15         | 6          |
| Methodists                            | 1          | 23         | 24         |            | 2          | 12         | 14         |            | 0          | 10         | 10         |            |
| Jews                                  | 1          | 5          | 6          |            | 2          | 6          | 8          |            | 3          | 1          | 4          |            |
| Other religion                        | 2          | 17         | 19         | 1          | 8          | 9          | 0          | 5          | 5          |            |            |            |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | <b>127</b> | <b>621</b> | <b>748</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>677</b> | <b>811</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>626</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936 and 1946.  
 No relevant information available in the 1951 census publications.

**Table 7: Stated place of birth of music teachers in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Place of birth                        | 1926       |            |            |            | 1936       |            |            |            | 1946       |            |            |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                       | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          | Males      | Females    | Total      | %          |
| Saorstát Éireann/Éire/26 counties     | 91         | 547        | 638        | 85         | 100        | 613        | 713        | 88         | 84         | 474        | 558        | 89         |
| Northern Ireland/6 counties           | 5          | 34         | 39         | 5          | 3          | 17         | 20         | 2          | 3          | 12         | 15         | 2          |
| England, Scotland, Wales *            | 21         | 34         | 55         | 7          | 19         | 37         | 56         | 7          | 15         | 22         | 37         | 6          |
| United States of America              | 0          | 2          | 2          |            | 0          | 1          | 1          | 3          | 2          | 2          | 4          | 3          |
| Other countries †                     | 10         | 4          | 14         | 3          | 12         | 9          | 21         |            | 7          | 5          | 12         |            |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | <b>127</b> | <b>621</b> | <b>748</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>677</b> | <b>811</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>626</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936 and 1946.  
 No relevant information available in the 1951 census publications.

\* Including Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

† Including France, Germany, Russia, India and other British Dominions.

**Table 8: Music teachers and the Irish language in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Spoken language                       | 1926       |            |            | 1936       |            |            | 1946       |            |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                       | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      |
| Irish speakers*                       | 15         | 79         | 94         | 26         | 152        | 178        | 25         | 138        | 163        |
| Non-Irish speakers                    | 112        | 542        | 654        | 108        | 525        | 633        | 86         | 377        | 463        |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | <b>127</b> | <b>621</b> | <b>748</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>677</b> | <b>811</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>626</b> |

Source: *Census of population*, 1926, 1936 and 1946.  
 No relevant information available in the 1951 census publications.

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The 1926 census differentiates between 'Irish speakers only' [of which there were no music teachers], 'non-Irish speakers' and 'Irish & English speakers'. The subsequent census publications detail only 'Irish speakers' and 'non-Irish speakers', the category of 'Irish speakers' including those with any knowledge of Irish and another language, usually English.

**Table 9: Numbers of music teachers in various age categories in Ireland in the period 1922-1951**

| Age category                          | 1926       |            |            | 1936       |            |            | 1946       |            |            | 1951      |            |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
|                                       | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males      | Females    | Total      | Males     | Females    | Total      |
| 14-19 years                           | 2          | 42         | 44         | 1          | 28         | 29         | 0          | 26         | 26         | X         | 13         |            |
| 20-24 years                           | 11         | 125        | 136        | 7          | 134        | 141        | 5          | 73         | 78         | X         | 48         |            |
| 25-29 years                           | 13         | 84         | 97         | 16         | 150        | 166        | 11         | 82         | 93         | X         | 71         |            |
| 30-34 years                           | 12         | 71         | 83         | 13         | 78         | 91         | 13         | 70         | 83         | X         | 60         |            |
| 35-44 years                           | 21         | 100        | 121        | 28         | 108        | 136        | 15         | 71         | 86         | X         | 57         |            |
| 45-54 years                           | 28         | 97         | 125        | 21         | 86         | 107        | 20         | 65         | 85         | X         | 85         |            |
| 55-64 years                           | 26         | 64         | 90         | 31         | 61         | 92         | 19         | 55         | 74         | X         | 50         |            |
| 65 years and over                     | 14         | 38         | 52         | 17         | 32         | 49         | 17         | 28         | 45         | X         | 21         |            |
| <b>Total number of music teachers</b> | <b>127</b> | <b>621</b> | <b>748</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>677</b> | <b>811</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>626</b> | <b>92</b> | <b>477</b> | <b>569</b> |

Source: *Census of population, 1926, 1936, 1946 and 1951.*

## APPENDIX K

**John F. Larchet and Arthur Darley,  
'Memorandum re: suggested establishment of a National Academy of Music' (n. d. [1922])<sup>1</sup>**

The present unsatisfactory position of the fine arts in the Irish Free State appears to be universally admitted, and of all the arts, music, which makes the greatest appeal to a large proportion of humanity, is the most neglected.

This is due to a variety of causes; the political conditions which prevented the people from settling down to any form of self expression or self-development are probably the basic cause of our general artistic debility, and to these there must be added, in the case of music at any rate, our position under the English government, and our enforced conformity to English musical and educational methods.

The attitude of the British government towards music has always varied between complete indifference and open hostility; and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that English ideas on music and musical education have never received anything but contempt from the great nations of Europe. Even in recent years, when English musicians began to realise the position of their country, and to search for new methods of rescuing their art from the decay into which it had fallen, we were still denied any opportunities of improvement in this country, and have been forced to struggle on with the antiquated and often grotesque methods which have since been abandoned by the English themselves.

The main results of this condition are twofold: our own unrivalled national music has been neglected and dissipated, and Ireland has been forced to fall out of the general advance of musical knowledge and musical culture, and to accept a position which is not only degrading, but most unfair to herself.

The first efforts, in any scheme put forward for the improvement of our position, should be directed towards the revival and purification of our national music. This has suffered exceedingly; much of it is possibly lost forever; many of its finest examples have been filched from us by England and Scotland, and the remainder has been much injured and debased by the interference of unqualified editors and collectors, who have done more harm than good. Even the labours of a few genuine enthusiasts who have worked in this field have done little more than save it from absolute extinction, and our greatest work still lies before us.

Secondly, Ireland must be enabled to take a place among the great musical nations of Europe. Those who look upon the musical position of Germany and France as being beyond our reach, and accept our own degradation as inevitable and natural, overlook entirely the fact that those countries have only been educated up to their present level by a generous and unremitting attention to the art, which is fostered by magnificent government endowments, as well as the beneficence of private patrons. Of Germany, in particular, it is no exaggeration to say that she pays as much attention to music and the fine arts in general as she does to scientific research. She looks upon both as equally necessary for the development of her people, and the results of her policy, in both directions, do not need to be pointed out now.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was presumably compiled and sent to the ministry of education in late 1922 or early 1923, for it to be sent to the ministry of finance on 1 Feb. 1923. (National Archives of Ireland, FIN/1/2794).

The great musical *conservatoires* of Berlin, Leipzig, Paris and Rome, with the national systems of musical education which they control, achieve two objects: they offer every opportunity to all the creative talent which can be discovered and they cultivate in the people as a whole an intelligent love of music, and a genuine artistic appreciation without which genius has no incentive to create.

There appears to be no reason to doubt the natural abilities of our people, or their power under the same conditions, to achieve the same success. The best method of reaching this end appears to be the establishment of a central musical institution based, with necessary modifications to suit our own peculiar conditions, on the great endowed institutions of the Continent. This institution should synthesise and control the teaching of music in all schools and colleges owned by the state, or receiving any educational grants from the government; it should be in a position to offer advanced teaching to all who require it; and by every possible means should endeavour to encourage the advancement of music in the country.

It is obvious that such an institution will require state support, at any rate in the beginning. In the scheme outlined below a sum of £20,000 is suggested, being a capital grant of £5,000 and a sum of £3,000 per annum for a period of five years. The figure is exceedingly moderate compared with the monies poured out every year by Germany, France and Italy for the same end; and if the scheme succeeds, it should be possible to have the institution financially self-supporting at the end of the period mentioned. Even if the state did not feel inclined to expend any more to encourage the progress of music, a beginning would have been made on proper lines, and the art could at least hope to exist by itself.

The heads of a tentative scheme for such an institution are submitted herewith.

I. Style and title

The institution shall be known as the National Academy of Music.

II. Buildings

There is no necessity, in the beginning at any rate, to consider the question of erecting a building. It should not be difficult to obtain suitable accommodation. The old University College buildings in Stephen's Green, which contain ample room, and a very fair substitute for a concert hall, suggest themselves at once. It is proposed that the state should pay the rent of any buildings acquired.

III. Functions of the Academy

The functions of the Academy shall be the teaching of music in all its branches, theoretical and practical, to pupils; the control, direction, inspection and examination of music in all schools and colleges in the Irish Free State controlled by the government, or receiving any educational grants from the government (for which purpose all the powers and duties of the National Education Board and the Intermediate Education Board in relation to music should be transferred to it); the certification of teachers; the encouragement of music by means of scholarships, travelling studentships, research work (especially in relation to Irish music), lectures, recitals etc. The Academy should have the power to absorb any existing institutions with their consent, whether endowed or not, and to

accept the administration of any grants or endowments given by any body or individual for the advancement of music.

IV. Constitution and management

The management control and general administration of the Academy shall be vested in a council constituted as follows:-The musical director of the Academy who should be chairman, two members of the professoriate nominated by him, and two persons interested in the advancement of music, not being professional musicians, nominated by the minister of education. The nominated members of the council should hold office for a period of five years, and should be eligible for re-appointment. Casual vacancies on the council should be filled, as to professional members, on the nomination of the musical director, and as to the non-professional members, on the nomination of the minister of education. Any person nominated to fill a casual vacancy on the council shall hold office only until the expiration of the term for which the person in whose place he is nominated would have served.

V. Musical director

The principal of the Academy should be a musical director, who should be a whole-time official, appointed by the minister of education, and should hold his appointment subject to removal by the minister of education for misconduct or incapacity. The scholastic direction of the Academy should be vested in the musical director.

VI. Finance

The Academy should receive from the government a capital grant of £5,000 for pianos and other musical instruments, library, music, furniture, and preliminary expenses, and a sum of £3,000 per annum towards the maintenance of the Academy for a period of five years, at the end of which the position could be reviewed, and other arrangements made. The Academy would charge such fees for tuitions, lectures, examinations, certificates and diplomas, etc., as would be proper, and should be at liberty, subject to the consent of the minister of education, to accept endowments of money, instruments, etc., to be applied to the objects of the Academy.

## APPENDIX L

### The R.I.A.M. II: numbers of pupils attending music classes; financial significance of the local centre examination system, 1922-51

**Table 1a: Numbers of pupils attending various music classes at the R.I.A.M., 1922-32**

| Academic Year | Piano | Singing | Sight-singing | Violin | 'Cello | Chamber music * | Organ | Harmony | Elements/Rudiments | Piano accomp. | Speech training † | Viola | Flute | Clarinet | Double Bass | Harp | Totals ‡ |
|---------------|-------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|-----------------|-------|---------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------------|------|----------|
| 1921/2        | 226   | 58      | 40            | 78     | 18     | 40              | 11    | 99      | 209                | 0             | 3                 | 1     | -     | -        | -           | -    | 783      |
| 1922/3        | 215   | 45      | 33            | 75     | 17     | 30              | 11    | 127     | 205                | 0             | 7                 | 2     | 1     | -        | -           | -    | 768      |
| 1923/4        | 248   | 39      | 32            | 79     | 25     | 26              | 11    | 125     | 193                | 0             | 6                 | 1     | 0     | 1        | -           | -    | 786      |
| 1924/5        | 230   | 39      | 25            | 62     | 22     | 43              | 14    | 127     | 176                | 0             | 3                 | 0     | 1     | 1        | -           | -    | 743      |
| 1925/6        | 239   | 39      | 22            | 57     | 23     | 40              | 14    | 128     | 195                | 0             | 1                 | 0     | 1     | 1        | -           | -    | 760      |
| 1926/7        | 213   | 37      | 23            | 57     | 27     | 43              | 15    | 118     | 167                | 0             | 3                 | 1     | 2     | 0        | 1           | -    | 707      |
| 1927/8        | 194   | 37      | 20            | 66     | 22     | 29              | 15    | 110     | 147                | 0             | 1                 | 0     | 1     | 0        | 2           | -    | 644      |
| 1928/9        | 163   | 42      | 43            | 53     | 16     | 17              | 18    | 88      | 138                | 0             | 1                 | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0           | -    | 579      |
| 1929/30       | 167   | 50      | 45            | 46     | 11     | 4               | 18    | 92      | 127                | 3             | 2                 | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 3    | 568      |
| 1930/1        | 160   | 46      | 40            | 38     | 14     | 5               | 18    | 90      | 112                | 3             | 1                 | 2     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 2    | 531      |
| 1931/2        | 153   | § 50    | 43            | 36     | 14     | 0               | 18    | 90      | 113                | 6             | 3                 | 2     | 1     | 0        | 0           | 2    | 531      |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1921-32.

\* Although chamber music was instrumental ensemble music-making, it is unclear whether or not the figures published in the annual reports, particularly from 1930 onwards, actually refer to the number of chamber music ensembles as opposed to the number of students in the ensembles. In 1936, for example, the figure '1' was given for this category, but the type of ensemble was not detailed and thereby the number of students involved is somewhat uncertain. Note that this subject was not always offered by the R.I.A.M. either and that students who attended the class when it was available also attended individual classes on a specialist instrument, such as piano, violin or cello.

† This subject was called 'declamation' until 1936, 'elocution' from 1937 to 1947 and 'speech training' for the rest of the period in question.

‡ There is a difficulty with presenting a total figure for the number of students attending classes at the R.I.A.M. here as the academy itself did not report a total figure each year nor did they detail how many students of the total, where given or otherwise, may have attended a number of different classes and/ or played in chamber music ensembles, thus be accounted for more than once, in turn, making the total number of students attending classes at the R.I.A.M. appear greater than it may have been in reality. Indeed, this table does not reflect all of the music classes available at the R.I.A.M. during the period in question, as orchestral and choral classes, for example, were introduced from 1927 & 1928 respectively, and were attended by present, past pupils and staff. However because these particular classes were given free of charge and appear to have been to encourage communal music-making within the Academy, it does not appear that the numbers of those who attended were included in the annual reports.

§ This number was given as '46' in the *R.I.A.M. annual report*, 1932.

Table 1b: Number of pupils attending various music classes at the R.I.A.M., 1932-51

| Academic Year | Piano | Singing | Sight-singing | Violin | Cello | Chamber music | Organ | Harmony | Elements/Rudiments | Piano accomp. | Speech training | Viola | Flute | Clarinet | Double Bass | Harp | Other subjects | Totals |
|---------------|-------|---------|---------------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|-------|----------|-------------|------|----------------|--------|
| 1932/3        | 129   | 50      | 37            | 36     | 12    | 2             | 19    | 76      | 103                | 5             | 3               | 2     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 0    | -              | 474    |
| 1933/4        | 122   | 43      | 43            | 29     | 8     | 0             | 19    | 51      | 90                 | 3             | 2               | 2     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 1    | -              | 413    |
| 1934/5        | 108   | 43      | 39            | 25     | 10    | 0             | 18    | 50      | 80                 | 2             | 1               | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 1    | -              | 377    |
| 1935/6        | 125   | 48      | 32            | 32     | 8     | 1             | 17    | 60      | 84                 | 3             | 1               | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 1    | -              | 412    |
| 1936/7        | 138   | 40      | 20            | 27     | 9     | 0             | 17    | 62      | 62                 | 3             | 22              | 1     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 2    | -              | 403    |
| 1937/8        | 143   | 44      | 28            | 24     | 9     | 0             | 15    | 68      | 66                 | 0             | 56              | 0     | 1     | 0        | 0           | 2    | -              | 456    |
| 1938/9        | 121   | 33      | 23            | 18     | 10    | 0             | 14    | 58      | 61                 | 0             | 44              | 0     | 1     | 0        | 0           | 2    | -              | 385    |
| 1939/40       | 127   | 33      | 23            | 21     | 9     | 0             | 18    | 64      | 48                 | 0             | 48              | 0     | 2     | 0        | 1           | 5    | -              | 399    |
| 1940/1        | 136   | 43      | 23            | 20     | 10    | 0             | 17    | 59      | 49                 | 0             | 49              | 0     | 2     | 0        | 0           | 5    | -              | 413    |
| 1941/2        | 170   | 68      | 39            | 20     | 10    | 0             | 19    | 61      | 83                 | 0             | 49              | 0     | 2     | 0        | *0          | 3    | -              | 524    |
| 1942/3        | 191   | 84      | 41            | 27     | 10    | 0             | 17    | 65      | 105                | 0             | 60              | 0     | 2     | 1        | 1           | 3    | -              | 607    |
| 1943/4        | 210   | 68      | 32            | 35     | 8     | 0             | 16    | 66      | 103                | 0             | 82              | 0     | 0     | 0        | 1           | 3    | -              | 624    |
| 1944/5        | 309   | 102     | 52            | 46     | 10    | 3             | 23    | 86      | 162                | 0             | 134             | 1     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 2    | -              | 930    |
| 1945/6        | 350   | 128     | 70            | 48     | 11    | 3             | 26    | 113     | 183                | 3             | 121             | 1     | 0     | 0        | 0           | 2    | -              | 1,059  |
| 1946/7        | 356   | 105     | 66            | 36     | 11    | 0             | 25    | 125     | 194                | 0             | 159             | 0     | 0     | 1        | 0           | 4    | -              | 1,082  |
| 1947/8        | 368   | 129     | 84            | 43     | 9     | 0             | 27    | 141     | 230                | 0             | 198             | 2     | 0     | 4        | 0           | 4    | -              | 1,239  |
| 1948/9        | 325   | 105     | 60            | 46     | 12    | 0             | 23    | 149     | 174                | 0             | 30              | 3     | 1     | 4        | 0           | 3    | 8              | 943    |
| 1949/50       | 299   | 127     | 71            | 57     | 11    | 0             | 20    | 142     | 171                | 0             | 16              | 8     | 2     | 5        | 0           | 1    | 9              | 939    |
| 1950/1        | 323   | 81      | 42            | 65     | 12    | 15            | 12    | 137     | 207                | 0             | 54              | 8     | 0     | 2        | 0           | 1    | 8              | 957    |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1932-52*

\* This number was given as '1' in the *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1939*, p.

† This figure was given as '1 Quintet' (5) in the *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1951* but as '1' in the report for 1952.

**Table 1c: Numbers of pupils taking 'other' subjects at the R.I.A.M., 1948-51**

| Academic Year | Piano duets * | French horn | Trumpet | Trombone | Plain chant | Oboe |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|------|
| 1948/9        | 2             | 2           | 2       | 1        | 1           | -    |
| 1949/50       | 2             | 1           | 2       | 2        | 1           | 1    |
| 1950/1        | 1             | 1           | 0       | 4        | 0           | 2    |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1949-51.*

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\* It is unclear whether or not this figure refers to the number of duets or the number of students in the class

**Table 2:**  
The financial significance to the R.I.A.M. of its local centre examination system

| Academic Year | Total number of candidates examined at local centres | Total annual income of the R.I.A.M. |    |    | Revenue from local centre exam fees |    |   |                          |
|---------------|--|-------------------------------------|----|----|-------------------------------------|----|---|--------------------------|
|               |  | £                                   | s  | d  | £                                   | s  | d | Approx % of total income |
| 1921/2        | 1,013  | 6,930                               | 6  | 2  | 715                                 | 1  | 0 | 10                       |
| 1922/3        | 1,244  | 7,320                               | 17 | 4  | 862                                 | 2  | 0 | 12                       |
| 1923/4        | † 1,675  | 7,172                               | 19 | 5  | 1,173                               | 6  | 6 | 16                       |
| 1924/5        | 1,979  | 7,508                               | 0  | 11 | 1,330                               | 8  | 0 | 18                       |
| 1925/6        | 2,242  | 8,755                               | 6  | 9  | 1,530                               | 19 | 0 | 17                       |
| 1926/7        | 2,590  | 7,849                               | 0  | 5  | 1,802                               | 4  | 6 | 23                       |
| 1927/8        | 2,823  | 7,099                               | 3  | 1  | 1,901                               | 13 | 0 | 27                       |
| 1928/9        | 2,898  | 6,789                               | 18 | 9  | 1,944                               | 10 | 0 | 29                       |
| 1929/0        | 3,226  | 6,916                               | 3  | 5  | 2,396                               | 15 | 6 | 35                       |
| 1930/1        | 3,430  | 8,128                               | 0  | 10 | 2,387                               | 7  | 0 | 29                       |
| 1931/2        | 3,869  | 6,977                               | 6  | 11 | 2,504                               | 8  | 6 | 36                       |
| 1932/3        | 3,902  | 6,614                               | 15 | 8  | 2,573                               | 6  | 0 | 39                       |
| 1933/4        | 4,938  | 6,408                               | 5  | 7  | 2,700                               | 9  | 1 | 42                       |
| 1934/5        | 5,002  | 7,562                               | 2  | 4  | 2,960                               | 7  | 0 | 39                       |
| 1935/6        | 5,481  | 7,919                               | 4  | 9  | 2,892                               | 16 | 6 | 37                       |
| 1936/7        | 5,640  | 6,752                               | 16 | 11 | 2,968                               | 1  | 6 | 44                       |
| 1937/8        | X  | 7,520                               | 13 | 11 | 2,875                               | 16 | 6 | 38                       |
| 1938/9        | X  | 7,685                               | 3  | 5  | 2,867                               | 10 | 2 | 37                       |
| 1939/40       | X  | 7,981                               | 9  | 11 | 2,903                               | 17 | 0 | 36                       |
| 1940/1        | 5,623  | 8,025                               | 17 | 11 | 3,008                               | 12 | 6 | 37                       |
| 1941/2        | 6,331  | 7,473                               | 12 | 8  | 3,293                               | 19 | 8 | 44                       |
| 1942/3        | ‡ 'over 7,000'                                       | 8,536                               | 11 | 1  | 3,581                               | 4  | 6 | 42                       |
| 1943/4        | § 'exceeding 8,000'                                  | 12,019                              | 11 | 1  | 4,035                               | 17 | 6 | 34                       |
| 1944/5        | ** 'almost 9,000'                                    | 10,963                              | 19 | 4  | 4,277                               | 8  | 8 | 39                       |
| 1945/6        | X  | 13,290                              | 7  | 4  | 4,510                               | 2  | 6 | 34                       |
| 1946/7        | X  | 12,424                              | 2  | 11 | 4,765                               | 4  | 8 | 38                       |
| 1947/8        | X  | 11,896                              | 0  | 2  | 4,771                               | 10 | 4 | 40                       |
| 1948/9        | †† 10,257  | 14,798                              | 15 | 7  | 4,716                               | 9  | 8 | 32                       |
| 1949/50       | X  | 15,802                              | 6  | 5  | 4,987                               | 6  | 3 | 32                       |
| 1950/1        | X  | 16,337                              | 6  | 7  | 4,979                               | 5  | 8 | 30                       |

Source: *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1922-1952.*

The term 'local centre' refers to a venue such as a secondary school where there were deemed to be enough prepared pupils to conduct examinations or any central urban location decided by the academy itself in which smaller numbers of pupils of private music teachers from different areas could be assembled for examination. The R.I.A.M. itself was counted as a local centre.

X

No figure available in the annual reports.

†

No figure for the number of local centre exam candidates in 1924 was given in the annual report for 1924. However, two different figures for 1924 were published in the *R.I.A.M. annual report, 1925*; 1,675 was the figure provided by the Board of Studies (p. 9) and 1,669 by L.E. Steele, inspector under the Educational Endowments Act, 1885 (p. 15)

‡

*R.I.A.M. annual report, 1943*, p. 11.

§

*R.I.A.M. annual report, 1944*, p. 12.

\*\*

*R.I.A.M. annual report, 1945*, p. 13.

††

Ida Starkie, 'The Royal Irish Academy of Music' in Fleischmann (ed.), *Mus. in Ire.*, p. 111.

## APPENDIX M

### Music Association of Ireland, 'Music and the nation: a memorandum' (1949), Part IV – conclusion <sup>1</sup>

In presenting this memorandum, the Music Association of Ireland fulfils in some measure, it is to be hoped, one of the main purposes for which it was founded in the spring of 1948. It has been our object to draw attention to some of the things that need to be done in the future to organise music in Ireland on the whole, rather than to present a factual survey of what has been done or is done in particular fields in the present. Whether or not there is any likelihood of some of the most important of our requirements being realised within this generation, we believe that to come within measurable distance of the musical advancement of other nations, or to effect even small improvements methodically, we must order these according to a general plan, designed to achieve ultimately and by degrees that minimum level of musical organisation which we have suggested should be the aim. For this purpose we shall require a central body or a National Council of Music, financed and invested with authority by the state, and working in liaison with the minister for education, the town and local authorities, and possibly with a minister for fine arts.

A voluntary association such as ours can draw up for the first time a critical survey of music in Ireland, and publish a policy; but, unless we have much greater cooperation and financial backing, we can do little directly to put any policy into effect. At the most we can make representations to individual ministers, which has already been done in connection with the sections on education and broadcasting, and address the government generally, or any future government, as well as the musical public and profession, with the memorandum as a whole. The music profession in Dublin, divided as it is onto various cliques, has been slow to come forward, and musicians in general are very loathe to risk compromising themselves in the open. This is natural under the circumstances, since they are among the people who can least afford to do so, and they are not organised as a profession. The Association however is supported by a sufficiently authoritative and representative body of progressive musical opinion to claim, with more justice than any other existing body, the right to speak on behalf of music as it affects this country.

In so speaking through this memorandum, though it may not be acceptable in all its details to every musician or to every member of the Association, we are nevertheless seeking to grind no axe, and we have not hesitated to criticise wherever criticism is called for in the interests of music in Ireland. At the same time, though we have not been appointed as a state commission, we have voluntarily put forward suggestions for the pursuance of a constructive musical policy, and we offer these free and gratis to the government. It is not otherwise likely that any steps would be taken to arrive at a special over-all policy or plan for the advancement of music; there is at present no government department within the province of which it would particularly lie to concern itself with this, and it is only a matter of chance if we have from time to time any minister or government official who has even the slightest interest in music. The suggestions we have made, if they were to be considered, would fall within the sphere of several different departments and authorities, and this

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Music Association of Ireland, 'Music and the nation: a memorandum', 14 June 1949 (National Library of Ireland, MS 40, 610), pp 67-78. This typescript contains a variety of hand-written corrections and addenda which have been incorporated here, where appropriate, into the text. Some corrections in spelling have also been made.

may be used as a plea for the establishment of a ministry for fine arts. It remains for the government as a whole, or the individual ministers concerned, to take action; at least if they wish to do anything they have now some proposals before them, and we venture to hope that, if and when some serious move is made, even though a new plan or a more detailed report be drawn up, this memorandum may serve as an indication and a preliminary survey of the ground to be covered.

The main objections that will be opposed to us will of course be those of expense. The weight of such objections however depends upon the value that is put upon culture in general, and music in particular. Money can invariably be found by the government for anything that is thought sufficiently important, and while we are aware that some of our proposals would involve a certain outlay, the sums would be nothing extraordinary in comparison with what is already spent on relatively unnecessary things. The expenditure would be spread over a number of years, and in the long run would yield ample returns in every respect, both directly and indirectly.

We have tried to show that each part of a plan for developing a musical culture in the nation must be to a large extent dependent upon the other parts. If therefore money is spent on one aspect of music, it is uneconomical to refuse to spend it on the other complementary aspects. That a considerable sum is already devoted to maintaining a symphony orchestra, for example, is a cause for great satisfaction; yet a proper return for this money cannot be expected in the absence of good radio transmission, and without a hall in which to hold public symphony concerts. Since the orchestra costs many thousands of pounds per annum, it seems to border on the eccentric when public concerts have to be discontinued owing to a loss of one hundred pounds. In the event of such concerts being resumed, it would be equally incongruous to neglect to advertise them properly or to conduct an organised publicity not only for the concerts themselves but for music in general.

In the same way the success of future symphony concerts clearly depends on the encouragement of a taste for music among children in schools, and upon the initiation of a widespread movement for adult musical education. Further, the two spheres of education, of children and adults, are themselves interdependent.

We have argued that the introduction of music as one of the principal factors in education is one of the utmost importance with regard to the educational system itself. Expenditure on music in this field, therefore, may be regarded primarily as expenditure on education, and it should not be necessary to prove that a good educational system is one of the first necessities for the state and one of the most serious responsibilities of any government.

In the long run it will not cost the state anything extra to have teachers trained in music as part of their normal training. The educational changes required in schools are mainly a question of gradual reorganisation. A number of additional educational officers, such as supervisors fully trained in music, will be needed, but it is likely that additional educational organisers would be necessary in any event, or that some of the existing posts could be transformed to meet the new requirements. The principal expense with regard to national schools will be an initial outlay for the provision of a small piano, gramophone and wireless in each school, and in larger schools of a music-room. New school buildings are required on a large scale apart altogether from music, and the inclusion of a suitable music-room might not necessarily mean a serious increase in cost. The buildings will have to be planned in accordance with the educational system of the future. The other equipment might cost altogether in the neighbourhood of £100 for each school, and the wireless, and even the gramophone, will be useful also for subjects other than music. If the total cost of supplying every

national school in the country with this equipment were to amount to some £600,000, it would not be very impossible to do it, especially if it were to be done year by year.

Adult musical education will require some expenditure, which we have suggested might devolve upon regional authorities.

If these changes are to be practicable and fully effective, good music will have to be provided at the same time as an interest is awakened. It would be short-sighted to try to teach people to appreciate music in a country where there is no music to be appreciated. A go-ahead policy in the promotion of good concerts, recitals and illustrated lectures, and the stimulation of a direct interest in music by fostering music in the theatre, music publishing and composition will have immediate repercussions in the educational field by making people conscious of music as a present reality, as something that is going on in their midst and that has an important function in society. As more people begin to appreciate music, and the effects of a more general education in music become felt, these things will become self-supporting, and a much greater amount of musical activity will become possible. In the meantime they may have to be subsidised to a certain extent. The principal outlay under this heading will be the initial one required for a national concert hall, and a national conservatory of music, to provide for the future supply of executant musicians and teachers.

Without these last two necessities any endeavour to encourage music on the plan we have suggested, whether in education or in practice, will be seriously handicapped. It is true that two such buildings will cost a fairly large sum, and that the maintenance of the conservatory will be expensive. Every effort should nevertheless be made to provide the money, and we believe that it could be done by an administration that seriously wanted to do it and that was concerned with advancing the Irish nation to a position of some dignity and cultural standing among the nations of Europe.

Perhaps we are here picturing a utopian ideal; it is not however something that has been found impossible elsewhere. Other small nations have achieved as much, and if we look at the case of Finland, with as small or smaller initial resources. Economic stability is also necessary; but it is not a coincidence that it is just such nations as those to which we are referring that were able at the same time to achieve this. The Irish nation has not advanced as far in either direction. The one ideal appears as utopian as the other; and it always will, for in each case the underlying reasons are the same.

It is not therefore that we are so poor that we cannot afford to support culture; rather is it that when we see some progress in cultural and educational matters, we may then conclude that there are some prospects ahead, of reaching as a nation a reasonable material prosperity also. To be poverty stricken in spirit is a far more hopeless predicament than to be materially badly off.

Individuals may succeed in accumulating money even though they may be lacking in most of the higher human attributes. This is not possible however for a society as a whole, and it is frequently done at the expense of society. The organisation of a state to secure the best possible conditions for all, and to provide for the welfare of future generations, requires a very different outlook and very different qualities from those of the individual opportunist. It requires a broadness of horizon that is equally far removed from the small-minded viewpoint that confuses parochialism with nationalism, and from any other form of political fanaticism. Political forms are not ends in themselves, and where the preaching of them is demonstrably dissociated from genuine social and cultural ideals, it is no more than

cant and jingoism. The great patriots and nationalists of Irish history were working for something more than the replacement of one set of shopkeepers by another.

If anything much beyond this has in fact been achieved during a quarter of a century of self-government, or if it ever will be, it is not too early for some evidence to be apparent. We are here concerned only with music, but its condition may be taken as an index to that of culture in general. We find that it is treated, on the whole and as compared with any other civilised country, with an official contempt and a cynical indifference.

In education some improvements have recently been made in our primary schools with regard to the place of music in the curriculum, and it is true that pious hopes are expressed by the department as to the results that may be obtained. On the other hand a serious effort is not made to make such results possible or to give the children any real opportunities of appreciating music or acquiring the elements of a genuine musical culture. The time allotted to music is absurdly short, and its teaching is neither properly organised nor sufficiently entrusted to expert or competent authorities.

In our secondary schools music has not so far been a subject on the ordinary curriculum, and no control whatever is exercised by the department in relation to the teaching of music or to the qualifications of music teachers on school staffs. As a result, not even class singing is included in the curriculum of the majority of boys' secondary schools. In some schools there is a choir, in relatively few an orchestra, consisting of picked students, but apart from the picked few, the students as a whole are unaffected. Where instrumental music is taught the instruction invariably occurs outside school hours. As a contrast to this we may point to the situation in Northern Ireland, where the regular programme in such schools includes class-singing, aural training, and musical appreciation, illustrated both by means of actual performance as well as by the gramophone and radio. In all secondary schools, facilities exist for the study of the piano by allowing students to take piano lessons during school hours. In some schools as many as four piano teachers are required to cope with the ever-increasing demand. There is further in Northern Ireland an organisation whereby school children even in the country towns can hear performances by eminent artists, and orchestras such as the London Philharmonic and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras; and the ministry of education has recently made provision for the appointment of specialist music teachers in the larger schools, who will be responsible for the instruction throughout the school to which they are appointed.

In an article in *The Bell*, of April 1947, Professor Fleischmann wrote concerning vocational schools:

'Only one county (Cork) employs a full-time teacher of choral singing, who conducts classes on consecutive days of the week at different schools. If this policy were generally adopted, and one teacher of singing and another of instrumental music were attached to the vocational schools in each county, who would cover all the schools once or twice weekly, the benefits to music and to the countryside would be incalculable. Fantastic, perhaps, yet this is merely what is being done in England, where nearly every county has its music committee with a salaried music organiser, and where professional musicians staff the rural music schools'.

Nothing is done either by the department of education or by the local or municipal authorities for the musical education of the adult public. Apart from the two municipal schools of music, and a negligible grant given to the Royal Irish Academy of Music on condition that it can show a certain minimum number of

emissaries in the persons of eminent conductors or composers should at least have some official attention paid to them.

Excuses have been made for us, even by foreigners: we are only beginning, it is said, we are doing our best, one cannot expect too much and one must not be too hard. Such excuses are not acceptable to Irishmen, who know perfectly well how these things are brought about, and who know also that very different standards are just as easily accessible, if they are wanted, and that it is not merely a question of cost.

It may be difficult for a government department to conduct its affairs with the principal object of obtaining the maximum of efficiency, irrespective of personal, political and other considerations. If Radio Éireann were run as a private enterprise, in the manner, for example, of the newspapers, we do not think the position would be much improved in this respect. Nor do we regard the system of management of the B.B.C. as a model to be imitated. If a greater integrity of purpose is to be achieved, it should be possible under state management, if under any system; and it should be sufficiently evident, from whatever point of view we look at it, that if we do not put efficiency and standard first we shall merely be discrediting not only that particular point of view, political or otherwise, but the whole nation.

We are simply proposing a state broadcasting station controlled by a representative body of experts in the various fields concerned. It is obviously absurd that an organisation playing so important a part in the cultural life of the country, and in reflecting the standards of Irish culture abroad, should be constituted as a minor branch of the Post Office, and it argues a depressing failure on the part of successive Irish governments to recognise either the intrinsic worth of cultural and educational standards, or their value to the nation in terms of prestige – a value that has been well understood and exploited even by the totalitarian military and materialistic states. The minister for posts and telegraphs has indeed recently appointed a 'Radio Advisory Board', but without any powers of its own. When we find that out of some twenty four members of this board there are only three professional musicians, and consider this in relation to the fact that at least 70% of broadcasting time is devoted to music, this seems to be only another example of official reluctance to permit the effective intrusion of qualified opinion.

We suggest as the only solution the separation of Radio Éireann from the department of posts and telegraphs, and the formation of a Radio Administrative Board, or a Cultural Council, with or without a minister for fine arts. This board or council should consist, not of non-descript persons from various walks of life, but of representatives of the previously mooted National Music Council, in correct proportion relatively to the proportion of broadcasting time that is inevitably occupied by music, and of representatives of other cultural activities, especially literature and the theatre, who should be men, or women, of generally, not merely officially, recognised eminence in their respective spheres, and of leading educationists or representatives of the department of education, and of any other department that is thought necessary. This board would appoint the permanent officials of the station, who would be responsible to it, and it would itself be responsible to the government as a whole as much as any other department. We are aware that in existing conditions such a proposal appears to border on the fantastic; but it amounts in reality to nothing more fantastic than the entrusting of matters concerning the nation's cultural and educational well-being and progress to the nation's leading men in these spheres, as farming should be organised by agricultural experts, or finance by economists. Only thus shall we ever achieve a national

broadcasting service in which we may take pride, and which will represent a reasonable reflection of the best that we as a nation can produce.

The effect on national prestige should further be considered in relation to the fact that Dublin must be the only capital city or even city of any size in the world of western civilisation that possesses no concert hall and no professional symphony orchestra giving public concerts. The plea of economy simply does not wash. If it were true that the government really could not afford to build a concert hall, they could at least show some signs that they were interested; the minister for finance might devote to it some of the surplus that has enabled him to make concessions for the encouragement of country cinemas. 'Economy' in these matters is a myopic policy that may be compared with the economy of those who used to cut down the forest trees in Ireland, while they were too practical and realistic to plant new ones. As it is, little need for economy is felt in providing for purely political purposes and in creating new government bureaus with staffs salaried at several thousand pounds a year.

The truth can only be that our public men are simply unwilling to take an interest in cultural matters. The Dublin Corporation, when approached as to the possibility of contributing to enable public symphony concerts to be held in the city of Dublin, replied that they were not legally entitled to support symphony concerts. Are we to assume that the Dublin Corporation is not concerned with the city's cultural facilities but only with its dustbins?

We are grateful to the department of posts and telegraphs for maintaining an orchestra, in the face, no doubt, of strong opposition, and for giving us good symphony concerts in the Phoenix Hall. Most city authorities in other countries nevertheless maintain or contribute to an orchestra with the object of having regular public orchestral concerts. Since the radio orchestra exists only for broadcasting, and we can scarcely muster more than one good orchestra, the only solution would be to detach the orchestra from Radio Éireann, even as we separate Radio Éireann from the Post Office, and turn it into a national symphony orchestra, supported by the government, the Dublin Corporation, and also by subscription, as in the case of philharmonic societies elsewhere, and devote it to giving first-class public symphony concerts in Dublin and other parts of the country. These concerts could all be broadcast, and a distinct radio orchestra would be unnecessary. An exactly similar development had recently taken place in Norway, where a separate radio orchestra has ceased to exist, and its place has been taken by the Oslo Philharmonic Society's orchestra, which gives two public concerts weekly throughout the season.

The need for an Irish national orchestra has been stated before, notably by Mr Boydell in an article in *The Bell* in April 1947. In the same number Professor Fleischmann drew our attention to some very relevant facts and comparisons:

'An Irish symphony orchestra will have to face competition with English and continental orchestras, some of them capitalised to the tune of £100,000 per annum, with players' salaries ranging from £13 - £17 for a thirty-hour week. The Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is not one of the largest or most prosperous of English orchestras, yet its income includes an annual grant of £14,000 from the Birmingham Corporation, and the total expenditure on the orchestra is nearly three times as great as that on the existing Radio Éireann orchestra. New South Wales, with a smaller population than this country (something over two million) can afford £60,000 annually as a subsidy for the new Sydney Symphony Orchestra - £30,000 contributed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, £20,000 by the state government, and £10,000 by the city council of Sydney. If we are to have a first-rate orchestra here compatible with the dignity of a capital

city, the department of finance will have to realise that leaving other considerations aside, the public demand for orchestral music, plus the ever-present factor of this country's reputation abroad, will justify expenditure such as would be allowed without question for tourism or racing'.

The similar example which could be cited are very numerous – in fact nearly every large city in England and on the continent of Europe maintains or substantially contributes towards the upkeep of an orchestra. When we contrast this with the attitude that meets us in Ireland, where it is illegal for city corporations to contribute a few pounds towards symphony concerts, where the government cannot be persuaded to take measures on behalf of music which would cost the exchequer nothing, or even to remove unnecessary and useless impediments such as the tax on musical instruments, we might be tempted to conclude, on the face of it, that we are controlled by one of the most materialistic administrations this side of the Iron Curtain.

The administration that we get is no doubt a reflection of the tastes of the majority, and we see the same image mirrored from the pages of the leading newspapers. Its figure, at first sight, has about it a misleading suggestion of that ancient wraith, the stage Irishman. Those who plead the cause of literature, of art-galleries, of the theatre or of architecture are certainly a very small minority. As for music, the representation is true to life when we see on the one hand the appointment by the minister for external affairs of a 'Cultural Committee' to represent Irish culture abroad, which does not include the name of a single musician; and on the other hand when we find the performance of a new work by an Irish composer, or a concert given by an Irish conductor almost invariably ignored by the press, and even visits of famous foreign conductors passed unnoticed.

We find the same indifference to music in the majority of our churches. While it should be possible to hear every morning in our cathedrals the great polyphonic music of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we find instead an almost universal neglect and low standard of church music, both in performance and taste, and a grudging policy that results in the impossibility of earning a living as an organist or church musician.

We find, to quote once more Professor Fleischmann, in the same article in *The Bell*, that:

'As a profession, music offers no worth-while living to the more intelligent and ambitious youngsters in search of a career. There are scarcely half-a-dozen whole-time positions in the country which carry salaries exceeding those of any junior clerk. Few parents will contemplate a profession for their offspring which lacks material prospects, and true vocations are rare. Hence it is that the bulk of the teaching is dissipated amongst tyros, inexperienced and unqualified. Under such circumstances there is but one remedy – organisation'.

In spite of the fact that we are expressing the views of a small minority we believe nevertheless that persons in positions of authority and influence have a responsibility which goes beyond the mere pandering to the popular demand of the moment. We address this memorandum to all such persons, present and future, and to the general public, in the hope that sooner or later it might contribute something towards rousing a greater consciousness of the value of music to the nation, and of the manner in which it might be realised.

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