

**The influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on choral singing, choral
conducting and choral composition in Ireland (1954-2021)**

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Abstract

The Cork International Choral Festival was established in 1954 as part of the *Tóstal* festival – a festival that sought to celebrate and showcase Irish traditions on an international stage. Over time (1954-2021), the Festival has emerged as Ireland's premier choral competition. It is held over five days, with choirs from Ireland and abroad gathering in Cork to celebrate choral music. The Festival has undergone significant growth over time and features up to five thousand singers and conductors each year. The Festival has also evolved by developing several competitions for choirs and composers, as well as educational initiatives and non-competitive platforms. Many Irish choirs have progressed through the Festival's competitive platforms and are now highly ranked in other Irish and European choral competitions. It has provided the opportunity for choirs, conductors, and composers to develop their talents through opportunities to learn and perform. The Festival offers singers training in the form of masterclasses and other educational activities such as vocal production workshops, while also exposing singers, conductors, composers and general audiences to the highest level of choral music and singing in Ireland.

The Festival's impact on choral singing, conducting and composition in Ireland remains largely unexamined. This thesis contributes a new body of research through an analysis of documentary evidence, interviews with musicians associated with the Festival and the results of a survey administered to key choristers, conductors, composers and administrators involved in the Festival. Various aspects of the Festival will be examined: competitive and non-competitive performance; the composition of new Irish choral music; and how the Festival has helped establish many associations such as the International Choral Conducting Summer School, Sing Ireland and the Irish Youth Choir.

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Introduction

The Cork International Choral Festival is one of Europe's premier choral festivals and is regarded for its high standards, organisation and friendliness. Every year, some of the best amateur choirs in the world partake in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition while also being offered many non-competitive activities. Attracting these choirs offers a unique opportunity for Irish singers, conductors and composers of choral music to experience a diverse range of music. Irish choirs are the most active participants. The Festival annually features up to one hundred Irish adult, youth and school choirs that participate at the national level, in the Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition and the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition. Overall, the Festival attracts an estimated five thousand participants annually. The Cork International Choral Festival continues to enhance and influence choral singing, conducting, and Irish choral music composition.

Since 1954, the Cork International Choral Festival has earned an outstanding reputation among amateur, semi-professional, and professional choirs of all sizes in Ireland and beyond. Throughout its existence, the Festival has received financial support from the city and county councils of Cork, corporate sponsorship, media outlets, institutions such as University College Cork, the Cork School of Music and the general public. It is organised and run by a team of directors, managers, administrators, as well as a sizeable number of volunteers. The Festival has fostered intercultural exchange and connectivity. The Festival has also played a significant role in enhancing and influencing the choral tradition in Ireland, with a particular commitment to providing an opportunity for all types of choirs to perform in a range of settings, therefore

incentivising music-making in both rural and urban communities. Conducting workshops, educational programmes, and vocal production masterclasses have featured as part of the Festival, aiding in developing choral singers' and conductors' abilities. While other choral festivals in Ireland provide educational opportunities, none compare to what is offered at the Cork International Choral Festival. Furthermore, the Festival has commissioned new works almost every year since 1962, creating a large corpus of innovative, new and valuable choral music.

Aims of the research

This thesis will investigate how the Cork International Choral Festival has influenced and enhanced the training and development of singers, conductors and choirs, while also continuously adding to the growing body of Irish choral music. The thesis will examine the Festival from its inception, how it has grown and incorporated training and exposure to choral music, and its dedication to offering performance platforms to choirs and composers. The thesis will also examine the impact the Festival has had on choral music in Ireland, notably via the formation of *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*, the Irish Youth Choir, and the Annual Conducting Summer School, as well as all the incentives offered by the Festival to further develop choral singing and the composition of Irish choral music.

Chapter 1 examines the origins and development of festivals in Ireland, leading to a discussion of the establishment of the Cork International Choral Festival, the role of the Festival directors, and how it extended beyond its original constitution. The Cork International Choral Festival was originally conceived as a means of showcasing music

in Ireland in the hopes of attracting visitors from other countries. However, the Festival has grown beyond this and now fosters creativity and encourages the development of choral music in Ireland. Chapter 2 focuses on the growth of choral music, with particular reference to music and choral education in Ireland leading up to the Festival's formation. It analyses developments in choral singing in schools and outside influences that provided singers with opportunities to perform, as well as the growth of choral singing through the number of choirs being formed. Chapter 3 examines the Festival's commitment to ensuring that quality Irish choral music is produced each year. The Seminar on New Choral Music, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, and the Composer in the Classroom Scheme, for example, can be seen to demonstrate how the Cork International Choral Festival has offered inspiration for the composition of innovative choral music in Ireland. Finally, Chapter 4 offers an account of various institutional bodies that have emerged from the Festival, resulting in new training and development opportunities for musicians in the areas of choral singing and conducting.

Literature review

Susan O' Regan's *Music and Society in Cork, 1700-1900* offers an in-depth and wide-ranging examination of musical life in Cork from 1700-1900.¹ A vibrant concert life was enhanced by visiting musicians, who collaborated with local musicians. At the same time, touring companies came to Cork to offer professional performances, therefore enhancing the musical life of the people of Cork. St Fin Barre's Cathedral offered educational programmes that honed the skills of teachers and performers, thus aiding the development of the choral sector in Cork. The growing popularity of singing

¹ Susan O'Regan, *Music and Society in Cork, 1700-1900* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018).

classes and the establishment of choral societies became the bedrock of the choral traditions of Cork city, leading to the establishment of the Cork International Choral Festival.

Music in Ireland - A Symposium, edited by Aloys Fleischmann, provides details of the first survey conducted on the position and influence of music in Ireland.² The collection consists of forty articles by Irish musicians and authorities. Fleischmann compiled lists of choirs, musicians, orchestras, festivals, clubs and societies, and a register of music teachers. Divided into three sections – Music in the Institutions, the Profession of Music, and Music and the public – *Music in Ireland - A Symposium*, provides a comprehensive account of the state of music in Ireland prior to the establishment of the Cork International Choral Festival.

Ethna Barror, conductor and founder of the Lindsay Singers, at the forty-first Cork International Choral Festival, addressed the audiences in her opening speech.³ Barror comprehensively discussed the Festival, its achievements and how it had changed the face of choral singing in Ireland.

Looking back over twenty-five years at the achievements of the Festival and the benefits many of us have derived from it, one realises the importance of the Festival, not only to Cork, but to the whole country. Two things are worth mentioning. The impact on the social and cultural life of the community has been widespread. Choral singing was not one of the country's strong points, but now almost every village and town can boast of at least one choir. Secondly, the contribution the Festival has made to the choral repertoire of the country has been invaluable.

² Aloys Fleischmann, *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952).

³ Niamh McDonagh, 'Ethna Barror: Profile of a Successful Choral Conductor' (MPhil thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatoire of Music and Drama, 2008), 102-103.

At one time, the highlight of many a choral festival would have been the performance of a piece in three or four parts, like ‘All in the April Evening’, but those days are gone, and now we all aspire to greater things, to more difficult works by composers which include Mahler, Bruckner, Monteverdi and our own Dr. Victory.⁴

It is clear from Barror’s words that a deeper exploration of the Festival’s roots and achievements is worthy, as the impact of the Festival at a national level was apparent among those centrally involved.

Research by Ruth Fleischmann, Eimear Carroll and Coral O’Sullivan has examined aspects of the Cork International Choral Festival’s development and local impact. Ruth Fleischmann’s *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration* is a collection of writings compiled by 204 people involved with the Festival.⁵ It documents the experiences of various participants (directors, administrators, adjudicators, commissioned composers and choristers). Fleischmann compiled appendices documenting all the choirs, conductors, competitions entered, adjudicators, commissioned works, Festival directors, administrators and voluntary workers. This book celebrates the Festival, its achievements and gives evidence of how the Festival has helped develop choral music in Ireland since 1952. This thesis will examine the impact the Festival has had on choral singing, conducting and composition, which has not been studied before.

⁴ Ibid., 102-103.

⁵ Ruth Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration* (Herford, Germany: Glen House Press, 2004).

Eimear Carroll's thesis, 'The sacred choral commissions of the Cork Annual Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music: tradition and modernity', examines the use of Gregorian chants, and techniques characteristic of sixteenth-century polyphony in the commissioned works of the Festival.⁶ The commissions' texts are examined for their significance within the choral tradition. Carroll's research found that composers had drawn on early music techniques and traditions but reinvented them for a modern sound. This thesis shows the innovation in Irish choral music that is being fostered by the Festival through its Festival commissions.

Coral O'Sullivan's thesis, 'The commissioned works of the Contemporary Music Seminars of the Cork International Choral Festival 1962-2012: An annotated catalogue', examines the Seminar on New Choral Music composition at the Cork International Choral Festival.⁷ The research examines the Festival's commissioned works over a fifty-five-year period, collating the information extracted from scores and other sources to present an overview of the compositions. It also outlines the works' status and provides a resource for performers and academics. However, in reading the theses written by O'Sullivan and Carroll, no mention is made of how the Festival developed any of its key features such as inclusive competitions, non-competitive opportunities and educational platforms. Rather, these theses solely examine the works of the Seminars on New Choral Music, with little input from those attending the Festival year after year.

⁶ Eimear Carroll, 'The sacred choral commissions of the Cork Annual Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music: tradition and modernity' (MA thesis, St Patrick's College, Dublin City University, 2005).

⁷ Coral O' Sullivan, 'The commissioned works of the Contemporary Music Seminars of the Cork International Choral Festival 1962-2012: An annotated catalogue', (MA thesis, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork School of Music, 2013).

Bernie Sherlock's thesis, 'Contemporary Irish Choral Music and an outline of its Historical Origins', examines Irish choral music's composition, and the solid artistic vision underlying its processes over the past thirty to forty years.⁸ Specific composers of works that have proved popular among choirs outside of Ireland are examined. Part One examines how Irish choral music has evolved. Part Two analyses the works of eight composers (Mark Armstrong, Gerald Barry, Rhona Clarke, Eoghan Desmond, Seán Doherty, Ben Hanlon, Michael Holohan, and Michael McGlynn). These eight composers have close ties to the Cork International Choral Festival, having competed in a number of its competitions, or having been awarded the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition prize. Some of them have also been commissioned by a choir to compose a piece to be premiered at the Festival.

The literature above focuses on the history of music in Ireland and Cork, and analysing works composed as a result of the Festival. This thesis will explore the critical role of the Cork International Choral Festival in the enhancement and development of choral music in Ireland.

Methodology

This research seeks to contribute to the small body of existing research on the history of the Cork International Choral Festival by examining its impact at a national level, as well as offering an in-depth analysis of the perspectives of choir members and key actors who have contributed to its development. The thesis draws on the analysis of

⁸ Bernie Sherlock, 'Contemporary Irish Choral Music and an Outline of its Historical Origins' (DMusPerf dissertation, Royal Irish Academy of Music, 2018).

Festival programmes and musical works performed at/composed for the Festival, as well as survey data, and two interviews with key contributors.

A description of the thesis: design and method

This thesis used a survey of forty-four participants to assess the perceived impact of the Festival on the development and enhancement of choral music in Ireland. Singers, conductors, directors, administrators and composers were asked their thoughts through an anonymous survey (selected participants are those who have had a number of experiences participating in and attending the Festival over many years).⁹ These were divided into different categories: a singers' survey, conductors' survey, composers' survey and an administrators' survey, including directors, managers and administrative staff (past and present) of the Festival.¹⁰ The questions asked had similar themes but outlooks varied among the different categories.

Twenty-four singers were asked to participate in the survey, with a total of 66.66% responses collected. Twenty-four conductors were asked to partake, with 75% responding. Twelve composers were asked to partake, with 66.66% responding. Eight members of the Festival administration team, past and present, were asked to partake, with 50% responding.

⁹ For more on survey methodologies, see Floyd J. Fowler (ed.), *Survey Methodologies* (London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 4th edn 2009).

¹⁰ The surveys, participant information sheet and participant consent sheet used in this study are compiled in Appendices A, page 172 and B, page 177.

The Cork City Libraries website houses an electronic version of all the Festival programmes from 1954 to 2015.¹¹ The programmes from the 2016–2019 Festivals can be found on the Cork International Choral Festival website archives.¹² These digital resources are crucial for examining the impact and influence of the Festival on Irish choral music. The role of visiting choirs, growth of choirs and progression, and participants' exposure to choirs of an international standing can all be measured through an examination of the Festival programmes and the documents detailing the Seminar on New Choral Music.

The background and rationale for the design choice

It was felt that a survey would adequately and clearly provide the information needed from participants on their opinions of the Cork International Choral Festival. The surveys enabled the researcher to compare and contrast different aspects of the Festival and how each participant felt it had enhanced and influenced choral singing, conducting and composition in Ireland. The questions asked were in the form of personal opinions, reflecting on previous experiences at the Cork International Choral Festival. All questions were open for the interpretation of each individual participant. Singers, conductors and composers from various parts of the country were invited to partake in the survey to ensure a fair and subjective vision from the whole of Ireland.

¹¹ Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

¹² Anon, 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

An evaluation of the choice of method and a statement of its limitations

The use of a survey methodology had both advantages and disadvantages. Allowing participants time to reflect on the questions resulted in more in-depth responses. Setting a deadline proved both helpful and unhelpful. Some participants requested additional time to complete the survey. In contrast, others commented that the deadline motivated them to think about their answers. The survey participants were emailed in January 2021. A second email followed if no response was received. Again, many participants commented on how helpful the reminders were for them to complete the surveys. With minimal academic research into the Festival, the small data set enabled new information to be gathered from professionals and amateurs who are knowledgeable and experienced with the Cork International Choral Festival. The survey data was also supplemented by a number of semi-structured interviews with key actors in the Festival's histories, to further contextualise the responses gained. Two interviews were conducted with Festival Director John Fitzpatrick and composer and conductor Ben Hanlon.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to core topic of this research – the influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on choral singing, conducting and composition in Ireland. It has sketched out the aims of the research, offered a synopsis of the chapters to follow, provided a brief review of literature related to the Festival, and discussed the methodology for the research. The following chapters will engage with the Festival's impact in more detail, commenting on its legacy for choral singing in Ireland and beyond.

Chapter 1

The Cork International Choral Festival

This chapter will examine the evolution of the Cork International Choral Festival, its context within Ireland's musical history, and the challenges that have shaped its development. The Cork International Choral Festival's success illustrates how arts festivals can be harnessed as part of Ireland's economic and social development in the future.¹ The chapter is divided into three sections: first, an exploration of Ireland's festival culture; second, an examination of the Cork International Choral Festival's history and third, an exploration of how the Festival extended beyond its original conception.

1.1 An exploration of the broader historical context of Ireland's festival culture

Ireland hosts twenty music festivals annually, offering competitive and non-competitive choral participation at the national and international level.² Twelve of the festivals are primarily for choral music.³ The remaining festivals that also include competitions for choral groups are *Feis Ceoil* Dublin (Music Festival), *Feis Maitiú* Cork (Festival of Father Matthew), Arklow Music Festival, Pan Celtic Festival, Wesley

¹ Various bodies in Ireland have undertaken studies on the impact of arts festivals on economic and social development. See for example https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/6_Funding/Festival-Innovation-Programme-Guidelines_1.pdf [accessed 25 June 2021].

² This number is in respect of music festivals aimed at classical music traditions.

³ The relevant festivals are the Cork International Choral Festival, Navan Choral and Instrumental Festival, the Association of Irish Musical Societies Choral Festival, Sligo International Choral Festival, Limerick Choral Festival, the Gospel Rising Music Festival, Mayo International Choral Festival, Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Kenmare Choral Festival, The City of Derry International Choir Festival, the Dublin International Choral Festival, and Maynooth Choral Festival.

College Dublin Interschools Music Festival, Kilkenny Music Festival, *Féile an tSamhraidh* (the Summer Festival) Midleton, and the Tipperary Peace Festival.

Workshops, masterclasses and recitals from leading ensembles are offered to choral singers and the general public as a core component of the Festival schedule. Of all these Festivals, *Feis Ceoil* and the Cork International Choral Festival stand out for their contribution to creating and performing choral music using the Irish language. They achieve this through the requirement of an Irish language piece or an Irish text in composition and performance competitions.

The *Feis Ceoil* was established in 1897. Initially, it was meant to be held between Cork, Dublin and Belfast; however, it never made its way to Cork and has been held in Dublin since 1901, with two visits to Belfast in 1898 and 1900.⁴ *Feis Ceoil* aimed to heighten Irish composers' (by nationality and association) musical awareness and to cultivate musical appreciation and competitive participation in Ireland. To enhance these aims, the *Feis Ceoil* included lectures, concerts and competitions that highlighted the work of Irish composers.⁵

The *Feis Ceoil* promoted six competitions for vocal ensembles at its early stages (thirty-two competitions in total), which has now grown to one hundred and eighty-five competitions (twenty-four of which are purely for choral singing).⁶ Choral singing in

⁴ Fintan Vallely, 'Feis Ceoil', in F. Vallely (ed), *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), 252-253.

⁵ Karol Mullaney-Digman and Jimmy O'Brien Moran, 'Feis Ceoil', in Harry White & Barra Boydell (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (2 vols, Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), i, 372-373.

⁶ Anon, 'Our History', <<https://www.feisceoil.ie/About-Us/history.asp>> [accessed 21 May 2020].

the Irish language consisted of three competitions for mixed voice, thus ensuring Irish choral music was being performed, while separate competitions for male and female voices were introduced in 1925.⁷ Currently, three competitions at the *Feis Ceoil* have Irish Language requirements. *Corn Hardebec* (the Hardebec Cup) has requirements of two contrasting pieces in the Irish language which also comes with a special prize for the performance of a piece written after 1980, while *Cóir Iarbhunascoile* (post-primary school choirs) and *Cóir Bunscoile* (primary school choirs) also have the requirement of two contrasting pieces in Irish.⁸ The Florence Culwick Memorial Cup is the only competition requiring a work composed after 2000 (this changed from a work composed after 1950 in the new syllabus of 2020).⁹

Feis Ceoil was the leading competitive platform for choral singing until the Cork International Choral Festival was established. From the competitions listed at *Feis Ceoil*, it is evident that the composition and performance of choral music from Ireland (not only choral music using Irish text) is being promoted. Thus, *Feis Ceoil* presaged the Cork International Choral Festival, which would grow to promote Irish choral music on an international stage.

1.2 The History of the Cork International Choral Festival

Although the Cork International Choral Festival emerged at a time of significant economic downturn and mass emigration from Ireland, it has taken place annually

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Anon, 'Syllabus of Competitions', < <https://www.feisceoil.ie/syllabus/competitions.asp> > [accessed 20 May 2020].

⁹ Anon, 'Syllabus – Florence Culwick Memorial Cup', < <https://www.feisceoil.ie/syllabus/Florence-Culwick-Memorial-Cup/3.html> > [accessed 20 May 2020].

since 1954.¹⁰ Approximately five thousand choristers take part each year, hailing from Ireland, Great Britain, continental Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia.¹¹

The Festival was part of *Tóstal* ('the Hosting'), a festival begun by Taoiseach Seán Lemass in 1952, to promote tourism in Ireland.¹² The prospect of *Tóstal* gained great interest nationwide. The idea came from the President of Pan American World Airways, Juan Trippe, who took inspiration from attending the Festival of Britain in 1951. Mainly aimed at American citizens with Irish ancestry, it was also anticipated that *Tóstal* would help to increase transatlantic air travel.¹³

For many years, voluntary and state-sponsored tourism organisations promoted the country's attractions to help advertise Ireland as a holiday destination internationally. *Tóstal* had a new idea to propose 'a national spring cleaning' with the hope of extending the tourism season. It aimed to attract visitors for the Easter period, adding to the attractive July to August peak season. At the time, the Irish tourism industry promoted the country's restful atmosphere, as evidenced through its comfortable hotels and guesthouses, the Irish people's friendliness, and the beautiful scenery.¹⁴ *Tóstal* aimed to offer something more by creating events that could be publicised abroad to appeal to the international tourism market, but that could be enjoyed by the general public. In response, *Tóstal* hoped to bolster civic spirit and national pride. In

¹⁰ The Festival did not run in 2001 due to the foot and mouth epidemic in Ireland. See Ruth Fleischmann (ed.), 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration* (Herford, Germany: Glen House Press, 2004), 9. It also did not run in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Florence O'Donoghue, 'Looking back: The Tóstal', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 14.

¹³ Susan Daly, 'You know we had a 'Gathering' 60 years ago, right?', < <https://www.thejournal.ie/an-tostal-1953-the-gathering-854877-Apr2013/> > [accessed 21 May 2020].

¹⁴ O'Donoghue, 'Looking back: The Tóstal', 14.

subsequent years, both the International Choral and Folkdance Festival (1954) and the International Film Festival (1956) were established.¹⁵

The development of *Tóstal* was led by both *Bórd Fáilte* and the Irish Tourist Board.¹⁶

The first *Tóstal* Festival in Cork was in 1953; it included a pageant involving the business community, sports events, and the Gaelic League.¹⁷ The Festival also included many arts performances that took place in towns and cities throughout the country (performances included music, dance and theatre). From 1953, *Tóstal* aimed to portray and promote Irish culture through language, art, drama, music, dance, legendry, and mythology, as experienced through pageants, parades, exhibitions, performances and competitions.¹⁸ Musical performances included Handel's *Messiah*, organised by the Cork Orchestral Society and performed by the *Hallé* Orchestra, with Our Lady's Choral Society (Dublin), and conducted by Sir John Barbirolli.¹⁹

Although many towns and cities ceased the tradition of *Tóstal*, some events are still active across the country. The Cork International Choral Festival, Cork International Film Festival, the Rose of Tralee Festival, and national Tidy Towns Competition continue to uphold the *Tóstal* tradition.²⁰

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 10. Bórd Fáilte is now known as Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

¹⁷ The Gaelic League was a social and cultural organisation that promoted the Irish language internationally and nationally.

¹⁸ Daly, 'You know we had a 'Gathering'.

¹⁹ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 10.

²⁰ The original *Tóstal* Festival would have celebrated its seventieth year in 2020, in the town of Drumshanbo, County Leitrim. However, it unfortunately was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As part of *Tóstal*, the Cork International Choral Festival promotes and encourages choral singing at local and international levels in Ireland.²¹ It aims to attract internationally-renowned choirs to Ireland to improve the standard of Irish choirs and to offer competitions for all types and varieties of choirs involved. Since its inception, the Festival has sought to build a connection between Ireland's entire island, with a choir from Belfast, the Ulster Singers, attending the first competition in 1954.²² This forged a connection that lasted throughout the Northern Ireland conflict²³ with choirs from Derry and Portadown regularly performing and competing at the Festival.²⁴

The Cork International Choral Festival has enabled Ireland to forge a connection with an international choral music network.²⁵ When it was established, Ireland was accustomed to the choral singing traditions of Europe and the Anglican church. Three different theories or schools of choral singing have shaped the development of choral singing in Cork: the European classical church music tradition brought by Aloys Fleischmann Senior to St Mary's Church; the Anglican church music tradition enhanced in Cork by John T. Horne, conductor and teacher at St Fin Barre's Cathedral and the Cork School of Music; and, finally, Pilib Ó Laoghaire's intertwining of Irish traditional music with the European classical church music tradition in which he was immersed (the tradition in which Ó Laoghaire and hundreds of others had begun their choral singing education).²⁶ Most importantly, the Festival introduced the audiences

²¹ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 10.

²² Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1954.

²³ The Northern Ireland conflict was an ethno-nationalist period of conflict in Northern Ireland that lasted between the late 1960s and the late 1990s.

²⁴ Ruth Fleischmann, 'Cork International Choral Festival', in Harry White & Barra Boydell (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), i, 248-249.

²⁵ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

and singers of Cork and beyond to the historical traditions of choral singing in other European countries, particularly those of Eastern Europe.²⁷ To encourage the composition and performance of new choral works, the Festival organisers required each participating choir to sing a work by a composer of the choir's own country.²⁸ The Festival introduced competitions for Irish composers from 1958 to 1961, which involved the composition of original works and arrangements of folk music. This competition arguably led to the inaugural Seminar on Contemporary Choral music in 1962, which commissioned up to four composers from Ireland and other European countries to write new choral music for the Festival.²⁹ In 1966, the Cork International Choral Festival incorporated a schools' competition to encourage and promote choral singing among children.³⁰

Fringe concerts and outreach activities were organised from 1959 onwards, with joint concerts between Irish and international choirs bringing high-level choral music to churches and venues outside of City Hall, in Cork city and county.³¹ Bringing choral music to the community was also an important aspect of the Festival.³²

From its foundation the Cork International Choral Festival received solid support from the Cork business and trade union community and the city and county councils. These bodies soon recognised the tourism potential and civic pride that a major music festival and its offshoots could bring to the Cork community. Indeed, the Lord Mayor is the *ex*

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Ibid., 10.

²⁹ Ibid., 10.

³⁰ Ibid., 10.

³¹ Ibid., 10-11.

³² See Chapter 2 page 42 and section 3.4 page 83.

officio president of the Festival. For fifty years, the armed forces helped to care for and provide food for up to five hundred choristers, twice a day, while the Band of the Southern Command gives a recital at the beginning of almost every Festival.³³

The success of the Festival was built upon the involvement of three institutions: the music department at UCC, which trained teachers to work in schools; the Department of Education and Skills, which promoted music in schools and created music teaching positions; and the Vocational Education Committee, which established *Cór Fhéile na Scoileanna* (the school choir festival). In the latter context, Ó Laoghaire worked relentlessly from 1947 to establish a choral infrastructure throughout Cork city and county.³⁴

University College Cork, as well as many other Cork and national institutes, offered vital support. These institutions were the Vocational Education Committee, the *Irish Examiner* (formerly known as the *Cork Examiner*, a national newspaper) and local and national broadcaster *Raidió Teilifís Éireann* (Irish Television Radio). Catholic and Protestant denominations offered cathedrals and other churches as venues for local and visiting choirs, and the large Jewish community in Cork has been a patron of the Festival for many years.³⁵ Of all the support received by the Festival, the volume of voluntary support is striking. Large groups of citizens from varied backgrounds and generations continuously dedicate their time and energy to the Festival. The

³³ Fleischmann, 'Cork International Choral Festival', in *The Encyclopaedia of Music*, 248-249. The Band of the 1 Southern Brigade was formed in 1925 and has been stationed at Collins barracks in Cork since 1926. The band plays a musical and cultural role in Cork along with its military commitments.

³⁴ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 11.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

involvement of a large team of volunteers supporting the Festival director, Festival Board and the professional administration team is a particular aspect of the Festival and is often remarked upon by visiting choirs and supporters.³⁶

1.2.1 *Cór Fhéile na Scoileanna*

The Cork International Choral Festival was not the first organisation in Cork to promote choral music. In 1947, Proinsias Ó Ceallaigh, an inspector of music in primary schools, sought to inaugurate a festival of non-competitive performances for schools, *Cór Fhéile na Scol*. On its foundation, it was the first of its kind in the country. This Festival favours a unique approach to music and the arts, which emphasises a celebration of the arts and prides itself on its non-competitive nature. Its mission statement illustrates that it promotes the fundamental ideals of a festival: ‘a time for gaiety and joy, expressed by the children through music’.³⁷ The Festival was run by Proinsias Ó Súilleabháin, the organising inspector of music and teachers. For many years, the Festival catered for both primary and secondary schools and held matinee and night performances over two weeks.³⁸ To this day, approximately 3,500 students come together annually to showcase music and arts in primary education. For its twenty-first anniversary, *Amhrán na Féile* (Song of the Festival) was composed, with words by S. E. O’ Carroll and music by Br B. O’ Treacy. Áine Ní Chartaigh was the winner of the competition for the composition of the new anthem to mark the Festival’s fiftieth anniversary, titled *A Sheanchathair Aoibhinn* (A Lovely Old City).³⁹

³⁶ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

³⁷ Anon, ‘Cór Fhéile na Scol - History’, <<https://www.corfheilenascol.ie/history>> [accessed 8 February 2019].

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

Performances feature choirs, action songs, dance, movement, choral verse, mime, and different bands.

Although the Cork International Choral Festival and *Cór Fhéile na Scol* are not directly linked, the latter may have inspired and demonstrated a need for an adult version of the celebration of choral singing and arts for choirs in the greater Cork area. The Choral Festival sought to bring a more competitive aspect to the adult choristers, to engage and develop choral singing in rural and urban Ireland.

The Cork International Choral Festival has helped to improve the quality of choral singing, especially in small Irish towns, in several ways.⁴⁰ The challenge of competition, the opportunity to listen to visiting choirs, the carefully chosen set pieces in specific competitions, and the comments of the panel of international adjudicators enhance choristers' awareness of their musicality and vocal and choral technique. These factors also encourage choirs and conductors to develop choral singing skills.⁴¹

1.2.2 The Festival Directors

The quality and vision of the Festival's early directors laid a foundation for its growth and for the promotion of choral singing on a grand scale. Without the initiative of *Tóstal* to help boost tourism and showcase Ireland's arts, Cork might not have had the means to establish and maintain one of Europe's most prominent choral festivals.

⁴⁰ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

Since its inception in 1954, the Festival has had only three directors: Aloys Fleischmann (1954 to 1987), Geoffrey Spratt (1987 to 1993) and John Fitzpatrick (1993 to 2019). In 2020, it was announced that Peter Stobart was to take up the position of Festival director.⁴²

Aloys Fleischmann, chairman of the *Tóstal* Cultural Committee from 1954 to 1966 and Director of the Cork International Choral Festival from 1967 to 1987, was a Professor of Music at University College Cork and maintained close links between the college and the Festival.⁴³ Fleischmann was fundamental to the success of the Festival since its establishment. Born in Munich in 1910, Fleischmann was raised and educated in Ireland. He then studied for a brief time in Munich in the early years of the 1930s. Having earned undergraduate and master's degrees from University College Cork, he returned in 1934 and was appointed Acting Professor of Music.⁴⁴ In the same year, Fleischmann founded the university orchestra, for which he was entered into the Guinness Book of World Records for being the longest-serving conductor (1939 to 1991) of an orchestra.⁴⁵ Fleischmann's daughter Ruth has compiled a series of essays and articles in *Aloys Fleischmann (1910-1991): A Life for Music in Ireland Remembered by Contemporaries*, describing his impact on musical life in Ireland. Musical education became a driving force in Fleischmann's life, as he realised that

⁴² Anon, 'New Artistic Director of Cork International Choral Festival announced', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/2019/12/new-director-of-cork-international-choral-festival-announced/>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

⁴³ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 11.

⁴⁴ Séamus de Barra 'Aloys Fleischmann' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.09807>> [accessed 4 May 2021].

⁴⁵ Anne M. Murphy, 'Aloys Fleischmann (1910-1992): A Life for Music in Ireland – A review of collections of articles and essays on the composer Aloys Fleischmann, compiled by his daughter Ruth Fleischmann', <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/aloys-fleischmann-1910-1992-life-music-ireland>> [accessed 20 May 2020].

teachers, students and audiences alike could establish an Irish compositional style. He expressed his concerns for music education in Ireland when he stated that,

only out of a welter of activity can a virile art emerge – activity sufficient to bring talent to the surface and keep it afloat. The amount of undiscovered talent goes to waste in Ireland as much as that which, utilised, goes to make up the musical tradition of many another country, but for lack of openings and facilities for training, it becomes deflected here to other pursuits. We need a good organisation of various kinds to create the conditions in which this talent can emerge and thrive.⁴⁶

Fleischmann is responsible for many institutions that are still in existence in Cork today. These institutions include the Cork Orchestral Society, which brought national and international musicians to Cork city (such as the London Symphony Orchestra to the Savoy Cinema as part of *Tóstal*),⁴⁷ the Cork Ballet Group in 1947, with choreographer Joan Denise Moriarty, which later became Cork Ballet Company and paved the way for the formation of the Irish National Ballet, the Cork International Choral and Folkdance Festival, and the Seminar on Contemporary Choral music.⁴⁸ If it were not for Fleischmann's dedication to musical education, the Cork International Choral Festival and all its subsidiaries and other organisations might not have been developed by future directors.

⁴⁶ Aloys Fleischmann (ed), 'The Organisation of the Profession', in A. Fleischmann, *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 89-90.

⁴⁷ Anon, 'University Art Society – Cork Orchestral Society Programmes (1935-60)', <<http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/3437/>> [accessed 12 January 2021].

⁴⁸ Seamus de Barra, 'Thoughts on Aloys Fleischmann by Seamus de Barra', <<https://rorygallaghermusiclibrary.org/cork-music-archival/aloys-fleischmann/aloys-fleischmann-biography/>> [accessed 26 May 2020].

Geoffrey Spratt took up the position of Lecturer in Music at University College Cork in 1976. Spratt's experience in orchestral, operatic, and choral conducting helped him significantly in his work with various music education bodies in Ireland.⁴⁹ As the co-founder (1980) and chairman (1984 to 2006) of *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* (National Choir Association), Spratt helped to develop and promote choral singing in Ireland. Spratt was responsible for forming the University College Cork Choir and orchestra in 1976 to 1977 and conducted the University College Cork Choral Society from 1978 to 1987. Founder of two of Ireland's highly recognised ensembles, the Fleischmann Choir and *Cantivum Novum*, conductor of noted Cork-based chamber choir Madrigal '75 (1985 to 1997), and co-founder of the *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* Annual Conducting Summer School, Spratt established himself as one of Ireland's leading choral educators and conductors.⁵⁰ Spratt was appointed as Director of the Cork School of Music in 1992.⁵¹

John Fitzpatrick has been an active member of the Cork International Choral Festival since 1968, beginning as a member of the University College Cork Choral Society.⁵² He first attended the Festival as a singer, then as the conductor of various Cork choirs; he was a member of the Festival's artistic board from 1976 and from 1993 to 2019 served as the Festival director. From 2020 onwards, Fitzpatrick holds the title of

⁴⁹ Aryeh Oron, 'Geoffrey Spratt (Conductor, Flute, Viola)', <<https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Spratt-Geoffrey.htm>> [accessed 26 May 2020].

⁵⁰ Anon, 'CSM Chamber Orchestra (Conductor: Geoffrey Spratt)', <<http://www.corkorchestralsociety.ie/programme/91/fleischmann-choir-and-csm-symphony-orchestra>> [accessed 26 May 2020].

⁵¹ For a discussion of the organisations that have helped develop choral music in Ireland, see chapter 4, page 118.

⁵² John Fitzpatrick, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 443.

President of the Festival.⁵³ Fitzpatrick studied music at University College Cork under Fleischmann and Seán Ó Riada. Attracted to choral music by the sound of the human voice and working with texts, Fitzpatrick soon began working with many choirs in the Cork city and county area. Louis Halsey, an English composer, arranger and choral conductor, was an influence on Fitzpatrick, who attended summer courses with him for several years and brought a specific style to the conducting and performance of pieces.⁵⁴ As Festival director, Fitzpatrick had responsibility for both overall programme planning and the development of competition structures, including the introduction of the now highly-regarded Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition. Fitzpatrick helped the Festival grow in many ways. During his tenure, the Festival expanded from a weekend to five days, with six gala concerts, and fringe concerts, utilising a wider range of venues in the city of Cork. Educational developments included the choral symposium, Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, Composer in the Classroom Scheme, the Choral Gathering, The Big Sing and inclusion of Sacred and Interchange Trails for local churches. Fitzpatrick's broader responsibility was to oversee the overall organisational and administrative running of the Festival while also implementing new structures. This also ensured financial and professional status at the local, national and international level.⁵⁵

Peter Stobart was appointed as Director of Music at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, in 2015. He also directs the Diocesan Church Music Scheme of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

⁵³ Elaine Murphy, 'John Fitzpatrick retires from Cork International Choral Festival after 26 years at the Helm',

< <https://www.thecork.ie/2019/11/09/john-fitzpatrick-retires-from-cork-international-choral-festival-after-26-years-at-the-helm/> > [accessed 26 May 2020].

⁵⁴ Fitzpatrick, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', 442.

⁵⁵ Survey Participant 30, 15 January 2021.

and is the Education and Events Officer of the Royal School of Church Music in Ireland. To secure the future of sacred choral singing, he has forged a link between schools and the cathedral.⁵⁶ With a strong background in and drive for music education, Stobart has helped to develop singing workshops for schools and the ‘Come and Sing’ events for choristers.⁵⁷ Stobart studied choral conducting at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and has won many awards, including the Alan Kirby prize for choir training and the Thomas Armstrong Prize for Choral Conducting. Stobart sang with and conducted many choirs before moving to Cork: the Durham University Chamber Choir, Peterborough Cathedral Choir, St Peter’s Singers and the Peterborough Children’s Choir.⁵⁸ Stobart is an experienced educator, having worked at many schools and cathedrals in the United Kingdom. As a trained singer and choral conductor, he possesses the knowledge needed to work with choral groups and execute workshops and developmental strategies, a key feature needed to be the Director of the Cork International Choral Festival.⁵⁹ Stobart successfully managed the online version of the Festival in 2021. The Festival offered a variety of competitions for national and international choirs and singing groups, while also streaming concerts and workshops. The online platform of workshops and concerts proves that the Cork International Choral Festival is dedicated to developing choral music in Ireland.

Each of the directors has proven crucial to the development of choral music in Ireland. The directors to date have had sufficient training and experiences in choral singing that

⁵⁶ Anon, ‘Peter Stobart – Choral Conductor’, <<https://www.peterstobart.com/about> > [accessed 24 June 2020].

⁵⁷ Anon, ‘Music Staff’, <<https://corkcathedral.webs.com/music-staff> > [accessed 24 June 2020].

⁵⁸ Anon, ‘Peter Stobart – Choral Conductor’.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

can only aid their visions of developing and promoting the Festival. Having the knowledge, experience and the passion for choral music has helped these directors to enhance and drive the Festival to where it is as a major contributor to the development of choral music in Ireland.

The Festival has witnessed many changes throughout the years, with each director bringing his ideas and expertise. Fleischmann added competitions in the form of a school's section in 1966, and in 1977, a plainchant and church music competition (welcoming choirs to perform a repertoire from various churches which may have been progressive for the 1970s), the latter of which is still one of its most attended competitions. Fleischmann, with the Festival administration, selected notable conductors to join the Artistic Advisory Board in 1954. These members consisted of choral conductors who would aid in general policymaking, with one of their foremost responsibilities being to choose the set pieces for competitions.⁶⁰ The members of the first artistic advisory board were Aloys Fleischmann, John T. Horne, R. B. Kealy, Geraldine Neeson, Seán Neeson, Prionsios Ó Ceallaigh and Pilib Ó Laoghaire.⁶¹ During his tenure, Spratt ended the set-piece requirements, altered the Festival's structure by incorporating non-competitive and competitive performances in each competition, and considerably increased prize money.⁶² Competition A was reformatted and changed to an international competition with a substantial price difference from three hundred Irish pounds to three thousand Irish pounds.⁶³⁶⁴ Spratt

⁶⁰ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 12.

⁶¹ Fleischmann, 'Festival Organisers 1954-2003', in *Ibid.*, 578.

⁶² Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶³ Geoffrey Spratt, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in *Ibid.*, 411.

⁶⁴ Competition A is discussed further on page 28.

also expanded the outreach programmes and implemented the idea of having a large choral and orchestral work performed at the opening gala concerts.⁶⁵ Spratt aimed to carry on Fleischmann's tradition of bringing new and previously unperformed works to the audiences in attendance at the Festival, helping to enhance and develop the understanding and exposure to choral music in Ireland.

Fitzpatrick maintained all of the above, and, in 1998, helped with initiating the Composer in the Classroom Scheme. He also introduced a new competition in 2000 for Light, Jazz and Popular Music and the Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition in 2011.⁶⁶ Fitzpatrick offered more competitions to include more varied genres and a higher level of competition for choirs in Ireland.

Arguably, having a well-resourced and active school of music at University College Cork, and the Cork School of Music, with staff who are dedicated to bringing and encouraging music in the locality was central to the Festival and its mission to enhance and develop choral music in Ireland. Furthermore, the rich history of choral singing in Cork, with particular mention to St Fin Barre's Cathedral and its charity schools can be factors attributed to the fervent choral scene in Cork.

⁶⁵ Fleischmann, 'Introduction', in *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

1.3 How the Cork International Choral Festival extended beyond its original guise

Cork hosts an International Choral Festival, Film Festival, Jazz Festival and several more recently established festivals, such as the Cork Mid-Summer Festival, Arts Fest, Art Trail, the Cork Fringe Theatre Festival, the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, the East Cork Early Music Festival, and the Ortus Chamber Music Festival. With these festivals, Cork is recognised and established on the global arts festival stage.⁶⁷

Regarded as the premier choral festival in Ireland and as a top competition in Europe, the Cork International Choral Festival is one of many choral festivals/competitions held in Ireland today.

The first Cork International Choral Festival consisted of five competitions that had voicing and membership size restrictions and requirements. Competition A was for mixed voice choirs (SATB) with thirty or more singers. Competition B was for female voices with twenty-four or more voices. Competition C was the same as competition B, but for male voices. Competition D was for mixed voice choirs from areas with fewer than ten thousand people in the population. The competitions listed had set pieces – three works for competition A and two set works per competition B, C and D. These competitions always included one piece in the Irish language. For choirs outside of Ireland, a composition or an arrangement of a folk song from the choirs country was performed. There was no test piece for competition E, and choirs could choose a programme of three pieces, one to be performed in Irish.⁶⁸ As with the competitions of

⁶⁷ 'Pure Cork',
< <https://purecork.ie/whats-on/categories/festivals> > [accessed 7 April 2019].

⁶⁸ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1954.

Feis Ceoil, the Cork International Choral Festival also promoted the performance of Irish language pieces. With a wealth of folk songs from Ireland, the Festival provided a platform for Irish music to be adapted for choral settings by composers and arrangers. The familiar tune of a folk song would work well in a group setting for many inexperienced singers, putting the focus on the musical aspects rather than the language.

The requirements for the Irish language in the competitions has significantly changed in the history of the Festival. From 1987 onwards, the requirement of an Irish language piece in specific competitions ceased to exist. From an examination of the 2019 Festival, only the primary and post-primary school competitions required the performance of a piece in the Irish language. Ireland's Choir of the Year, a competition open to any choir from the island of Ireland, requires the performance of an original work by a living Irish composer. The Fleischmann International Trophy Competition calls for a work by a composer of the choir's native country: for Irish choirs, this means that a work by an Irish composer must be included in their performance (with no requirement for the work to use an Irish language text). However, Irish language pieces are still regularly performed in these competitions. Works by composers Michael Holohan, Ben Hanlon, Cristóir Ó Lionsigh, Michael McGlynn, Kevin O'Connell and Rhona Clarke were performed more frequently at the Festivals from 2015 to 2019.^{69 70}

⁶⁹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2015-2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 20210/

⁷⁰ Works performed from 2015 to 2019 are listed in Appendix C, page 181. All pieces performed by Irish composers are listed in Appendix H, page 195.

From the Festival's inception in 1954, the requirement for Irish language compositions or arrangements by Irish composers has been maintained in competitions. However, the number of competitions with Irish language requirements has decreased. By 1964, even with the addition of another competition, only one competition, competition F, called for three-part songs of the choir's selection, one of which was to use Irish text.⁷¹

With the introduction of the schools' competition in 1966, two categories were set for ensembles – students under fifteen years of age and eighteen years of age. Both competitions required a part song in the Irish language to be performed. 1971 saw an increase in competitions from nine to fifteen, four of which were school competitions: female voices under the age of fifteen, female voices under eighteen, male voices under eighteen and mixed voices under the age of eighteen.⁷² The number of competitions requiring the use of the Irish language was now five, four of which were in the schools' competitions. The schools' competitions have now decreased to three sections – Section 1: Primary School Choirs; Section 2: Equal Voice Post-Primary; and Section 3: Mixed Voice Post-Primary, still with the requirement of a piece or arrangement of a folksong using the Irish Language.⁷³ These competitions are responsible for many new compositions in the Irish language, as many conductors of secondary schools' choirs have commissioned composers such as Greg Scanlon and Michael McGlynn (Newtown

⁷¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1964. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁷² Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1971. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁷³ Anon, 'Application Form', <https://www.corkchoral.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Application-form_Nat-2020_2.pdf> [accessed 27 May 2020].

School, Waterford), Rhona Clarke (Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy) and Ben Hanlon (Laurel Hill Secondary School, Limerick).

Even with all the changes in requirements and competitions since the initial Festival, the syllabus still asks for Irish language pieces and arrangements. At primary and secondary level education, choirs must perform in the Irish language. Irish language promotion was and still is an integral part of the Festival. Fostering a love of choral singing and the use of the Irish language is not a unique aspect of the Festival.

However, it constantly challenges choir directors and singers to embody two of the reasons the Choral Festival was established as part of *An Tóstal* – to showcase and promote the Irish culture through language and music. With all the newly commissioned and composed pieces stemming from the schools' section competitions, the Cork International Choral Festival has influenced a range of compositions suitable to younger singers that showcase the Irish language.

The Cork International Choral Festival has developed a range of competitions at all levels which reflect the present state of choral music-making at the national level and offer all choirs and singing groups, whatever their background, experience, expertise, or the type/level of music they are interested in performing, relevant competition platforms.⁷⁴ The Festival is vibrant and provides opportunities for all singers to perform and to learn from their experiences.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

⁷⁵ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

One particular choir that seized upon these opportunities was the Lindsay Singers, founded and conducted by Ethna Barror. The Lindsay Singers was a female voice choir of national and international standing. It competed thirty times at the Cork International Choral Festival from 1968 onwards.⁷⁶ In 1992, the visiting adjudicator for the Festival from Wales, Roy Bohana, described the Lindsay Singers as, ‘a very fine international choir of the highest standard. You should be very proud to have a choir of (the standard of) the Lindsay Singers in Ireland’.⁷⁷ Barror spoke of how the Cork International Choral Festival had influenced the choral music scene in Ireland in her opening address at the Festival in 1994, while also commenting on how the Festival had influenced choral music and singing in Ireland.

Up to quite recently, this was the only International Choral Festival in the country, and so it became a sort of ‘launching pad’ for many choirs, including our own. It provided us with opportunities which at the time, did not seem possible. The opportunity to compete at the international level against world-class visiting choirs. The opportunity to have our performances assessed by adjudicators of international reputation.

Through the various competitions, it gave us the opportunity to hear music, new choral works and introduce us to new composers. As a result, our repertoire expanded significantly.

When we first came to Cork, our repertoire was very limited and very modest, but now, thanks to the Festival, we include many major works in our programmes. I suppose if we could not, after twenty–five years, it is a poor lookout.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Niamh McDonagh, ‘Ethna Barror: Profile of a Successful Choral Conductor’ (MPhil thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatoire of Music and Drama, 2008), 6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

Barror’s opening address highlights how the Festival transformed from a tourism initiative into an annual event that cultivated a strong choral tradition in Ireland. The Festival has transformed, enhanced, and influenced choral singing in Ireland.

1.3.1 Programming

When examining the programmes from the 1954 to 2019 Festival, the growth of the Festival is tremendous. In 1954, two separate programmes were available with information about *Tóstal* and the Choral Festival. The *Tóstal* programmes gives details about Cork city, the buildings, history and a welcome address from the Lord Mayer of Cork.⁷⁹ The Choral Festival Programme (figure 1.1) only states the time and days of each competition or non-competitive performance by a choir or folk – dance group.

⁷⁹ Anon, ‘An Tóstal’,
<file:///Users/fearghaloconnor/Desktop/1954%20Tostal%20programme.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2021].

Figure 1.1⁸⁰



⁸⁰ Anon, 'International Choral Festival', <file:///Users/fearghaloconnor/Desktop/1954%20Choral%20Festival%20programme.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2021].

FRIDAY, 8 p.m.

Official Opening by Mr. Erskine Childers, T.D., Minister for
Posts and Telegraphs

Folk Dance by German Team

Coachford Choir

Cloyne Choir

} (Competition D)

Miss Hasson's Troupe of Dancers

Corale "Giacomo Puccini" (Italy) (Non-competitive)

Folk Dance by French Team

Dortmunder Kammerchor e.V. (Germany) (Non-competitive)

SATURDAY, 3.30 p.m.

Folk Dance by Estonian Team

Strandtown Ladies' Choir (Non-competitive)

Miss M. McTeggart Troupe of Dancers

Ulster Singers (Non-competitive)

Folk Dance by French Team

Corale "Giacomo Puccini" (Italy) (Non-competitive)

Tramore Singers (Competition D)

Folk Dance by German Team

SATURDAY, 8 p.m.

Folk Dance by French Team

Limerick Municipal Technical Institute Choir (Non-competitive)

Miss Attridge's Troupe of Dancers

Strandtown Ladies' Choir

Cór Chumann Chorcaí

} (Competition B)

Folk Dance by Estonian Team
 Dortmund Kammerchor e.V. (Germany) }
 Cork Municipal School of Music Choir } (Competition A)
 Ulster Singers

SUNDAY, 3.30 p.m.

Folk Dance by German Team
 St. Joseph's P.P.U. Choir (Non-competitive)
 Miss P. McTeggart's Troupe of Dancers
 Pembrokeshire Festival Choir (Non-competitive)
 Folk Dance by Estonian Team
 Cór Chumann Chorcaí (Non-competitive)
 Folk Dance by French Team
 Royal Welsh Male Voice Choir (Non-competitive)

SUNDAY, 8 p.m.

Folk Dance by Estonian Team
 Royal Welsh Male Voice Choir (Non-competitive)
 Cullen School of Dancing
 Pembrokeshire Festival Choir (Non-competitive)
 Folk Dance by German Team
 Dortmund Kammerchor e.V. (Germany) (Non-competitive)
 Cecilian Singers
 Corale "Giacomo Puccini" (Italy) }
 Cór Chumann Chorcaí } (Competition A
 Cór Cois Laoí } continued)
 Adjudicators' Remarks and Results

On examination of the 2019 Cork International Choral Festival Programme (figure 1.2), from the content page, it is clear that much has changed throughout the whole

Festival. Introductions and welcome addresses from the Lord Mayor of Cork and the Festival directors prelude the information on competitions, non-competitive opportunities, educational platforms of the festivals and biographies of adjudicators and international choirs.

The programmes have become a historical artefact for the Festival, gathering information on what choirs attended, the repertoire performed and conductors names. Similarly to the 1954 *Tóstal* programme, the 2019 Cork International Choral Festival programme offers historical facts, tourist sites, and suggestion for exploring the city of Cork.

The programmes further add to Barror's points that the Cork International Choral Festival has grown since its establishment and acted as an innovative platform for choirs to thrive, improve and simply enjoy choral singing. Comparing the programmes, it is evident that there has been a significant increase in the number of competitions and opportunities hosted by the Festival between 1954 and 2019. Over time, the director and administration team have added participatory elements to the Festival, enabling a greater number of singers, conductors and composers to travel to Cork.

Figure 1.2⁸¹

		CONTENTS
Introduction		
Lord Mayor's Foreword	4	Alexander Technique Workshop
Director's Introduction	5	Choir Voicing Workshop
Gala Concerts		Voice Production
Opening Gala Night	8	Choral Music Scores
PUST - A Breath From The North	13	22nd Composers In The Classroom Performance
Chamber Choir Ireland	15	The Big Sing
Evocations with Helene Stureborg's Chamber Choir	19	
Fleischmann International Gala Concert	21	National Competitions
Closing Gala	25	Primary Schools
Fringe Concerts		Post Primary Mixed Voice
Choirs at Vertigo	29	Post Primary Equal Voice
Choirs at Christchurch	29	Chamber Choirs, Female Voice and Male Voice Choirs
Choirs at Christchurch	30	Mixed Choirs, Ireland's Choir Of The Year, and Youth Choirs
Choirs at The Freemasons' Hall	30	Light, Jazz and Popular Music
Choirs at the Goldie Chapel	31	Church Music
Music at St. Fin Barre's Cathedral Organ Recital	31	
Choirs at St. Mary's Collegiate Church	32	Festival Awards
Choirs at St. James's	32	Festival Awards
Music at CIT School of Music	33	
Choirs at St. Colman's Cathedral	33	Sacred & Interchange Trail
Choirs at The Methodist Church	35	Sacred & Interchange Trail
Choirs at St. Anne's	35	
Choral Gatherings		Choral Art
Choral Trail	39	Choral Art
Friendship Concerts	40	
Festival Food Market, Emmet Place	40	Biographies
Afternoons in The Atrium	41	Adjudicators
Education		Fleischmann International Trophy
Choral Symposium Outline	43	Competitive Choirs
Choral Symposium Schedule	44	International Non-Competitive Choirs
Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition	45	Guest Groups
PUST - Open Rehearsal	46	
Core Singing	46	Festival Sponsors & Organisers
Inside the Performance with Chamber Choir Ireland	47	Festival Sponsors & Organisers
The Composer Speaks	47	
		Get Around Guide & Festival Features
		Food & Drink Trail
		Tourist Sites
		Hotels
		Festival Features

⁸¹ Anon, '2019 Programme – Cork International Choral Festival', <https://issuu.com/corkchoralfest/docs/choral_festival_brochure__19_hr> [accessed 23 June 2021].

The Festival has also kept its global ranking because of its volunteers, interns, administrators, and directors.⁸² The organisation of the Festival can also be accredited to the large volume of volunteers who help each year. The Festival relies on these volunteers' goodwill and upholds its relationship with the public, maintaining those relationships and ensuring all involved feel valued for their time and effort.⁸³ Perhaps the volunteers see the Festival as an institution in which they want to be involved rather than an organisation that needs volunteering. The efficient and professional management team ensures that the experience is enjoyable for all who attend the Festival in any capacity, and that it will positively stay in their memories.⁸⁴ The administrators, managers and directors are highly organised, which is a crucial element when bringing up to twenty-two international choirs and many Irish choirs to Cork city over one weekend.⁸⁵

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2021 which has forced the Cork International Choral Festival to cancel two in-person programmes, the Festival decided to offer competitions that allowed choirs not to travel to Cork to compete. In 2021 the Festival changed the format of its competitions to include an online video submission for national and international choirs. The National A Capella Video Competition was also launched for the 2021 Festival. The competition asked candidates to submit an unpublished video of a live performance or to compile a virtual performance of individual choir members. The two different types of videos (live performance and virtual choir) were adjudicated separately in the following categories: upper/female

⁸² Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

⁸³ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

⁸⁴ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

⁸⁵ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

voices, lower/male voices, children's voices and mixed voices. This competition was open to any choir in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.⁸⁶ The Festival also launched an International A Capella Video Competition with the same format as the National competition; however, no choirs from the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland were eligible for entry.⁸⁷ By establishing these competitions, the Festival ensured a continued platform for performance and competition for choirs both nationally and internationally.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter examined the evolution of the Cork International Choral Festival, its context within Ireland's musical history, and the challenges that have shaped its development. Since the Festival's inception, both the rates of participation and size of its competitions have increased, while also incorporating non-competitive and educational opportunities for singers, conductors and composers. While many strands of the *Tóstal* have been discontinued, the Festival still strives to promote and expose the audiences in attendance to new choral singing in Ireland. Each of the Festival's directors has helped with this exposure in his own manner, while also introducing new modes of participation. Barror's address from 1994 clearly shows that the Festival has helped to develop a tradition of choral singing in Ireland since 1954, which continues to grow each year. It could be argued that the Cork International Choral Festival has helped to create and expand a tradition of choral singing in Ireland that had not been

⁸⁶ Anon, 'National A Capella Video Competition', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/national-a-cappella-video-competition/>> [accessed 11 March 2021].

⁸⁷ Ibid.

fostered before its foundation. This argument will be discussed in greater detail in the next three chapters.

Chapter 2

Choral Singing in Ireland

2.1 Music and choral education in Ireland

Arthur Hill and Nicholas D. Murphy, inspired by the National Training School of Music in South Kensington, London in 1876 sought to promote music education in Cork, seeking a status that matched art and science, which had been prospering throughout the city from the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ The model of the South Kensington National Training School led the way for the training of professional musicians. A meeting was held in 1876 at the Royal Cork Institution to establish a school of science and music and to expand the School of Art.² From this, the Cork Municipal School of Music was established in 1878.³

The Cork Municipal School of Music opened its temporary premises with four rooms at 51 Grand Parade with an initial enrolment of 161 students. The school moved to 8 Morrison's Island in 1900, and 13 Union Quay House in 1903.⁴ The 'Organisation of the School' set out its ethos.

The Cork School of Music is designed to provide a sound and systematic course of musical training for all classes and to elevate the general character of musical taste in Cork. Teaching should not be entirely confined to those who are gifted with exceptional talent, but rather, by preserving a system of classification, pupils of ordinary ability should also be enabled to enlarge their knowledge of the art and to develop technical skills as far as their prowess will admit.⁵

¹ Susan O' Regan, *Music and Society in Cork, 1700-1900* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018), 233.

² *Ibid.*, 233.

³ Geoffrey Spratt, 'A Proud tradition', < <https://csm.cit.ie/history> > [accessed 22 July 2019].

⁴ Kieran McCarthy, 'Pitching the right note', < <https://www.corkindependent.com/weekly/ourcityourtown/articles/2017/03/30/4137552-pitching-the-right-note/> > [accessed 22 July 2019].

⁵ O' Regan, *Music and Society in Cork, 1700-1900*, 234.

The school began with five staff members, providing tuition on piano, violin, harmony, voice, choral singing and *solfeggio*.⁶ T. J. Sullivan conducted the voice, *solfeggio* and choral classes.⁷ The fact that singers and instrumentalists were being trained in *solfeggio*, voice and choral singing from 1878 onwards made the Cork Municipal School of Music a leading institute in the development of choral singing in Ireland. The Cork School of Music had a voluntary committee consisting of individuals dedicated to supporting music education. Three members, Arthur Hill, Richard Pigott Beamish, and Fr Edward Gaynor, were foremost in enhancing sight-singing and music education, as well as the teaching of tonic *solfège* in schools.⁸ Gaynor established the Association for the Advancement of Music in Primary Schools in Ireland at the Cork School of Music and subsequently organised the first Schools' choral competition in Ireland at the Cork School of Art in 1892.⁹

John Francis Larchet, one of the most noted Irish composers in the first half of the twentieth century, wrote to the newly formed Dáil, outlining the importance of the arts in education and arguing that it was the new State's duty to encourage music education.¹⁰ Pádraig Ó Brolcháin, Chief Executive Officer of National Education, stated, 'it is the intention of the new government to work with all its might for the strengthening of the national fibre, by giving the language, history, music and tradition

⁶ Ibid., 234.

⁷ Ibid., 235.

⁸ Ibid., 237.

⁹ Ibid., 237.

¹⁰ Karol Anne Mullaney-Dignam, 'State, Nation and Music in Independent Ireland, 1922-51' (PhD dissertation, NUI Maynooth, 2008), 169.

of Ireland their natural place in the life of Irish schools'.¹¹ As the Irish language began to dominate national schools' cultural agenda, classroom singing proved valuable in teaching the language. The Irish primary school curriculum suggested that all songs should be in the Irish language, but, when implemented in 1922, the Department of Education's reports and teachers' journals indicated that teaching of these songs was fraught with problems from the outset. Children had great difficulty learning the words, and some teachers argued that it was not a musical process at all because learning the words took precedence over any musical concerns.¹² As a result, many of the elements and strands of the music curriculum became neglected. On the one hand, the Irish language began to revive, and the State actively promoted singing in primary schools through this initiative; on the other, there were fewer specialised music teachers in schools, due to a lack of training.¹³ In 1924, state inspectors examining the teaching of various subjects showed that students did not appear to have gained musical knowledge through their singing classes. Music was often referred to as 'Singing', or 'vocal music'.

The same trend would continue in the years following the establishment of the Irish Free State. Donald Herron's report *Deaf Ears?* examines the provision of music education in Irish schools and shows the low number of total hours of music instruction at teacher training colleges from 1978 to 1985, some twenty-six years after Fachtna Ó

¹¹ Marie McCarthy, 'Ireland: Curriculum Development in troubled times,' in G. Cox and R. Stevens (eds.), *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: Cross-Cultural Historical Studies of Music in Compulsory Schooling* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 70.

¹² Marie McCarthy, 'Music Education in the Emergent Nation-State', in R. Pine (ed.), *Music in Ireland 1848-1998*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), 68.

¹³ McCarthy, 'Ireland: Curriculum Development in troubled times', 72.

hAnnracháin suggested a reformation of the level of music education in Irish schools.¹⁴

Ó hAnnracháin stated in 1952 that ‘much progress has indeed been made in the primary school during the last decade’ but it is evident that not a lot of progress had been made from 1952 to 1985 in educating teachers on how to develop music and choral singing in the primary school sector in Ireland.¹⁵

From the 1990s onwards, it has been recognised that trained and skilled teachers are crucial for preparing a nation of choral singers, and the preparatory work must begin in primary schools. For children, immersion into a musical environment has surprising results, especially when they are instructed and guided from the start. Unison songs, rounds and canons, and part songs are vital to the development of choral singing. A structured and developmental curriculum focusing on leading from unison to part-work singing in junior infants through to the sixth class could enable Irish students to be more musically literate, leading to an increased number of highly trained and experienced choral singers. The Cork International Choral Festival provides a stage to showcase a school’s choir. The primary schools’ competition requirements are two contrasting pieces, one in unison and one with an Irish text (a translation from another language is not acceptable). Only one piece may have piano accompaniment. The Festival recognises that singers can work on all the crucial points of vocality within a unison song. As John Fitzpatrick states, ‘With the choir, one has to prepare and work the voice at each rehearsal, and for each performance, to undertake the best

¹⁴ Donald Herron, ‘Deaf Ears’, a report on the provision of music education in Irish Schools (unpublished, 1985), 4-6.

¹⁵ Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Choral Singing in Ireland’, in A. Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 233.

performance of the work at hand. This requires an understanding of vocal physiology, the technical aspects of breathing and tone production, development of good intonation, understanding of musical style and historical verity, preparation for good performance practice'.¹⁶

The development of school choirs and singing is still the responsibility of classroom teachers and principals at the primary level. Teachers' musical abilities come mainly from their own primary and secondary education, with some teachers having none. This has led to many teachers being uncomfortable with and perceiving a lack of skill to teach music and singing.¹⁷ To expect teachers with no musical training or experience to undertake the role of developing a generation of choral singers is unfair and inadequate and may have led to a decline in schools' musical activities. The Sing Ireland and Chris Mahon Bursary are two initiatives that can aid primary school teachers' knowledge of choral singing and conducting.¹⁸

John Fitzpatrick states that the number of entrants to the primary Schools' competition at the Cork International Choral Festival has increased since initiating the requirement of a unison song and a piece in the Irish language. He states that, 'most musicians and conductors would believe that a unison song is easier than a two- or three-part song'.¹⁹ Unison singing for younger voices would be more comfortable than part-singing purely

¹⁶ John Fitzpatrick, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in Ruth Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration* (Herford, Germany: Glen House Press, 2004), 440.

¹⁷ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 233.

¹⁸ These aspects are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, pages 56-58 and Chapter 4, pages 125-127.

¹⁹ John Fitzpatrick, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair, Cork, 8 December 2018.

from an aural point of view. The singers can imitate the teacher's vowels and phrasing by ear, imitating each other and eventually blending to a unison choral sound. When working on a two or three-part piece, time is not allocated to the musical line, voice quality, intonation, style, shaping or phrasing. As Fitzpatrick states, 'That (two and three-part songs) is so difficult to get. If you can get one line, one melody, one set of words, once you can do that, you now know you can sing'.²⁰ Having the ability to sing in unison and in tune, with unified vowels, is the foundation of singing in a choral setting. This foundational training is crucial for the development of choral singing at any level and that the Festival requires each primary school entering for competition perform a unison song can help with each groups development as a choirs and as choral singers.

With the growth of training in choral singing in Cork, the first schools' choral competition in Ireland as part of the Cork International Choral Festival was established in 1966. The people of Cork have kept this standard of choral singing alive to this day in schools; at the 2015 Festival in the Section One Primary Schools' Competition, five out of seven choirs hailed from Cork city and county, while other competing choirs came from counties Derry and Clare.²¹ This shows that the schools' competition is not only a source of pride for schools in the locality, but also around the country.

It is also important to acknowledge the lineage of the secondary schools' competitions within the Festival. Fleischmann argued in 1952 that secondary school music should be

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2015. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

of a more advanced level than primary school education; however, the teaching of music in primary and secondary schools is very different now than it was in Fleischmann's time. Secondary school music teachers are trained musicians, who have studied music education for many years, whereas many primary school teachers have had little to no musical training throughout their lives. At the time of publication of *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, Fleischmann stated that teachers should be adequately trained in choral and instrumental music and should have special qualifications to gain a post in secondary school music teaching.²² Training courses for teachers offer such classes and professional development, possibly helping to develop courses such as the music teaching diploma at the Cork School of Music in the 1970s, which offered the first course in academic, practical, and pedagogic music education.²³ If specialised training was still offered to both trainee teachers and full-time teachers at the secondary school level, students' choral development in Ireland could be profound. There are noticeably fewer male voice choir entries in the equal voice post-primary school competition at the Cork International Choral Festival. In the 2016 equal voice competition for post-primary schools, one choir out of ten was from an all-male school.²⁴

2.2 The Growth of Choral Singing in Ireland

'It has been suggested that the real test of the musical education of the citizens of any country is the degree to which music-making is fostered by individual members or

²² Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland a Symposium*, 234.

²³ Ita Beausang, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland: Part 2' <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-2>> [accessed 10 September 2019].

²⁴ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2016. Anon, Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

groups of the community within their own homes'.²⁵ Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, broadcaster, musician and founder of the first professional orchestra in Ireland (*Raidió Éireann* Symphony Orchestra), expressed concern that in the 1950s many areas in Ireland had few music-making initiatives and that local citizens had few resources to hire music teachers or to run courses.²⁶ Ironically, the lack of a musical infrastructure and scarcity of instrumentalists may have been driving factors behind the choral movement's growth, which resulted in a gradual increase in the number of choirs and choral societies in Ireland during the first decades of the new republic. From 1954, to welcome a diverse range of people from varying musical abilities and traditions, the Cork International Choral Festival sought to include competitions for choirs of rural and suburban settings and areas, both large and small in population. In essence, the Festival sought to enable the inclusion of all types of groups.²⁷ Ó hAnnracháin lamented the lack of music in rural settings, but the Festival motivated smaller areas to set up groups for competition; however, it is unclear if he was speaking purely of classical art music or all kinds of music. It could be presumed that music was happening at céili, gatherings and social occasions. Yet, the Cork International Choral Festival's competitions clearly demonstrated an intent to offer opportunities for singing groups of all levels and sizes to partake in the competitive choral scene.

Ó hAnnracháin stated that 'Choral singing ... can be implanted with relative ease and can be brought within reach of the average citizen ... well enough to take part in the

²⁵ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 232.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 1954-1962. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

concerted work'.²⁸ While instrumental playing usually involves years of formal instruction, choral singing is more accessible for untrained singers and musicians. Many amateur choirs in Ireland consist of a majority membership of musically illiterate singers; however, many choirs can still perform significant works at a high standard. Conductors educated in vocal production and rehearsal planning can develop their singers' voices and musicality, leading to a choir's public performance within several months. At the Opening Gala of the Cork International Choral Festival, many amateur choirs perform demanding works while being accompanied by an orchestra of semi-professional or professional musicians. The Goethe Institute choir, Madrigal'75 and the Fleischmann Choir are among some of the amateur and semi - professional choral groups that perform regularly at the Festival with works such as Mozart's *Requiem*, Jenkins' *The Armed Man* and Handel's *Dixit Domine* in past years.²⁹

At the Cork International Choral Festival, there were separate competitions for choirs of different size, level and setting. Competitions D and E include singers of all levels. Competition D is restricted to choirs from areas with a population of no more than ten thousand people, while competition E is set with requirements of two and three-part choirs or groups such as parish choirs and clubs from villages, or areas not exceeding two thousand in population.³⁰

²⁸ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 232.

²⁹ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2009-2015. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

³⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1954. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

In relation to the success of the above competitions, Marie McCarthy writes that a cultural perspective has affected music education in Ireland.³¹ Music played a role in defining which sub-cultural groups had access to different forms of education.³² Classical music was generally associated with middle- or upper-class status while the general public engaged with folk music.³³ The Cork International Choral Festival competitions reflected the needs and means of specific areas and localities competing at the Festival and taking part in the non-competitive elements. In the initial years of the Festival there were competitions for choirs from rural areas that usually featured a folk song as the required test piece, and competitions for choirs in international competitions that involved a piece by a known composer.³⁴ These requirements allowed participating groups to perform a repertoire of their choosing that was appropriate to their ability. The competing choirs of the international competition were usually of a very high standard and featured trained and musically literate singers. A group from a rural setting may not have had such abilities, and thus an arrangement of a folk song was more enjoyable and accessible. However, participant 1 states that ‘set pieces challenge choirs’, and that having a set piece rather than free choice pieces during a competition can enable development. The choir can see how other groups perform the same piece they are very familiar with, so the conductors and singers can provide critical and constructive criticism on their work, aiding the choir’s development.³⁵

³¹ Marie McCarthy, *Passing it On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1999), 43.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1972. Anon, ‘Cork International Choral Festival’, <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

³⁵ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

Different competitions based on population size and group types are crucial in developing choral experiences across the country. Pitting choirs of varying calibres against one another proves unhelpful to any choir's development and makes for a potentially negative experience. Setting standards for each competition enables a friendly yet competitive approach to enable all levels of singers to take part in the Festival. John Fitzpatrick, Festival director from 1993 to 2020, recounts how he entered choir *Cantairí Mhuscraí* in 1968, only five or six months after its formation. Fitzpatrick saw the Festival as a 'major platform for a developing choir'.³⁶ Fitzpatrick states,

Thus, with Cantairí Mhuscraí I started right at the bottom in the Competition F, a competition open to entry by choirs from rural areas, factory groups, and small villages. In our first year, and within five or six months of the choir's formation, we achieved second place. We were delighted with this initial success. The following year we won Competition F. The next year, after, we moved up to competition E and were again victorious. The choir continued to improve, and some years later, we won Competition B, the major national competition.³⁷

These competitions show that allowing choirs of the same standard to compete against one another helps to develop these choirs. The Festival provides opportunities for all levels of choirs and singing groups, allowing the choristers and conductors the time and confidence to grow, improve and progress up the ranks of the Festival's competitions.

Ó hAnnracháin, in the 1950s, believed that 'There is no town in Ireland which could not have its own choir, large or small.'³⁸ Every town in Ireland could and should have a choir; however, rural areas are sometimes out of reach for trained choral musicians and

³⁶ John Fitzpatrick, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', 443.

³⁷ Ibid., 443.

³⁸ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 232-243.

conductors. Dublin and Cork are the main nuclei of music and music education in Ireland, with most of the country excluded from trained choral practitioners' services. While instrumental players generally develop their musical abilities and technique from a young age, choral singers may have limited technical abilities and repertory, which was a problem at the time of Ó hAnnracháin's article in *Music in Ireland*, and which is still relevant in some areas of Ireland today.³⁹ Popular and recognised pieces are often performed and recycled to help increase the number of attendees at specific concerts. Performing these pieces regularly does not allow choirs to perform a more varied repertoire but may have some advantages. Performing popular or known pieces entices audience members to attend concerts, and, by word of mouth, attracts new audience members who might never have been exposed to choral music. This might also serve to encourage new members to join local choirs if the concerts influence them in terms of musical taste and experiences.

The Festival has been progressive since its establishment, ensuring that local, national and international choirs are being nurtured, challenged and encouraged. Attending the Festival combines choirs' already established relationship to choral singing with the variety of repertoire, the vibrancy and colour of the presentations, and opens their ears, minds and hearts to previously unimagined possibilities.⁴⁰ *Voci Nuove*⁴¹, for example, first entered the Church Music and Chamber Choir Competitions before entering Ireland's Choir of the Year and finally gaining a place in the Fleischmann International

³⁹ Ibid., 232-243.

⁴⁰ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

⁴¹ *Voci Nuove* was a choir formed by Daniel Beuster in 2011. This choir was initially set up as a project choir to perform at the Galway Jazz festival but grew to become a prominent choir in Ireland during its running.

Trophy Competition on two occasions.⁴² The Cork International Choral Festival indirectly helped to develop the choir by ‘raising the bar’, offering competitions through which to progress. Each year, skills such as musicality, programming and performance skills were improved upon – by singers and conductors – for participation at the Cork International Choral Festival.⁴³ The Festival also motivates choirs to work hard on pieces, often holding extra rehearsals in the lead up to the Festival and, ultimately, enhancing the singers’ abilities.⁴⁴

Aloys Fleischmann aimed to introduce audiences to new choral compositions. Fleischmann introduced competitions and seminars to help generate interest in new works; however, the Cork International Choral Festival was not the only organisation that enforced and promoted the performance of new works.⁴⁵ Although formed in 1926, *Raidió Éireann* (Radio Ireland) took almost twenty years to formally establish its first choir, *Cór Raidió Éireann* (Irish Radio Choir) in May 1943.⁴⁶ Ó hAnnracháin noted that *Cór Raidió Éireann*:

was welcomed by all who had the future of choral music in this country at heart, since it was a body which could be expected to give performances of choral works that would not be practicable for the ordinary choir, apart from the possibility that the choir would specialise in Irish choral music in particular.⁴⁷

⁴² Voci Nuove competed in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition in 2014 and 2016. Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2014 and 2016. Anon, Festival Archive’, <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁴³ Survey Participant 13, 15 January 2021.

⁴⁴ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 1 for more details.

⁴⁶ Séumas Ó Braonáin, ‘Music in the Broadcasting Profession’, in A. Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 197.

⁴⁷ Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Choral Singing in Ireland’, 237.

2.2.1 New Compositions

Prior to the formation of the choir, there was a lack of quality ensembles for the performance of new musical compositions, which resulted in Irish composers being limited in whom they could write for. The formation of *Cór Raidió Éireann* enabled composers to have their works performed at a professional level and allowed for more progressive music to be composed without the restrictions of an amateur ensemble.

With no resident conductor in the early years, the choir was directed by many guest conductors from Ireland and abroad. The first of these was Hugh Roberton, who, although living and working primarily in Scotland, travelled to Ireland to assist in the choir's foundation.⁴⁸ Roberton visited once a month, and Ó hAnnracháin trained the choir between visits. *Cór Raidió Éireann* consisted of twenty-four trained singers, but they were not considered a full-time ensemble.⁴⁹ It was strongly felt that *Cór Raidió Éireann* set the standard for professional choral singing in Ireland.⁵⁰

The founding of *Cór Raidió Éireann* paved the way for contemporary choral music to be performed at venues throughout Ireland and gained leverage in subsequent years with the establishment of Chamber Choir Ireland. Chamber Choir Ireland is the choir in residence at the Cork International Choral Festival, performing newly composed and commissioned Irish choral music at each Festival. The choir holds a residency at the Festival, with recitals held on the Friday night; these include the premiere of the Festival's commissioned pieces and the winning composition of the Seán Ó Riada

⁴⁸ Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the Broadcasting Service', 205.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 201.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 201.

composition competition. On Saturday, the choir then hosts the commissioned and competition winning works' performances at the Seminar on New Choral Music. This unique aspect of a choral festival in Ireland allows for the performance and discussion of newly composed Irish Choral music. The commissioned piece and the Seán Ó Riada competition's winning pieces receive in-depth discussion, while sometimes other pieces submitted to the competition are workshopped.

2.3 Singing in schools

In primary schools, performance opportunities usually consist of singing for religious occasions, such as at communion and confirmation celebrations, while most schools hold winter and summer concerts with each class working towards some sort of musical performance.

There are multiple primary and post-primary choral competitions throughout the country, as well as non-competitive opportunities. These include *Cór Fhéile na Scoil*;⁵¹ The National Children's Choir, an incentive for pupils of fourth, fifth and sixth class to come together and perform common repertoire, initiated in 1985 by Seán Creamer,⁵² and Wexford's 'Sing Out Loud', which brings together schools from Wexford town and county at the National Opera House.⁵³ Across these events, a number of performances draw on common repertoire. The Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland's

⁵¹ See chapter 1, pages 19-20.

⁵² Anon, 'Our aim',
< <https://www.nationalchildrenschoir.org/our-aims>> [accessed 19 January 2021].

⁵³ Anon, 'Sing Out loud',
< <https://www.nationaloperahouse.ie/whats-on/show/sing-out-loud2>> [accessed 21 June 2021].

Peace Proms offers the invaluable opportunity for thirty-five thousand school-aged children to perform with an orchestra.⁵⁴

The Cork International Choral Festival offers primary and secondary school choirs the opportunity to take part in a friendly competitive environment. Apart from the competition, the choirs are exposed to the performances of many visiting non-competitive choirs, the choirs involved in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition, and local choirs on occasion.⁵⁵ Scheduling these international and national choirs to perform for the primary and secondary school choirs while awaiting results (and very often before the competition has begun) offers the opportunity for a growth of interest in and appreciation of high-level performances of choral singing among young students. Many school choristers maintain their interest and love for choral singing throughout their adult lives, and the exposure afforded by the Cork International Choral Festival encourages this.⁵⁶

Fergus Sheil writes that in the past, (primary) teachers received minimal training in music education.⁵⁷ This is similar to today's situation, although the Kodály Society of Ireland's Annual Summer School offers a week-long intensive musical training for musicians and primary school teachers.⁵⁸ Regional Teachers' Education Centres also

⁵⁴ Anon, 'Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland. Background to cross-Border and European Links', <<https://peaceproms.com/cboi-background-3/>> [accessed 19 January 2021].

⁵⁵ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2018. Anon, Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁵⁶ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁷ Fergus Sheil, 'Raising Your Voice – Towards a Policy for the Development of Choral Music in Ireland', Report to the Arts Council of Ireland (unpublished, 2008), 19.

⁵⁸ Anon, 'About us', <<https://www.kodaly.ie/about-us>> [accessed 23 March 2020].

offer music education workshops as part of their Teachers' Summer Courses.⁵⁹

However, these courses are optional, suggesting that only teachers interested in music are likely to attend. The Annual Conducting Course at the University of Limerick is offered to primary school teachers as part of their summer courses. The Chris Mahon Bursary is also awarded to a promising conductor in the schools' competition at the Cork International Choral Festival, offering the awarded conductor a scholarship of the fees to partake in the Conducting Summer School. The Festival in Cork recognises that supporting a conductor from the primary school competition can lead to more understanding of choral training and pedagogy, inevitably helping to increase choral singing development among children and primary schools.

There are a number of educational services that offer trained musicians a platform to hold music and/or choral classes in schools. One company, Music Generation, because of the sponsorship and private funding available offers subsidised performance music education settings to school going children.

2.4 Music Generation

Music Generation was launched in 2010 by Music Network in an effort to bring diverse performance music education to children and young people up to eighteen years of age. The organisation is funded by Irish band U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of

⁵⁹ Information on Summer Courses is usually posted on various websites in April of each academic year and is also sent to each school within a district. These courses are offered in a range of areas and disciplines linked to the primary school curriculum. Waterford Teachers' Centre offers courses in Kodály Inspired Music Education as well as musical theatre courses.

Education and Skills (DES), Local Music Education Partnerships and the Arts Council of Ireland.⁶⁰

Music Generation has implemented several programmes for young people and children to avail of opportunities to perform choral music. Each county has its own programmes: Little People, Big Voices in Carlow, Escalation and Burren Children's Choir in Clare, Summer Sing and Singsong in Cork, Hidden Histories – Limerick Voices Projects in Limerick, Junior Song School in Louth, Sing it OUT! Voice Camp in Mayo, Singskool in Sligo, as well as many choral programmes and regional choirs.⁶¹

In creating these opportunities for children to be part of some sort of choral programme, Rosaleen Molloy, director of Music Generation, hopes that in time, 'county, regional and provincial choirs will become the feeder ensembles for the Irish Youth Choir Programmes'.⁶² Without being directly linked to the Cork International Choral Festival, the Director of Music Generation, along with some of the music development officers, strives to enhance and include choral programmes that will enable singers to join the Irish Youth Choir. This organisation has emerged from the very ideas of the directors and administrators of the Cork International Choral Festival. The Cork International Choral Festival, being directly linked to the foundation of the Irish Youth Choir has influenced Music Generation to provide training and

⁶⁰ Anon, 'About Music Generation',
< <https://www.musicgeneration.ie/about/> > [accessed 9 June 2020].

⁶¹ Anon, 'Local Music Education Partnerships',
< <https://www.musicgeneration.ie/programmes/> > [accessed 9 June 2020].

⁶² Anne Fidelma Barry, *Historical, Cultural, Educational, and Traditional Influences in Irish Choral Settings from 1922 to the Present* (PhD dissertation, Florida State University, 2015), 106.

opportunities in the hopes of inspiring more singers to partake in choral singing and singing groups.

2.5 Choirs in Ireland

From 1943, *Cór Radio Éireann* was at the forefront of promoting high-level choral singing; however, other choirs and choral societies were growing in number around the country. In Dublin, the most notable groups were the Culwick Choral Society, Our Lady's Choral Society, the Clontarf Choral Society, *An Cór Laoidheogach* (the Lutheran Choir), the Teachers' Male Voice Choir, and the choirs of the Gaelic League branches.⁶³ It was not just in Dublin that choral activity was thriving. In Belfast, the Philharmonic Society, the Ulster singers and *Cór Gaelach Bhéal Feirste* (the Irish speaking choir) were noted performers. Cork produced the St Fin Barre's Oratorio Society, the University Choral Society, the Aeolian Choir, *Cór Cois Laoi* (Choir of the Lee), and the choirs at the Cork School of Music.⁶⁴ Other centres around the country that had distinguished choirs were St Columba's Choir in Derry, the Brisbane Choral Society in Limerick, the Cecilian singers in Sligo, the Wexford Male Voice Choir, Tramore Singers, Waterford, and the *St Fiac's* Male Voice Choir in Carlow.⁶⁵

A list of prominent choral groups in the Republic of Ireland was collected by Ó hAnnracháin in *Music in Ireland*, published in 1952.⁶⁶ Of these twenty-two choirs that

⁶³ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 240.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 240-241.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 238.

⁶⁶ For more details, see Appendix D, page 182.

came into existence, only eight are still active.⁶⁷ With some choirs being short-lived, the surviving choirs show that there is still an interest in and need for choirs and choral singing groups in Ireland. While seven of the above choirs were Dublin-based, the Wexford Male Voice Choir actively promotes choral music in rural areas and smaller towns in Ireland. The Wexford Male Voice choir is still in existence and has a membership of thirty to forty men each term.

With the disbanding of the fourteen other societies, this did not mean that choral singing declined. Many new societies and choirs were formed in the country.

Renowned choirs are the Guinness Choir (1951), the Lindsay Singers (1958), *Cantairí Óga Átha Cliath* (1960), Limerick Choral Union (1964), Carlow Choral Society (1965), Tallaght Choral Society (1967), Mullingar Choral Society (1968), the Park Singers (1970), Dublin County Choir (1975), Madrigal' 75 (1975), Dun Laoghaire Choral Society (1982), *Cois Cladaigh* (1982), Galway Baroque Singers (1983), *Radio Teilifís Éireann* (Radio Television Ireland) Philharmonic Choir (1985), Bray Choral Society (1986), *Anúna* (originally *An Uaithne*, meaning Greenland) (1987), the Fleischmann Choir (1992),⁶⁸ the *Lassus* Scholars (1996), Mornington Singers (1997), Dublin Bach Singers (2002), New Dublin Voices (2005), *Cuore* Chamber Choir (2014), *Laetare* Vocal Ensemble (2014) and Dublin Youth Choir (2017).⁶⁹ The formation of these choirs shows that there is a need for choral singing opportunities in Ireland. Many

⁶⁷ Those choirs are The Hibernian Catch Club, University of Dublin Choral Society, The Strollers Club, The Culwick Choral Society, the Clef Club, the Wexford Male Voice Choir, *Cór Radio Éireann* (now known as Chamber Choir Ireland) and Our Lady's Choral Society.

⁶⁸ The Fleischmann Choir was initially named the Cork School of Music Symphony Chorus, but renamed in Aloys Fleischmann's honour after his death in 1992.

⁶⁹ Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', 232-243; Bernie Sherlock, 'Contemporary Irish Choral Music and an Outline of its Historical Origins' (DMusPerf dissertation, Royal Irish Academy of Music, 2018), 87-88.

choirs in Ireland, past and present, represent Ireland as a country with a thriving choral scene. An examination of the Cork International Choral Festival programmes shows that almost all these choirs were at one time involved with the Festival.⁷⁰ This shows that the Cork International Choral Festival has acted as a central venue at which choirs would strive to perform and compete, resulting from the Festival's prominent position as a promoter of choral singing, conducting and choral composition in Ireland.

2.6 Third-level institution choirs

Universities and Institutes of Technology in Ireland have housed a growing number of notable choral groups in the past number of years that show promise and choral excellence. All of these choirs have had involvement in some way at the Cork International Choral Festival.

These third-level choirs all share the common thread of having competed at the Cork International Choral Festival at some stage in their existence. UCD Choral Scholars and CIT Chamber Choir have all featured as champions of the Church Music Competition on numerous occasions, with DIT Chamber Choir competing in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition as recently as 2018.⁷¹ The Festival's competitive structures, adjudication, and ranking have enabled it to regularly attract choirs of such standing. This is testament to the history and renown of the Festival, and

⁷⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 1962-2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁷¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2011-2019.

its significance in opening choral singing up to a wide range of choral singers and conductors.⁷²

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the Festival's influence on choral singing and education in Ireland, by describing relevant educational and choral contexts. The Festival responded to Ó hAnnracháin's call that more musical initiatives needed to be developed at a local and national level, to enable people to learn and perform.⁷³ Although it was unclear whether Ó hAnnracháin was referring to classical art music, traditional music, or both, the Festival certainly capitalised upon the musical gap he identified.

The Festival dedicated specific competitions to choral and singing groups from different areas to allow for a fair competition between groups. Thus, it aided the development of choirs by scaling the competitions to suit different abilities and communities. As mentioned, *Chantoirí Mhuscraí* and *Voci Nuove* progressed through the Festival's competitions until they both reached the highest standards. Because of the Festival, these choirs had the opportunity to improve and develop their choral practices year after year.

Cork has a thriving choral scene that dates back to the formation of the Cork School of Music in 1878. Classes in singing and *solfeggio* have aided vocal development, and with many receiving training, the wider community has also felt the benefits.

⁷² For list of the third level institution choir that have taken part at the Festival see Appendix I, page 197.

⁷³ See Ó hAnnracháin's quote at the start of section 2.2, page 48.

Instruction through the Irish language was the main impetus for teaching music in schools. The language was taught through song, but the understanding of musical elements was omitted. This resulted in music being neglected in schools all over the country. It cannot be said that this was the case in every primary school, but teachers with a lack of training in music cannot have helped to foster students' interest.

A range of organisations other than the Cork International Choral Festival have enabled opportunities for schools to engage in music performance. However, these organisations are not associated with the Department of Education and Science (DES). Only one organisation, Music Generation, is linked to the DES. However, Music Generation is not a curriculum replacement for schools, which still results in children at the primary school level not receiving instruction on the fundamentals of music essential to becoming a competent choral singer.

However, the number of choirs in Ireland has increased, especially in third-level institutions. This increase clearly shows that there is an interest in choral singing and the Cork International Choral Festival offers a wide range of competitions for each group to exhibit its commitment to choral music in Ireland.

Chapter 3

The influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on the composition of Irish Choral Music

This chapter will examine different ways in which the Cork International Choral Festival has contributed to and influenced the composition of new Irish choral music, notably by exploring the Seminar on New Choral Music, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, The Composer in the Classroom Scheme, and music composed for performance in the equal and mixed voice sections of the post-primary schools' competitions. The latter section will draw on the work of Ben Hanlon to illustrate the significant role of the Festival in promoting compositional innovation and enhancing young people's engagement with choral music in Ireland. Three notable works written specifically for secondary school choirs will be examined and performance considerations will be explored.

The Cork International Choral Festival showcases many national and international choral works. In the process, the Festival helps to diversify styles and create awareness of both international composers and composers of Irish choral music.¹ Showcasing new works can offer inspiration for writing new choral music, and in this way the Festival provides an outlet and a basis for the promotion of new choral music.² With requirements for a piece to be performed by an Irish composer in a number of its competitions, the Festival offers incentives for the commissioning, composition and performance of Irish choral music. As the Chapter will explore, the Cork International

¹ Survey Participant 20, 15 January 2021.

² Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

Choral Festival is therefore responsible for promoting and creating many works of contemporary Irish choral music.³

3.1 The Seminar on New Choral Music

From a composer's perspective, the Seminar on New Choral Music is the most exciting element of the Cork International Choral Festival and acts as an ideal introduction to new choral music for composers, performers, and conductors.⁴ In 1962, eight years after establishing the Cork International Choral Festival, Aloys Fleischmann introduced a new development to expand its scope and significance: the Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music. The Festival had already been successful as a choral music promoter, but Fleischmann wanted to create a platform for promoting new choral music.⁵

Fleischmann felt that the Festival did not connect enough with the development of the arts. This disconnect 'resulted in a complacent and unimaginative conservatism in the reception of new music' among audiences.⁶ Reflecting upon Fleischmann's attitude towards creating new choral music, Séamas de Barra states that, 'The round of standard repertoire and old favourites was all very well. However, it was far healthier for both audiences and choristers alike to have the opportunity to respond to often strangely unfamiliar modes of interest'.⁷ Fleischmann was opposed to giving the audience what they wanted. Fleischmann's desire was to have new music be an intrinsic part of the festival Programme. Fleischmann publicised the Festival-commissioned pieces in the

³ Survey Participant 32, 15 January 2021.

⁴ Survey Participant 6, 15 January 2021.

⁵ Séamus de Barra, 'The Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music', in R. Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration*, (Herford, Germany: Glen House Press, 2004), 284.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 284.

hopes of nurturing a more educated and perceptive audience.⁸ Fleischmann sought to expand the already available choral repertoire. Newly commissioned music would ‘stimulate the creation of new choral music of sufficient quality and attractiveness to enter the standard repertoire or constitute a valuable addition to it’.⁹ Relayed to Fleischmann was information related to the successes and subsequent performances of commissioned pieces, leading him to state that, ‘this certainly makes us feel that our seminar is worthwhile’.¹⁰

The Seminar on New Choral Music at the Cork International Choral Festival has had a lasting influence on Irish choral music. Since its establishment in 1962, the Festival has commissioned fifty-two works by thirty-six Irish composers (thirty-one male and five female), one of whom, Rhona Clarke (commissioned twice – in 1994 and 2008), currently chairs the Seminars.¹¹ Twenty composers were commissioned once, fourteen composers twice, and one composer, Gerald Victory, three times.¹² Of the fifty-two commissions, only three composers, Seán Ó Riada, Seóirse Bodley and John Buckley, used text in the Irish language. The seminar gave the Cork International Choral Festival a status as a platform for choral singers and composers, as well as new choral music.¹³ In the first years of the seminar, established composers were chosen by the Festival (Seóirse Bodley, commissioned in 1963 and 1979; Brian Boydell, commissioned in 1964 and 1974; Gerard Victory, commissioned in 1966, 1978, and 1993). As the

⁸ Ibid., 288-289.

⁹ Ibid., 285.

¹⁰ Ibid., 285.

¹¹ This number was recorded in 2019.

¹² Seminar on New Choral Music Programmes, 1962-2019. Anon, ‘Cork International Choral Festival’, <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, Festival Archive’, <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

¹³ De Barra, ‘The Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music’, 285.

seminar grew, many new composers were commissioned, giving opportunities for less experienced composers to avail of the opportunity to be commissioned and to show their innovative ideas for choral composition, which was a main objective of the seminar. These commissions show that the Cork International Choral Festival helped to create new choral music and enable less known and new composers to have their works heard. The chance of having a piece performed and analysed by a professional choir would motivate composers to write more choral compositions, with the hope of being commissioned by the Festival.

There were, however, some notable exceptions. In 1987, 2010 and 2016, there were no commissions of Irish composers' work, while in 1967 and 1968, there were no Festival commissions at all.¹⁴ There was no seminar in 2001 due to fear of Foot and Mouth disease in Ireland, or from 2004 to 2007.¹⁵ The Seminar did not take place in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In 2019, the Festival commissioned composer Siobhán Cleary for the second time (the first year was 2011). Cleary turned down the commission on grounds of gender bias, which meant there was no commissioned work for the Seminar, or work for Chamber Choir Ireland to perform in their annual recital at the Festival in 2019.¹⁶ No commissioned piece also resulted in a lack of Irish composer representation at the seminar.¹⁷ In spite of these absences, the seminar has consistently provided opportunities for new composers to have their work heard.

¹⁴ There is no reason listed as to why there were no commissions in these years.

¹⁵ The Festival programmes only state that there was no commission in that year (2004-2007).

¹⁶ John Fitzpatrick, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. Cork, 8 December 2018.

¹⁷ Cleary felt that the commission fee she received did not meet her male counterparts' equivalent in previous years. Cleary received the award to the amount she requested. However, she declined.

The process of commissioning composers for the Seminar has evolved over time. In its early years, Fleischmann verbally invited composers to be commissioned. Composers were ‘specifically requested to compose a short unaccompanied part-song suitable for performance by an amateur choir of reasonable proficiency’.¹⁸ It is probable that Fleischmann’s specifications surrounding suitability of commissioned works for amateur choirs was intended to ensure they were accessible for many amateur choirs. In the earlier years of the Seminar, several choirs performed the commissioned works: the Lindsay Singers, *Cór Cois Laoi*, the Goethe Institute’s Choir, as well as *Cantique* and *Canzona*, both Dublin-based choirs conducted by Blánaid Murphy. Michael Casey of *Raidió Teilifís Éireann* approached Murphy to perform the seminar’s commissions in place of Chamber Choir Ireland, a professional ensemble of trained choral singers, when the choir was unavailable in 1995.¹⁹ As the choirs were able to sing the commissioned works, the composers clearly understood the parameters of amateur choral singing.²⁰ Since the beginning of the Festival, at least one Irish composer has been commissioned each year. By commissioning an Irish composer, the Festival added to the development of new choral music in Ireland. From 2010, the Festival commissioned just one composer per year.

In Fleischmann’s tenure as Festival director, the commissioned pieces were performed at Cork City Hall concerts. Fleischmann aimed to educate, cultivate, and expose the

¹⁸ Patrick Zuk, ‘The Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music’, in R. Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration*, 323.

¹⁹ Blánaid Murphy, ‘Festival Adjudicators’, in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 214.

²⁰ The named choirs were known to be some of the best in Ireland at the time.

audiences to new choral music repertoire. Presently, the commissions are premiered at a Friday night concert in St Fin Barre's Cathedral.²¹

Since 2008, Chamber Choir Ireland has performed every commissioned work. Chamber Choir Ireland is important because, since 2008, the pieces have become increasingly complex, possibly because amateur choirs no longer sing the commissions. Often, works were written without the limitations and possibilities of the human voice in mind and are unlikely to be performed again.²² Some composers, even though commissioned, may not have a complete understanding of the voice and how it works. The voice is not like another instrument where notes can be played one after the other. Recognising and knowing how to write for the voice is a vital aspect of choral composition. Participant 4 recalls attending a conference in the United Kingdom where a professional choir was performing a piece. The conductor of the choir stopped the rehearsal, turned to the audience and used the piece as an example of the composer writing for voice at a piano. Patrick Zuk argues that the new trends and techniques in modern compositions are beyond choral singing.²³ Atonality, neotonicity, and complexity in rhythms are not suited to the choral world. The voice cannot be manipulated like other instruments. Limitations of the voice must be considered, especially in an amateur singer setting.

²¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2015. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

²² Murphy, 'Festival Adjudicators', 214.

²³ Zuk, 'The Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music', 230-321.

Brian Boydell's *Come Sleep*, commissioned in 1964, has had a lasting impact on performance opportunities for choirs in Ireland. Boydell's *Come Sleep* was selected for inclusion in *Choirland: An Anthology of Irish Choral Music*. This anthology is a selection of fifteen pieces of choral music written by Irish composers, an idea that grew from the Arts Council's commitment to the publication and recording of new Irish choral music, based on research from the 2008 report, *Raising Your Voice*.²⁴ The number of performances of this piece is unknown; however, its inclusion in the *Choirland* publication signifies that *Come Sleep* is a staple of the Irish choral music repertoire that was written for the Cork International Choral Festival.

The commissioned pieces of both Irish and international composers were often performed as test pieces in the various competitions at the Festival after their year of commission and composition, thus aiding both composers' and choirs' exposure to new Irish choral music.²⁵ Prescribing these pieces for competition not only gave them more performance opportunities, but also submerged Irish choral singers in new music commissioned by the Festival. This consequence helped to develop, expand, and gain recognition for new Irish choral music.

The seminars have been instrumental in fostering a new appreciation for contemporary works among Irish composers. Many composers and students attended the seminar, encouraged by Fleischmann's fervent belief in their robust performance. Classes for music students at University College Cork were suspended for an entire week, during

²⁴ Anon, 'Choirland: An Anthology of Irish Choral Music', < <https://www.cmc.ie/news/181012/choirland-anthology-irish-choral-music> > [accessed 21 April 2020]; Fergus Sheil, 'Raising Your Voice – Towards a Policy for the Development of Choral Music in Ireland', Report to the Arts Council of Ireland (unpublished, 2008).

²⁵ Spratt, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 418.

the time leading up to final exams. However, as Aiveen Kearney states as a student of Fleischmann's, 'you would not dream of not going to the Choral Festival'.²⁶ Allowing the students to attend the different events of the Festival, such as the seminar, can be accredited to the vibrant choral scene in Cork city and county. The seminar offers students, choral lovers, and composers the opportunity to discuss new choral pieces from leading composers and conductors. Its teaching also helps young composers and students to understand the compositional and interpretational value of this new music.²⁷ The workshop in 1988 titled, 'Electronics and the Voice', where Stephen Montague offered members of the Seminar hands-on, practical experience in working with electronic equipment. From this, the seminar shows its willingness for creativity and continuous innovation in new choral music, which also could be seen as a factor in new electronic elements being introduced into vocal music.²⁸

The twenty-sixth seminar in 1989 offered the first masterclass in choral composition. Derek Bourgeois and Séamus de Barra tutored five young Irish composers: Rhona Clarke, Marian Ingoldsby, Michael McGlynn, Martin O'Leary and Patrick Zuk.²⁹ The Festival commissioned all but Martin O'Leary in subsequent years (Rhona Clarke, in 1994 and 2008; Marian Ingoldsby, in 1995; Patrick Zuk, in 1998; and Michael McGlynn, in 1999), with three of the composers winning the Seán Ó Riada Competition (Rhona Clarke, 1984; Marian Ingoldsby, 1993; and Michael McGlynn, 1986 and 1990).³⁰ These three composers have regularly featured at the Festival as their

²⁶ Ibid., 426.

²⁷ Ibid., 417.

²⁸ Ibid., 420.

²⁹ Ibid., 420.

³⁰ Seminar on New Choral Music Programmes, 1962-2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival',

compositions are among the most performed in the equal and mixed voice post-primary schools' competitions. In the cases of Clarke and McGlynn, their knowledge of the voice and the compositional styles used is evident, as many of their pieces suit the adolescent voice well.

Sister Nuala Reidy commissioned Clarke's *Géibheann* for the Loreto College choir, Fermoy, Co. Cork. Since its premiere performance in 1999, several choirs have performed this work in the competition each year, showing that it sits well with female voices.³¹ McGlynn's *Geantraí* has had similar success in both the equal and mixed voice competitions.³² The masterclasses offered to these composers by the Cork International Choral Festival may have led to each participant's development as a composer. For any musician, the opportunity to learn from and work with such experienced composers can greatly enhance the development of one's practice.

The BBC Singers, under John Poole, ran a workshop that used compositions from the composers listed above in 1989.³³ At this time, the BBC Singers had performed more contemporary choral compositions than any other ensemble in Europe. This also afforded aspiring composers and conductors fantastic opportunities to work with and

<<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, Festival Archive',

<<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

³¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 1998-2019. The piece was performed in 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2017 in the equal voice post-primary school competition. See Appendix F, page 182. *Géibheann* is discussed further on page 100.

³² These pieces were performed in the equal voice competition in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The mixed voice competition performances included 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival',

<<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, Festival Archive',

<<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. See Appendix F, page 187.

³³ Spratt, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', 420.

learn from a well-established performing group. Some years later, Chamber Choir Ireland became the ensemble in residence at the Cork International Choral Festival, with the purpose of performing commissioned pieces and the winning piece from the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition. These pieces require the highest standard for premier performance, promoting newly composed Irish choral music from the Cork International Choral Festival.

The Seminar on New Choral Music allows room for the development of choral music and for new aesthetical directions to be explored. Listening to and enjoying pieces by other composers and asking specific questions to the composer about their work is an essential element that can influence others.³⁴ After attending many seminars, participant 18 felt inspired by what he/she had heard and aimed to develop his/her practice by either integrating new techniques or working on the challenges faced by choirs when singing new music. The Seminar on New Choral Music at the Cork International Choral Festival fosters creativity and provides learning opportunities for the composers and audience in attendance, which in turn influences and enhances the composition of Irish choral music.

3.2 The Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition

From the beginning of the Festival, Aloys Fleischmann set out to create a platform to encourage the commissioning and arrangement of compositions and folk songs to enhance the wealth and performance of Irish choral music. Fleischmann, in memory of

³⁴ Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

Seán Ó Riada, established a trophy in his name, for the best performance of a choral work by an Irish composer at the Festival – the Seán Ó Riada Memorial Trophy.³⁵

Seán Ó Riada was a prominent figure in Irish music. He composed, arranged, and performed music for film, theatre, the church, television and radio.³⁶ Ó Riada was comfortable performing in both classical and traditional Irish music settings; this contributed to the formation of *Ceoltóirí Chualann* (Musicians of Bray), a group that promoted Irish music performance by holding concerts in theatres and concert venues throughout Ireland.³⁷ The music performed by this group enhanced the fusion of traditional and classical music. Siobhán Long describes how Seán Ó Riada's:

melding of classical and traditional styles was the pivot on which the tradition turned dizzily, as it stretched itself beyond anything imaginable, and found sudden acceptance in drawing rooms and parlours just as readily as it had been in snugs and back rooms for generations.³⁸

From 1972 until 1976, the Seán Ó Riada competition at the Cork International Choral Festival was not for composition. The award was for choirs, and involved the performance of a part song or an Irish composer's arrangement of a folk song.³⁹ The Festival aimed to enhance the performance of Irish music, and the incentive of an

³⁵ John Gibson, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 147-148.

³⁶ Harry White, 'Ó Riada, Seán [Reidy, John]' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.20462>> [accessed 4 May 2021].

³⁷ James M. Manheim, 'Ó Riada, Seán', <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/o-riada-sean>> [accessed 2 June 2020].

³⁸ Siobhán Long, 'Reinventing the reel', <<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/reinventing-the-reel-1.425696>> [accessed 9 February 2021].

³⁹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1972. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

award for such performance persuaded choirs to enter. From 1976 to 1978, the competition was changed to a composition competition. There was no performance of the pieces submitted, but rather an examination and analysis of the compositions, and an announcement of the winning composer. The 1976 composers were tasked with setting the text of the poem *Sioballaidhe*⁴⁰ (Syllable) by Seán Ó Ríordáin to music.⁴¹

In 1979, the competition was connected with the Pádraig Pearse Centenary.⁴² Choirs were invited to commission a composer from Ireland who would set to music one of Pearse's poems in the Irish language. A fee of £50 was offered to the first five choirs to announce their chosen composer. The pieces were then performed for a jury of commissioned composers from the Seminar on New Choral Music.⁴³ The jury of international standing often expressed their inability to adjudicate the competition without knowing the Irish language. Geoffrey Spratt arranged that there was one 'scholar of the Irish language' on the committee.⁴⁴ The inclusion of an Irish language scholar helped to address the language barriers and to assess pronunciation and the general outcome of the piece. Overall, the inclusion of an Irish speakers would have helped adjudicators with their detailed adjudication remarks, knowing that the text was sung correctly and adequate time was spent on pronunciation and diction.

⁴⁰ This spelling is incorrect as there is no poem with this title by the poet. However, *Siollabadh* is listed as a poem, directly translated as syllable-ising.

⁴¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1976. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁴² Pádraig Pearse was a famous Irish teacher, poet, writer, and activist known for his involvement in the Easter Rising of 1916. See Joost Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse: The Making of a Revolutionary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁴³ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1976. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁴⁴ Spratt, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', 415-416.

From 1980 until 2000, choirs commissioned a composer as part of the competition. The text had to use the Irish language. There is no record of the number of pieces that choirs commissioned; there were no awards offered in 1983 and 1989, and there were no entries in 1987 or 1992.⁴⁵ From 1994 onwards, the number of entries for the competition had dropped significantly. John Fitzpatrick states that ‘choirs were sometimes loath to commission compositions as they are afraid of what they might get’.⁴⁶ Geoffrey Spratt also noted that:

It was a great disappointment to see the number of entries for this competition dwindle as Irish choirs became less and less inclined to involve themselves with the commissioning and performance of new music by young Irish composers. It has been acknowledged that the majority of Irish choirs are in essence community choirs, and the level of musical literacy militates against the performance of much music of the twentieth century – let alone genuinely contemporary music.⁴⁷

The lack of choirs willing to commission a piece may have led to the termination of the competition in 2000. Many choirs did not have the skills and abilities to perform the problematic repertoire. In 2002, the competition was advertised, but with no uptake it was decided to cancel the competition. Thus, the Festival decided that the competition should be omitted from then on. In 2010, the Festival reinvented the competition. It was no longer essential to use an Irish language text; however, many submitted compositions continue to use Irish text.⁴⁸ Composers submit their entries under an alias, and only the Festival director is aware of the identities of the entrants after the winning composition has been named. There are three adjudicators for the competition: Paul

⁴⁵ See Appendix E, page 184.

⁴⁶ John Fitzpatrick, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair, Cork, 8 December 2018.

⁴⁷ Spratt, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, 416.

⁴⁸ John Fitzpatrick, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. Cork, 8 December 2018.

Hillier, Artistic Director and conductor of Chamber Choir Ireland, Rhona Clarke, chair of the Seminar on New Choral Music, and the commissioned composer of the Festival for that year. The concealment of identity allows both established and new composers to enter the competition anonymously and without prejudice.

The parameters for the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition from 2010 are as follows: an original work (to be composed for the sole purpose of the competition), written for a capella choir, up to five minutes in duration, and in four parts (SATB with no divisi). The selected text may be original or existing in the English, or Irish language (if in Irish, it is requested that applicants provide a pronunciation /phonetic guide to account for dialect). The composition must use non-liturgical texts and the composers are responsible for acquiring the rights to use unoriginal texts.

Unlike the seminar, whose commissions receive rare performances by amateur choirs, many pieces from the Seán Ó Riada competition have had success at the Cork International Choral Festival and other festivals and competitions in Europe. Examples include two winning pieces by composers Eoin Desmond and Criostóir Ó Loingsigh. Desmond's *Mother Goose's Melodies*, winner of the 2015 Ó Riada Competition, was performed by New Dublin Voices at the V International Harald Andersén Chamber Choir Competition in Helsinki, Finland in September 2016.⁴⁹ Ó Loingsigh's *Scéal Lemm Dúib* was the winning composition of the 2017 Ó Riada Competition and was performed by the Dublin Institute of Technology Chamber Choir at the 2018 Ireland's

⁴⁹ Eoghan Desmond and New Dublin Voices, 'Mother Goose's Melodies', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsrg_gEDy3I> [accessed 2 June 2020].

Choir of the Year Competition at the Cork International Choral Festival.⁵⁰ It should be noted that many Irish choirs regularly perform pieces such as Séamus de Barra's *An Tonn* and Michael Holohan's *Bagairt na Marbh*.⁵¹ Both of these pieces are winning compositions that use the Irish language, proving that there is interest and enthusiasm in performing the winning Irish language compositions from the competition.

With the opportunity to have a work performed by Chamber Choir Ireland at the Festival, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition is attractive to composers of Irish choral music.⁵² The winning composer and two runners up have the opportunity for their pieces to be workshopped by Chamber Choir Ireland.⁵³ Having a piece workshopped is an invaluable opportunity for any composer to have their work performed by a professional ensemble such as Chamber Choir Ireland and conductor Paul Hillier, as well as to hear and learn from the informal live performance.⁵⁴ The fact that there is no entry fee, the competition is open to all ages, and submitted compositions are blind-reviewed is very important, as many young composers might feel disenfranchised by the hefty entrance fee.⁵⁵ For participant 16, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition became a stimulus to compose a choral piece annually, having applied several times before winning the competition. One of the main highlights of this process was being able to present work to a specific audience. With a

⁵⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2018. Anon, Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁵¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 1998-2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁵² Survey Participant 16, 15 January 2021.

⁵³ Survey Participant 32, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁴ Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁵ Survey Participant 15, 15 January 2021.

recording of the work presented at the Seminar, participant 16 claims, ‘it is easier to send people a recording of a piece than to have another score lying around waiting for a performance opportunity’. By providing the winning composers with an opportunity to have their piece recorded by a professional choir, the Cork International Choral Festival also offers the composer the advantage of having a high-level recording of their piece for others to explore.

The guidelines set out enable the composers to write a piece that fits their goals and to integrate their individual compositional voices.⁵⁶ Winning pieces are discussed at the seminar. Rhona Clarke, chair of the Seminar, interviews composers before the winning piece’s performance; this is an invaluable experience as the composer is allowed to discuss their process and take questions from peers, enabling insightful conversation.⁵⁷ Participant 18, having attended the seminar, relays that the standard of compositions presented was low; there was no consideration of the choir’s sounds or range. He/she also felt that the different approaches to instrumental and choral writing were not taken into consideration. For these reasons, participant 18 began writing choral music that was more accessible for the human voice. Being a professional singer, participant 18 knew how to write music within the realms of the voice’s ability and beauty, which earned him/her the title of winner of the Séan Ó Riada Composition Competition one year.

⁵⁶ Survey Participant 22, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁷ Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

The Seminar on New Choral Music and the Seán Ó Riada composition competition have added many new works to the Irish choral music repertoire since it became a feature of the Festival programme. This shows that the Festival is responsible for enhancing and further developing Ireland's compositional activities.⁵⁸ The seminar's effects are seen in the programming of contemporary choral music as competition pieces. For those unsuccessful in the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, their pieces can still be performed and published for performance by Irish choirs.⁵⁹

Seán Doherty's *Dreams* was the runner up in the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition in 2014 and was performed again by *Voci Nuove* at the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition in 2016. Michael Holohan's *Bagairt na Marbh* won the competition in 1982 and has featured in the Ireland's Choir of the Year and Fleischmann International Trophy Competitions over the past number of years. The work was performed at the 2013 Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (New Dublin Voices), 2015 Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (*Voci Nuove*), 2017 Ireland's Choir of the Year (University College Cork Choral Society), 2018 Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (The Academy Chamber Choir, Tullamore), and the 2019 Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (Mornington Singers).⁶⁰ These patterns of performance illustrate how the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition has impacted the repertoire of contemporary Irish choral music, one of the main reasons the seminar was begun.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Survey Participant 15, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁹ Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2013-2019. Anon, 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 28 June 2021].

⁶¹ A list of all winning pieces from the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition can be found in Appendix E, page 184.

3.3 Exposure to national and international choirs as an influence on choral composition

A number of composers participating in this study have expressed that they have been influenced musically by attending the different competitions at the Cork International Choral Festival, with specific mention of music performed at the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition.

Participant 32 highlighted how Elizabeth Maconchy's piece entitled *Prayer Before Birth* had a major influence on his/her style of composition. The Cork International Choral Festival commissioned Maconchy in 1972 to compose this piece for the Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music.⁶² After joining a choir and learning Maconchy's piece, participant 32 came to love the work and wanted to explore more music like this. The piece led him/her on a path to researching and discovering contemporary and new sounds for choral music. Resonating with this, participant 16 states that the Cork International Choral Festival indirectly influenced his/her compositions, by virtue of attending as part of a choir. By attending the Festival, composers are exposed to new repertoire and composers of contemporary choral music. Participant 22 recalls first hearing Michael Ostrzyga's *Iuppiter* and Knut Nystedt's *Shells* at the Festival, which allowed for an exploration of new genres and compositional styles. Being educated in choral compositional styles such as those in North America, and then exposed to exciting works from various parts of the world, he/she was immersed in sounds previously unheard, which helped him/her to

⁶² Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 1972. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 28 June 2021].

reconsider his/her own writing.⁶³ While some composers who attend the Festival do not feel that their compositions are influenced by being exposed to a broader array of music, some do enjoy the general experience of being introduced to different genres, performers and composers.⁶⁴

However, the Festival also entices composition in secondary school aged children as part of the Festival, helping to inspire and create opportunities for young musicians who might never have composed before.

3.4 The Composers in the Classroom Scheme

Initiated by the Cork International Choral Festival and the Arts Officers of Cork City and County Councils in 1998, the Composer in the Classroom Scheme provides music students and their teachers with a yearlong opportunity to engage and work with a professional composer. The scheme successfully assists, encourages, and enhances students with various levels of experience and exposure to musical training in musical creation and experimentation. The work between schools and composers culminates in a seminar that enables the students to perform the compositions and to hear the variety of compositions contributed by each school from the year's collaboration. Since the first Composer in the Classroom Scheme began in 1998, seventeen composers and thirty-nine schools from Cork city and county have been involved in the programme.⁶⁵

⁶³ Survey Participant 22, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁴ Survey Participant 42, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁵ Anon, 'Composer in the Classroom 2019', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/composers-in-the-classroom-2019/>> [accessed 30 March 2021].

The Composer in the Classroom Scheme was the idea of John Fitzpatrick, the Cork International Choral Festival director, and Jerome Leonard from the Department of Education in Cork.⁶⁶ Ian McDonagh, Cork County Arts Officer, and Mark Mulqueen, Cork Corporation Officer in 1997, also played a role in its organisation.⁶⁷ The Seminar was always considered a non-competitive platform, possibly a reason for its continued success.⁶⁸ The first Seminar took place at the 1998 Cork International Choral Festival.⁶⁹ It was funded by the In-Career Development Unit of the Department of Education and Science, with assistance from the European Social Fund.⁷⁰

Belinda Quirke (Cork International Choral Festival Administrator) and Liz Meany (Cork City Arts Officer) managed the Composer in the Classroom Scheme from 1997 to 2002.⁷¹ The Scheme ran in conjunction with the Cork International Choral Festival and the Department of Education and Science Curriculum Support Team for Leaving Certificate Music.⁷²

Two composers were approached for the first year of the Scheme. Maria Judge studied at University College Cork and the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Kecskemét, Hungary.⁷³ Judge had won the Ó Riada competition when she

⁶⁶ Gibson, 'Choral Music in Schools', 149.

⁶⁷ Maria Judge, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 133.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 134.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁰ Jean Downey, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 138.

⁷¹ Belinda Quirke, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Ibid., 129.

⁷² Downey, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Ibid., 138.

⁷³ Anon, 'Marie Judge',

<<https://csm.cit.ie/contacts/staff/MariaJudge/>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

agreed to participate in the Scheme on McDonagh's invitation.⁷⁴ John Gibson, a composer and lecturer in piano at the Cork School of Music since 1982, was asked to join the team and work with the city schools.⁷⁵ In addition to these two composers, John Spillane, a noted singer and songwriter from Cork, was involved. The Scheme did not refer to the named composers (Maria Judge, John Gibson, and John Spillane) but instead focused on the student composers.

Four schools took part in the first year of the scheme in Cork city and county. The first Co. Cork schools to take part with Maria Judge were the Loreto Secondary School in Fermoy and *Coláiste Choilm* Ballincollig.⁷⁶ The Cork City schools with which John Gibson worked were the Presentation Secondary School, Ballyphehane and Ursuline Secondary School, Blackrock.⁷⁷ Like the Loreto Secondary schools and *Coláiste Choilm*, the Presentation and Ursuline Secondary schools were noted for their music departments. These schools were picked as a thriving choral and instrumental scene was already in place, upon which the Festival could build. The schools are also regular participants at the post-primary schools' competition at the Cork International Choral Festival. Those involved were fifth-year music students, but after several years, Ian McDonagh suggested that students not studying music should also be involved in this process.⁷⁸ Involving students not previously participating in music gives the opportunity to explore their creative self and can enhance a love or interest in music.

⁷⁴ Judge, 'Choral Music in Schools', 133.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁷ Downey, 'Choral Music in Schools', 138.

⁷⁸ Judge, 'Choral Music in Schools', 134.

Because of the Festival, many young people may have found a love for choral singing or composition from their involvement in the Composer in the Classroom Scheme.

In 2002, Louise McCarthy took over from Maria Judge and started a partnership with the Regina Mundi School.⁷⁹ McCarthy introduced many different types of music and genres to the students. McCarthy played recordings of twentieth-century music, minimalist music, and programmatic music by John Williams before detailing the students' projects.⁸⁰ The students of the Glanmire Community College enjoyed their time with John Spillane. His manner and style encouraged the students to work towards a performance. Spillane received a Meteor Music Award while in residence, which the students reacted well to. Carol Daly states that because of John Spillane's influence, 'Practically everyone in that class (the fifth-year music class) is now playing the guitar in some shape or form'.⁸¹ All of this would probably not have been possible if it were not for the Cork International Choral Festival and an invitation from John Fitzpatrick for the Glanmire Community College to participate in the Composer in the Classroom Scheme. Otherwise, the students might never have had this opportunity to flourish and engage in creative and active music-making. This broadening of access to music in Irish schools can be seen as part of the great legacy of the Festival in enhancing and developing choral singing in Ireland.

⁷⁹ Louise McCarthy, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 140.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

⁸¹ Carol Daly, 'Choral Music in Schools', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 145.

Students who studied creative writing and media were involved in composing the text for a piece, and video documentaries were incorporated into the entire project.⁸² The Composer in the Classroom Scheme brought together all disciplines of the arts in the school setting. Choirs and traditional groups had pieces written for them (if they existed in the school), and although they were not directly part of the process, they were an essential part of the performance.⁸³ The Scheme brought both composition and collaboration to a wide range of students of Cork city and county. Students' compositions sometimes included choreography, while some included ethnic instruments such as the academia (a xylophone-like instrument).⁸⁴ Glanmire Community School had a new music department in 2002/2003 and music teacher Carol Daly feared the students would not have the musical experience needed.⁸⁵ Rather than composing a choral piece, Spillane harnessed the students' existing abilities and experiences by guiding them through the process of producing a song, which eventually led to a performance at the Seminar during the Festival.⁸⁶ A problem noted by Judge was that the level of musical literacy became 'progressively worse the further you went from the city'.⁸⁷ To involve each participant, different ways of notating these compositions were therefore devised. Pictures, graphs and anything to signify sounds were used, helping include all involved in the scheme.⁸⁸

⁸² Judge, 'Choral Music in Schools', 134.

⁸³ Ibid., 134.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁸⁵ Daly, 'Choral Music in Schools', 144.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 144-145.

⁸⁷ Judge, 'Choral Music in Schools', 134.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 134.

The Composer in the Classroom Scheme offered a schools' composition competition in association with the National Chamber Choir. There were so many entries from *Coláiste Choilm* in 2003 that the National Chamber Choir travelled to the school to workshop the six entries to the competition.⁸⁹ The award was given to a student at the school, Paul Frost, and gave a great opportunity to the students to work with a professional choral ensemble and for the young composers to have their works performed officially as part of the Cork International Choral Festival, an achievement many recognised composers might strive towards. The competition may also have sparked the interest of many new composers. Judge and Gibson explored different ways in which to compose and create new music, which led to a performance in front of an enthusiastic audience at the Seminar.⁹⁰ If it were not for the Composer in the Classroom Scheme and the Cork International Choral Festival, these students might never have had this opportunity. John Gibson wrote of how several compositions written for the seminar were composed by students who could not read or write music.⁹¹ However, this did not deter the students as the scheme emphasised creativity in the young composers' minds. There was no wrong way to compose. Each group was encouraged to explore different aspects of composition, which led to a performance at the Festival, thus fostering a love of performing and composing in the students involved.

The Cork International Choral Festival offices house these scores, containing varying notational and compositional aspects.⁹² The scheme seemed to be attractive in Cork,

⁸⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁹⁰ Downey, 'Choral Music in Schools', 138.

⁹¹ Gibson, 'Choral Music in Schools', 148.

⁹² Downey, 'Choral Music in Schools', 139.

primarily as the number of composition entries for the National Chamber Choirs competition increased steadily.⁹³ Music teachers in secondary schools got involved with the Scheme and initiated compositions with their students. Louise McCarthy remembers hearing the excitement of students at the first seminar. Students commented, ‘That was so exciting – can we do it again?’, and ‘I cannot believe I did that’.⁹⁴ As part of the Cork International Choral Festival, the Composer in the Classroom Scheme sparked schools’, teachers’, and students’ interest in the composition of new Irish choral music, which can be seen as one of its long-lasting achievements.

Speaking of the children involved in the Composer in the Classroom Scheme, Maria Judge states:

I think that everybody can create, and it is just a manner of allowing them to do that. They do not always realise that they can. But even if a child is not gifted or skilful with their instrument, they can still be creative and find it enjoyable. I think it would be fantastic if children had that resource opened up to them.⁹⁵

Judge’s statement highlights that the opportunity to create and compose is needed. The Composer in the Classroom Scheme offers this opportunity to the schools involved as part of the Cork International Choral Festival, and clearly shows that the Festival is succeeding in fostering a new generation of choral singers and composers of choral music.

⁹³ Judge, ‘Choral Music in Schools’, 135.

⁹⁴ McCarthy, ‘Choral Music in Schools’, 140.

⁹⁵ Judge, ‘Choral Music in Schools’, 136.

From 2002, John O'Connor, John Spillane and Louise McCarthy were the composers in residence. These three composers brought new and different ideas to their schools. McCarthy is a contemporary composer, Spillane was influenced heavily by folk-pop, and John O'Connor introduced music technology to the compositions.⁹⁶ In 2003, the Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music commissioned a piece by Gráinne Mulvey, *Stabat Mater*, which was performed by the National Chamber Choir as part of the Composer in the Classroom Scheme.⁹⁷ By incorporating the performance of Mulvey's piece from a different strand of the Festival, students were offered insights into contemporary or new Irish choral music through their engagement with professional composers and performers.

Louise McCarthy notes that students at the Regina Mundi Girls secondary school in Cork city were composing at home. Composition was not an option offered to the students before the Composer in the Classroom Scheme, but now the students felt they had the confidence to engage with all types of music, and were not restricted to choral music.⁹⁸ The Scheme helped to develop a platform for any performance at the Festival, offering performance spaces outside of the City Hall's original setting, which extended to University College Cork and many churches around the city.⁹⁹ This was a significant achievement, which highlights the Festival's legacy in promoting musical literacy and equal access to musical opportunities in schools in Ireland as well as fostering an interest in choral singing and composition of Irish choral music.

⁹⁶ McCarthy, 'Choral Music in Schools', 142.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 142.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁹⁹ Gibson, 'Choral Music in Schools', 150.

3.5 The Commissioning and Creation of New Repertoire in the Schools

Sections Competitions

Sections two and three of the post-primary schools' competitions have contributed to the Irish choral music repertoire. Although this is a competition that assesses choirs' performances, the participating choirs' conductors have felt a need for arrangements and new, vocally appropriate, and exciting pieces for second-level choirs using the Irish language. Participant 38 states that once a commissioned piece was performed well at the Festival, it would enter the repertoire of many choirs in subsequent years, helping to expand new Irish composers' repertoire.

Conductors must be open to developing all aspects of the vocal and choral arts through masterclasses, concert attendance and concert planning. Some conductors choose choral works by Irish composers based on two facts: having a fuller knowledge of the repertoire available to them, in particular where one can find appropriate and graded lists, and the suitability of the works for their specific choirs. This is an area worthy of much more exploration in the commissioning of works for Irish choirs.

The Festival has tried to advertise and enhance the performance of works in the Irish language, as well as the works of Irish composers. These points are exemplified in the Seminar on Contemporary/New Choral Music, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, the requirement in the schools' competitions that a work in Irish or by an Irish composer is chosen, or the incentive to be awarded the Contemporary Music

Centre Trophy for the performance of a work by an Irish composer.¹⁰⁰ The specific requirement that a work by a living Irish composer was included in Ireland's Choir of the Year competition encouraged the creation and performance of Irish composers' works. More composers with experience of singing in a choir are now writing choral music and ensuring that music suited to the voice and all levels of choir is being composed. Many conductors have not as yet explored the now expanding range of works by Irish composers. It is noticeable that a small number of composers are chosen, and it is evident that these composers have a particular involvement with choirs as either singers, conductors and directors. Participant 23 believes that because of the choral tradition and history of group singing in Ireland, most Irish composers have no, or limited knowledge of the voice and how choirs work in practice. The Cork International Choral Festival also set up initiatives to encourage composers to attend the Festival by inviting them to Cork and offering free access to all concerts, resulting in a minimal uptake, and a lack of composer representation at the Festival.¹⁰¹

On a more positive note, the collaboration with Chamber Choir Ireland allowed the Festival to offer a working seminar involving singers, conductors, and composers to share the overall process of conception, realisation, text selection, and performance in sessions that offered an exciting opportunity for the audience to participate productively and openly. The final section will explore these points by drawing on a brief case study of the composer Ben Hanlon.

¹⁰⁰ The Contemporary Music Centre Perpetual Trophy is awarded annually at the festival for the best performance of an original choral work by an Irish composer written after 1975.

¹⁰¹ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

3.6 How the Festival has influenced composers – Ben Hanlon

In examining the choral music of Ben Hanlon, it is clear that the Festival has had an influence on his compositions. Many of Hanlon's compositions result directly from participation in the Festival, as he was commissioned by choirs, and his pieces were also performed by other choirs at the Festival. Hanlon began competing with choirs he conducted at the Festival in the early 1980s. From then on, the Festival has acted as a stage to perform the arrangements and commissions Hanlon has added to the Irish choral music repertoire.

Hanlon found it challenging to source an Irish repertoire suitable for young choirs, mainly male voice choirs. The stipulation of a piece's performance using Irish text was limiting and restrictive and presented two difficulties for the choir. Firstly, there appeared to be a small repertoire of four-part pieces using the Irish language that young male voices might enjoy singing. Secondly, much of the repertoire available held significant demands for young voices, which meant that good performances were difficult to achieve. For Hanlon, these two reasons were significant, and he wanted the singers to enjoy what they sang. Hanlon's solution was to find music that satisfied the two difficulties. *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* published arrangements of traditional Irish songs, which aided in selecting appropriate repertoire.¹⁰² Gerald Victory's *Sliabh Geal gCua*, and Mary Hayden's *Deus Meus Adiuvá Me* were popular pieces performed in the schools' sections of the Festival for many years.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Ben Hanlon, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. Waterford, 20 April 2019.

¹⁰³ See Appendices F, page 187 and G, page 192.

Regarding the requirement of using the Irish language, this rule inspired conductors and composers to create their own arrangements or compositions for the Festival. Many conductors and composers have begun doing so (for example Mary O'Brien, Emily Magner, Gemma Magner).¹⁰⁴ For Hanlon, this is why he began to compose: to help create a suitable and enjoyable piece for his choirs for performance at the Cork International Choral Festival. Hanlon began with arrangements and then gradually began to compose original works. All of this came out of necessity. One of Hanlon's earliest works, *An Speic Seoigheach*, proved very popular with the members of his school choirs, which encouraged him to begin composing. In Hanlon's earlier musical compositions, many demands were placed on singers; however, the music was also bright, rhythmical, engaging, tonal, and dissonant. As Hanlon states:

Cluster chords or a melody line that ran independently of a repeating figure or a sequence in the other voices, can often be heard in the music. These techniques can make the music sound interesting and give the music a certain freshness. In addition, young singers generally find such techniques easy to handle.¹⁰⁵

Hanlon was not alone in the composition of Irish choral music for competition at the Festival's post-primary sections. From the 1990s onwards, the Cork International Choral Festival seemed to act as a source of encouragement for several emerging composers to write music for choirs. Works by composers Rhona Clarke, Michael McGlynn and Marian Ingoldsby regularly feature at the Festivals in all competitions and at all levels. As Hanlon articulates: 'Works by these composers are as likely to win

¹⁰⁴ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2015-2019. Anon 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/cork-international-choral-festival-online-archive/>> [accessed 28 June 2021]. See Appendices F, page 187 and G, page 192.

¹⁰⁵ Ben Hanlon, Interviewed by Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. Waterford, 5 April 2019.

the prize for the best contemporary piece's performance as their international counterparts' music'.¹⁰⁶

Hanlon states that he is 'sure that my compositions have been influenced by the music I have heard performed at the Festival in Cork'.¹⁰⁷ The excitement of hearing a piece (performed by a choir competing in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition) often influenced Hanlon in considering the new sounds that choirs could produce. Hanlon was also influenced by the powerful effect a piece could have on the young and impressionable singers who would be anxiously awaiting the adjudication announcement. As a composer trying to hone his skill, Hanlon quickly learned that, 'music in its own right can be powerful and have an immediate impact. It does not necessarily require that the listener is musical, for the music to impart its message'.¹⁰⁸ Hanlon learned that if the music has something to portray and the choir can get the message of a piece across, then the audience will surely relate to it. In terms of what Hanlon composed, he invested the works with dynamic rhythms and colourful sounds, and dissonances in a reasonably controlled tonal environment. Hanlon aimed for the works to be attractive to both singers and audiences.

On hearing a performance of *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost*, Bernie Sherlock spoke with Hanlon, and he offered to compose a piece for New Dublin Voices.¹⁰⁹ The piece composed was *O Frondens Virga*, which premiered at the Cork International

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* is discussed further on page 108.

Choral Festival Fleischmann International Trophy Competition in 2010.¹¹⁰ *O Frondens Virga* is a significant work in eight parts and showcases the choir's, conductor's, and composer's abilities. This piece has been performed at various international European competitions, showing that Hanlon's (and other composers') work goes beyond the Cork International Choral Festival stages.¹¹¹

As well as the compositions mentioned, choirs have commissioned Hanlon's works on several occasions for performance at the Festival, notably *Duilleoga*, commissioned by Newtown School Waterford, and *Caifé Gaelach*, commissioned by Laurel Hill *Coláiste*, Limerick. Other pieces by Hanlon, such as *Fite Fuaite* and *Ár nAthair* have been performed at the Cork International Choral Festival and elsewhere by other choirs.¹¹²

Hanlon states that he has many reasons to be grateful to the Cork International Choral Festival for the opportunities it has given to perform his music and have it performed by others. Hanlon also credits the Cork International Choral Festival as a significant contributor to his compositions, and is particularly appreciative of the unique inspiration the Festival has given him as a composer. Thus, the Festival has undoubtedly helped to develop composers and add considerably to the Irish choral music repertoire.

¹¹⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2010. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

¹¹¹ *O Frondens Virga* was performed by New Dublin Voices at the 58 Concorso Polifonico Arezzo in 2010. New Dublin Voices, 'O Frondens Virga', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDP-s-umOOc>> [accessed 5 April 2021].

¹¹² See Appendices F, page 187 and G, page 192.

3.7 Creating New Irish Choral Repertoire – Rhona Clarke and Ben Hanlon

This section will offer insights into the aesthetic and technical considerations that need to be taken into account when choosing choral repertoire. It will then go on to explore the pedagogical aspects, particularly vocal production and technique, of pieces written for and performed at the post-primary school level competitions at the Cork International Choral Festival. It will examine and offer considerations for vocal development in three pieces – Rhona Clarke’s *Géibheann* and Ben Hanlon’s *Ár nAthair* and *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* – drawing on musical examples and recordings to illustrate the points made.

3.7.1 Choosing Choral Repertoire

The Cork International Choral Festival’s mixed and equal voice post-primary schools’ competitions began in 1966, conceived by the Festival Director, Aloys Fleischmann. Fleischmann intended to promote the use of the Irish language in choral singing, and thus the competition has a requirement of one piece to be performed in the Irish language. From the competition’s inception, composers such as Proinsias Ó Ceallaigh, Fintan O’ Carroll, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, Gerard Victory and Fleischmann himself were at the forefront of Irish choral composition using the Irish language. In *Music in Ireland*, Seán Neeson writes that a lack of existing repertoire written in the Irish language encouraged the development of students’ capabilities and interests.¹¹³ From the 1980s onwards, teachers and conductors began composing and arranging repertoire suitable to the students participating in the performing groups. Others commissioned

¹¹³ Seán Neeson, ‘The Place of Irish Music in Education’, in A. Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 55.

works by noted composers such as Rhona Clarke and Ben Hanlon. The mixed and equal voice post-primary competition at the Cork International Choral Festival has helped to develop and expand the choral repertoire in the Irish language through its new compositions and arrangements. The composers' and arrangers' attention to the musical abilities of secondary school aged students and their knowledge of vocal technique for developing voices has led to effective compositions, which push singers' abilities.

Selecting repertoire for secondary school choirs can be a daunting task. Several variables are considered, such as the changing voice, range, text, style, variety and voicing such as SA, SSA, TB, and TTBB. Jean Ashworth Bartle writes that, 'Conductors cannot separate appropriate repertoire from vocal development. Good repertoire enhances and develops a beautiful tone quality. Bad repertoire undermines choral development'.¹¹⁴ The chosen repertoire should enhance and develop an ensemble, by building singers' abilities and fostering a love of choral singing. As conductors and directors of school choirs, it is necessary to research and select music that exhibits good quality construction and composition. A musically developmental repertoire utilises quality and age-appropriate texts, engages the mind and the spirit of the singers, provides experiences of performing in various styles, genres, languages, and cultures, and entertains and engages the listener. Furthermore, every rehearsal should have an educational purpose; utilising the abovementioned points can further

¹¹⁴ Jean Ashworth Bartle, *Lifeline for Children's Choir Directors* (Toronto, Canada: Gordon V. Thompson Music, 1988), 7.

singers' exposure to various genres and experiences, and can expand their knowledge of choral singing and music.

Aesthetic and technical criteria are the most important tools used in the selection of repertoire. Aesthetic criteria can help choral directors choose music that heightens the choir's interest in the musical material. Technical criteria encourage choral directors to choose music that will enhance their choir's vocal development. The most effective selection will satisfy both criteria.¹¹⁵ Musical educators consider the use of appropriate choral repertoire essential to create and maintain successful choral programmes.

Kenneth E. Miller comments on the link between the aesthetic and technical domains:

Few high school students have a clear idea of the fundamental ideas and techniques they should use in their singing. Many young people sing primarily because of the enjoyment they derive from it, and that is a good beginning. But, relatively few of them have also acquired the skills and knowledge necessary for knowing how to use their voices well.¹¹⁶

The selection of pieces that encourage learning, musicality, enjoyment and entertainment is crucial for singers. The following section investigates the pedagogical aspects, particularly vocal production and technique, of pieces written for and performed at the post-primary level competitions at the Cork International Choral Festival. Performance considerations for vocal development are suggested for each

¹¹⁵ Rebecca R. Reames, 'High school Choral Directors' Description of Appropriate literature for beginning high school choirs', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 49, 2 (2001), 123.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth E. Miller, in Courtney Banta, 'The Process of Teaching Vocal Technique in the Choral Rehearsal', (University Honors thesis, Kent State University Honours College, 2012), 1.

piece. The compositions under examination are *Géibheann* by Rhona Clarke, and *Ár nAthair* and *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* by Ben Hanlon.

3.7.2 *Géibheann* – Rhona Clarke¹¹⁷

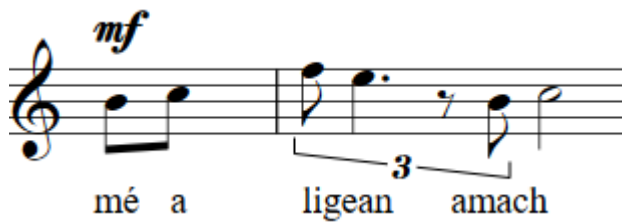
The poem ‘*Geibheann*’ by Caitlín Maude has been featured on the Leaving Certificate Irish course on many occasions. The language used is basic and conveys the dilemma facing a caged animal who formerly enjoyed great freedom and stature in its natural habitat. The use of words is very appropriate. We can feel the power when the animal’s former life is being described using alliteration – ‘chroithfinn crainnte na coille’ – which means ‘I would make the trees of the wood tremble’. By contrast, we feel the despair and hopelessness in words describing its captivity – ‘ach anois luím síos’ – which translates into ‘I just lay down’. Students are attracted to the familiarity of the poem’s language, as they can easily relate to the story and theme involved, and to a new way of examining a piece for their state exams. The generous use of vowels, for example, ‘ainmhí mé, ainmhí allta’, which means, ‘I am an animal, an animal from the wild’, makes it an appealing piece to sing. Warm-ups can deal with the high and low placement of passages throughout the pieces. Choir directors should address the possible problems related to diction and the articulation of intonation to aid learning.

In bars 46-49 of the soprano 1 part of *Géibheann*, which reaches mixed registers, the passaggio must be approached with a high positioned soft palate. An approach in the middle range resonance will prove difficult as it is directly between registers for most singers. Once the palate is lifted, the passaggio break will be avoided. The use of

¹¹⁷ The score for *Géibheann* is in Appendix J on page 200.

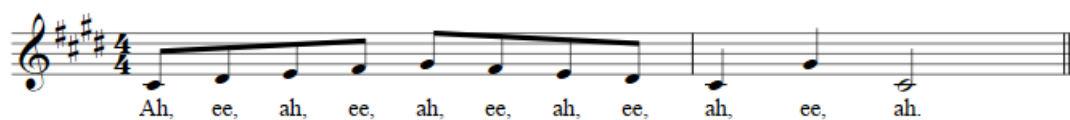
neutral vowels and staccato technique will help singers to feel the placement as it moves through the motif. Singers should alternate between staccato and a siren to help with the feeling and to gain comfort with the placement.

Musical Example 1, Musical Recording 1



In bars 1-14 and 38-51, the spoken language of the word *Ainmhi* would suggest a closed vowel. However, it is essential that the vowels, when sung, are kept open, well rounded and placed forward, as they form a repeated theme throughout the entire piece. The motif comprises the opening and closing uh, versus the ah vowel. The direction of the melody will also alter the vowel when it is ascending. The isolation and connection of vowel shapes and sounds to create a smooth transition between notes is achieved by using an ascending and descending motif followed by the opening and closing words.

Musical Example 2, Musical Recording 2



Musical Example 3, Musical Recording 3



The triplets and semiquavers in bar 41 will need to be light, crisp and well placed. This bar should be practised slowly and gradually taken faster to help the voice correctly place the notes in quick succession. A recommendation would be to stick to the tempo indicated by the composer for vocal development and musical reasons. An increased tempo places more demands on the ability of the singer.

Musical Example 4 and Musical Recording 4 ask for slow practice while singing a triplet. Slow practice will help singers develop the ability and agility required to sing these motifs.

Musical Example 4, Musical Recording 4



3.7.3 *Ár nAthair* – Ben Hanlon¹¹⁸

Ár nAthair is a translation of the Lord's Prayer with which many secondary school students would be familiar. The language used is basic, as it is sung mainly in the present tense and the subjunctive mood, while the generous use of long vowels makes it rhythmic and easy to retain.

The words are underpinned by the rhythm of the spoken language, helping to create a sense of movement, aided by using a variety of time signatures and mixing duple and triple meters. The subdued or anthem-like feel of this piece is well-suited to the young male voice. Vocally, it sits nicely in the tessitura and is comfortable to sing for each part. A timeless quality is evident in this piece, with similarities to the well-known Seán Ó Riada setting of 'Ag Críost an Síol'. Familiar passages prove attractive to the ear, with structured free rhythms for the baritone solo. The sustained passages, while usually tricky, help stabilise the piece from the beginning, aiding the upper voices by giving a feeling of security around the tonic or home tone. The slow tempo, sustained drones and free rhythmical feel help this piece to have a timeless quality. The range for the voice is one octave in tenor 1, one octave in tenor 2, a baritone solo of a diminished fifth, a perfect fourth in the baritone, and an octave in the bass. The ranges of these parts fit perfectly the vocal abilities of secondary school students. The original key was F# minor, but after the publisher, editor and composer reviewed the composition, it was agreed to raise the piece to G minor to help with the placement of notes in the male tessitura. The range is also kept within the ability of secondary school aged students' voices, rather than older male voices. This is achieved by maintaining sustained

¹¹⁸ The score for *Ár nAthair* is in Appendix K, on page 203.

passages but allowing for breathing in a way that a novice singer could perform.

Hanlon uses a rich texture in his writing with the substantial prevalence of thirds in the tenor parts, making the harmony writing more accessible for the young voices. The dynamic range aids the young singers' vocal abilities while also pushing them to develop legato singing and sustained phrasing.

Teaching vocal production techniques during warm-ups is not difficult for a knowledgeable director. Warm-ups should contain the desired element for learning. Doreen Rao asks conductors to take elements and motifs from the piece being sung as warm-ups and thus to aid the students' vocal development.¹¹⁹ With this in mind, paying close attention to vocal difficulties can help prepare students for singing.

Correct vowel formation is essential to sustaining and keeping a consistent pitch in the lower voices throughout *Ár nAthair*. The soft palate must be raised, resonating in the palate and not allowing the tone to spread or drop. Demonstrating the ah vowel correctly and incorrectly allows the singers to hear how the pitch and vowel can travel, resulting in inaccurate intonation.

The opening of this piece features the bass and baritone singing in fifths. By moving the placement from the soft palate to the chest placement using a spread tone, then returning back to correct vowel formation, students will be able to hear the difference between a resonant ah and a forced chest ah.

¹¹⁹ Doreen Rao, 'The Conductor as Artist and Teacher: Doreen Rao Choral Workshop', workshop presented at University of Limerick, 1 April 2013.

Musical Example 5, Musical Recording 5

Musical score for Tenor and Bass parts. The Tenor part is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of two measures of whole rests. The Bass part is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It consists of two measures of a sustained whole note, marked 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'Ah' below the note. A horizontal line is drawn below the Bass staff.

For secondary school aged singers, long phrases and breath control can sometimes prove challenging. Warm-ups should therefore utilise appropriate breathing and phrasing exercises. Kenneth Phillips writes, ‘if the warm-ups are successful, a redo of the warm-up exercise while rehearsing will not be needed’.¹²⁰ Effectively executing the exercises can aid the development of vocal ability and further the rehearsal and singers’ experience. In *Ár nAthair*, the opening bass and baritone parts are sustained for eight bars. As the tempo is marked $\text{♩} = 50$, it is not attainable to sing this in one breath.

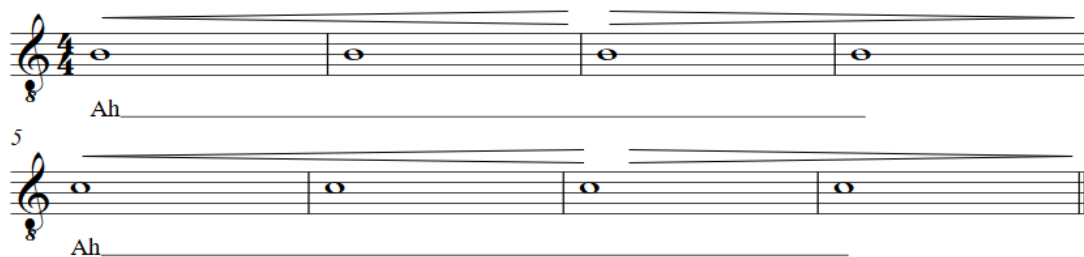
Approaches to staggered breathing could involve the introduction of *mezza di voce*. This Bel Canto technique of sustaining a single pitch while gradually making the voice louder and then softer will help achieve an uninterrupted sound. This is a challenging but effective exercise to avoid multiple glottal onsets in sustained and free-breathing passages. Practised over 8-12 bars, the singers will learn to control their tone production with appropriate air release. The choral director should explain that singers

¹²⁰ Banta, ‘The process of Teaching Vocal Technique in the Choral Rehearsal’, 23.

must listen to each other to effectively fade in and out, to complement each other and avoid gaps in the sound.

Musical Example 6 and Musical Recording 6 demonstrate an adverse onset restart during staggered breathing and allow the students to hear the harsh and uneven entries.

Musical Example 6, Musical Recording 6



Musical recording 7 demonstrates good onset restarting during staggered breathing; students will hear a controlled and precise onset.

Different dialects of the Irish language will influence how the vowels are modified. In Musical Example 7 and Musical Recording 8, the dialect used will be Munster Irish. Vowel formation is a crucial aspect of in-tune singing. Regional accents, language dialects, a country's version of a language (such as Irish English), and vowel sounds affect the voice and how we use it. The modification and manipulation of the vowels will bring them closer to the Italian vowel and will significantly help the intonation, placement, and tone of bars 7 and 8 of *Ár nAthair*.

Musical Example 7, Musical Recording 8: The singer will perform with a Waterford accent and then with correct and unaffected vowel sounds.

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a time signature of 6/8. It contains the lyrics 'go ndéan-tar do thoil ar an dta - lamh'. A dynamic marking 'f' is placed below the staff, with a horizontal line extending from the start of the second measure to the end of the fourth measure. The bottom staff has the same key signature and time signature, but includes a sharp sign (F#) in the key signature area. It also contains the lyrics 'go ndéan-tar do thoil ar an dta - lamh'.

To achieve effective resonant humming in bars 12-20 (Musical Example 8, Musical Recording 9), choral directors must consider what vowel shape is needed within the hum, allowing students to explore different vowel shapes and lip tensions.

Simultaneously, students should be taught to hum, which will naturally steer them towards a vertical vowel with lots of space in the mouth.

Musical Example 8 and Musical Recording 9 portray open and closed, narrow and vertical vowel shapes while humming.

Musical Example 8, Musical Recording 9

The image shows a musical score for two voices: Tenor and Bass. The Tenor part is written on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *Mm*. The Bass part is written on a bass clef staff in 4/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *Mm*. The lyrics are: "Ar n'ar-áin lae thúil tabhair". The Tenor part has a *freely mf* marking above the lyrics. The score includes a fermata over the first two notes of the Tenor part.

Choral directors should demonstrate a frontal, forced, nasal and tense hum, which will automatically allow singers to hear the opposite effect.

3.7.4 *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* – Ben Hanlon¹²¹

Having completed a composition course in the Krakow Academy of Music and been introduced to the music of Polish conductor and composer Krzysztof Penderecki in 2007, Hanlon returned to Ireland and composed *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost*. This piece has enjoyed a great deal of popularity since its composition. Initially composed for Hanlon's senior school choir, the piece was performed at the Cork International Choral Festival in the 2008 schools' section competition.¹²² One of the school's adjudicators for that year, Brendan O'Connor, requested an SATB version of the piece from Hanlon. Hanlon obliged, and at the 2009 Fleischmann International Trophy Competition, O'Connor premiered the SATB version with his choir, *Cois*

¹²¹ The score for *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* can be found in Appendix L, page 207.

¹²² Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2008. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 28 June 2021].

Cladaigh. Cois Cladaigh was awarded the Lady Dorothy Mayer Trophy for the piece's performance.¹²³ Since 2009, the piece has been performed by several winning choirs at the Festival in Cork and elsewhere. The piece regularly features at the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition and the Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition.¹²⁴ The piece was performed at the 2014 and 2018 Irelands Choir of the Year Competition by Voci Nuoce and UCC Choral Society and at the 2015 Fleischmann International trophy Competition by New Dublin Voices.¹²⁵ *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* was featured in a contemporary European music concert by the BBC Singers in London and was performed by the Azusa Pacific University Chamber Choir in 2015.¹²⁶ It also features in the Irish Contemporary Choral music compilation 'Choirland', with Chamber Choir Ireland's performance.¹²⁷

Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost primarily tests note accuracy and musicianship skills. However, multiple sections can help develop a singer's vocal technique. Bars 24-27 need to be sung at a slower tempo and broken into smaller sections. Troublesome intervals should be approached with care, for example, the augmented 4th in bar 24. Repetition is also crucial here as the singers will, after time, feel comfortable with any leaps throughout the melody.

¹²³ The Lady Dorothy Mayer Trophy award is for the performance of a piece in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition.

¹²⁴ See Appendix H page 195.

¹²⁵ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes. Anon, 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 22 August 2021].

¹²⁶ Ben Hanlon and Azusa Pacific University Chamber Choir, '*Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost*' <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9z2rxgV6xs>> [accessed 5 May 2021].

¹²⁷ 'Choirland' is a collection of fifteen works by Irish composers, compiled in 2011/2012 and funded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

For the sopranos and tenors in bars 55-64 and 69-81, all melody should be omitted and rhythm and language should be first tackled on one pitch. Omitting the melody will help the singers hear how the language should sound when being sung without the difficulties of the melody. Some work will be needed to achieve beauty of sound on a single pitch using the Irish language. Singing this phrase using the C sharp for all notes will sit comfortably in the developing singer. Once singers have achieved the ability to sing these sections at tempo with good diction and a legato line and accents, only then should the actual pitches be performed, one bar at a time. The leaps in melody should be approached with sirens in the warm-up or during rehearsal to ensure the accuracy of notes.

Musical Example 9 is the motif in question while Musical Recording 10 manipulates the music and uses it to help the voice to discover the best way to learn how to sing. The language is sung on one note, then the leaps are explored with sirens. Finally, the accents are added.

Musical Example 9, Musical Recording 10, 10.1 and 10.2

The musical notation is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The first two measures are in 5/8 time, each containing a dotted quarter note followed by four eighth notes. The first measure has a sharp sign above the first note. The third measure is in 6/8 time, starting with a half note followed by two eighth notes. The fourth measure is in 2/4 time, starting with a half note followed by a quarter note. The lyrics are written below the notes: "Gloi-re do Dhi - a, Gloi-re do Dhi - a, Gloi-re do Dhi - a 'sna hAr - da!".

Tenors and basses in bars 7-18 and 88-94 have the difficulty of a line with continuously repeated notes. To start, the line should be sung as legato as possible, joining each note to the next. By using the correct pitches and augmented note values, singers will be

able to feel the connection between each vowel shape and position while hearing the differentiation between each sound. After multiple successful practices of this exercise, each word should be introduced at shorter lengths until all singers are comfortable and can sing the quaver note with correct pitching and without vowel diversion.¹²⁸

Musical Example 10 shows the desired outcome for performance while Musical Recording 11 shows how the singers can work towards the in-tune and consistent sound needed.

Musical Example 10, Musical Recording 11

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Tenor and Bass. The Tenor part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. The Bass part is written in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. Both parts feature three measures of music. The lyrics for both parts are 'Mo - lai - mís, mo - lai - mís, mo - lai - mís'. The first two measures of each part are marked with *pp* (pianissimo) and the third measure is marked with *p* (piano). The notes are quarter notes with accents, and there are rests in the second and fourth eighth notes of each measure.

Bars 115 and 116 feature a high note for soprano 2 and tenor. The main issue in these bars is the extreme dynamics, which rapidly move from *fff* to *p*. Rethinking a *messa di voce* will help here. Many *messa di voce* exercises feature slow, sustained and controlled increases and decreases of volume. However, in these bars, a sudden extreme change of dynamic would need practice.

¹²⁸ The exercises mentioned here for bars 7-18 and 88-94 will also cover the bass 2 parts in bars 97-103.

Using the note pattern as written, a pitch comfortable for all singers should be chosen, removing the language and substituting vowel sounds using the m consonant (*mah* and *moh*), alternating between them and ending on the same vowel as the piece's last word (*mol*). This exercise should be started at a slow tempo until all singers are comfortable with the wide dynamic range. It is also essential to have the same energy for the *forte* and the *piano* singing. This is important to ensure that the final note, at a lesser volume, is still being supported and sung correctly. Hanlon's works were usually composed with his secondary school all-male choir in mind, and the *fff* to *p* can be interpreted as an *ff* to *mf*, which would be less work for young singers to perform.

Musical Example 11 and Musical Recording 12 show how the music can be altered to suit the desired learning outcome for a supported and clean dynamic change from all singers. To ensure the soprano 1 and tenor 1 are singing with the correct placement, have the practise no lower than a major 3rd below the written pitch. This will encourage resonance of the higher pitch when individual lines are sung together. Singing the exercise staccato will also allow for more accurate tuning.

Musical Example 11, Musical Recording 12

The musical score consists of eight staves, each representing a different vocal part. Each staff has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The music is in 6/8 time and G major. The lyrics are "Mo - lai - mis, mo - lai - mis, mol!". The dynamics range from fortissimo (fff) to piano (p). The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a melody in the right hand. The vocal lines are written in a simple, clear style, with the lyrics written below the notes. The first six staves are in treble clef, and the last two are in bass clef.

From bars 82-94, breath support is crucial to achieve a consistent and controlled increase in dynamics and to sustain soft, accurate singing and diction for such a long phrase as portrayed in Musical Example 12 and Musical Recording 13. Rehearsal

techniques are a vital feature to help sing and explore extreme dynamics. These techniques do not have to be related to the music and should focus on many repetitions of singing *pp*. This should be followed by repeating the scale at *mp* and discussing what the differences or similarities might be. If the voice is tired while singing *pp*, it will most likely be due to the lack of support. Because it is marked *pp*, there should not be less energy or support behind the note. Choral directors should discuss the differences and similarities between the dynamics and their related techniques. This will help singers to successfully articulate bars 82-94 when addressed in the rehearsal, provided that the warm-up activities are performed correctly. Singers sometimes forget that singing softly requires the same physical and mental energy as singing loudly. When secondary school aged students are asked to sing softly, singers often tend to relax, and the body tends to enter a less alert state. Speaking about the physicality of supporting while singing will help young singers to understand its importance.

Musical Example 12, Musical Recording 13



The application of all of these examples during warm-ups and throughout a rehearsal is not difficult if educators/conductors take the time to study the score and then share with the students why they are practising a particular exercise. Not only does using the score help with vocal development, but it also helps students learn music and become more engaged in the entire rehearsal. Many vocal warm-up compilations offer examples of

warm-ups that can address the technical aspects of singing; however, simply doing a warm-up with no pedagogical or educational connection to a piece in a rehearsal sometimes seems redundant. James E. Bowyer states, ‘warm-ups are where you learn how to sing, the rehearsal is where you learn what to sing’.¹²⁹ When singers understand how to connect the content of the warm-up exercises to the particular piece, the rehearsal becomes much more relevant to them. Students will be better prepared to listen to the conductor, work on the requested improvements, and carry this into the next rehearsal and beyond. The use of musical scores written for and commissioned for the Cork International Choral Festival as an educational tool can help students develop their vocal technique, fostering a love for choral singing in secondary school aged singers in Ireland.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Cork International Choral Festival’s influence on choral composition, by examining the Seminar on New Choral Music, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, The Composer in the Classroom Scheme, and music composed for performance in the equal and mixed voice sections of the post-primary schools’ competitions. The latter part of the chapter explored the life and work of Ben Hanlon, as an example of the Festival’s influence on young composers. Finally, an examination on pedagogical uses for music composed for the post-primary school competitions was discussed, giving performance consideration on vocal technique and development.

¹²⁹ James E. Bowyer, Lecture, ‘Choral Studies III’, American Kodály Institute, Loyola University Maryland, Baltimore, MD, USA, July 2013.

The purpose of the Cork International Choral Festival is to promote and develop Irish choral music. In this regard, the Festival has achieved its aim. Over time, the composers it has commissioned, those who have entered the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, and those commissioned by choirs, have added to the richness of contemporary choral music in Ireland. Their contribution essentially keeps choral music alive not only in Ireland but across the world. The Cork International Choral Festival, the Seminar on New Choral Music, and the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition have gained international recognition. The composition competition is an annual opportunity for the world to focus on the quality choral works being composed in Ireland, thus extending the influence of these works to a broader global community.¹³⁰

The Composer in the Classroom Scheme helps to ignite interest in composition within different groups of secondary school participants each year. New works are composed using the resources, abilities and energy of those involved. Guided by experienced choral composers, each participating group is offered the opportunity to perform their compositions as part of the Cork International Choral Festival each year, thus helping to develop a new generation of choral singers, conductors and composers of Irish choral music.

When examining the influence of the Festival on composers of Irish choral music, it is evident from the career of Ben Hanlon that it has provided opportunities for new music to be composed. The examination of Hanlon's compositional trajectory at the end of

¹³⁰ Survey Participant 22, 15 January 2021.

this chapter offered just one example of how the Festival has helped to increase the volume of Irish choral works that continue to be performed in Cork, Ireland and worldwide. This, as well as the examination of selected work for post-primary school choirs provides fertile ground for further research on the Festival's compositional legacy.

Chapter 4

The Influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singers and Conductors

This chapter is comprised of two sections. Section one examines the educational opportunities and organisations that have stemmed from the Cork International Choral Festival, notably *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*, the International Conducting Course, and the Irish Youth Choir. It also describes how the Festival has influenced other training opportunities for singers and conductors. Section two discusses the other ways in which the Festival has helped to develop choral singing and conducting in Ireland, notably through the opportunities it has offered for choristers, conductors and composers to participate in competitive and non-competitive environments, and the vibrant social circle and community it has developed over the years, from which a variety of collaborations have emerged.

4.1 Creating Educational Opportunities for Singers and Conductors

The Cork International Choral Festival has primarily influenced choral singing and conducting in two ways. Firstly, the Festival offers a high-level competitive platform for choirs to showcase their talents. Secondly, new initiatives offer opportunities for competition, the development of singers and conductors, non-competitive participation and exposing all in attendance to the highest level of choral singing available in Ireland. This chapter will offer a final commentary on these significant aspects of the Festival's legacy, highlighting its importance for choral music on a national and an international scale.

The Cork International Choral Festival is an essential organisation for the dissemination of choral singing in Ireland. The Festival has a reputation and legacy as a choral festival – conductors and singers feel that taking part offers the comfort and assurance of a well-rounded experience. With close to five thousand choristers partaking each year, the Festival accommodates the mass participation of amateur groups from Ireland and choirs from around the world, continuously providing a stage for performance and competition in a choral setting in Ireland.¹ The timing of the Festival (usually held in the first weekend of May) enables conductors and singers to achieve their teaching, learning and planning objectives close to a period that might be considered ‘concert season’ for many choirs.² The accessibility and affordability of the Festival is also desirable to groups.³ Cork has a rail and motorway system, and an international airport, making it easy for groups to access the city both nationally and internationally.

By attending the Cork International Choral Festival, conductors and choirs are immersed in a wealth of diverse repertoire from various genres. Attending the concerts and competitions enables those involved to enjoy and experience new repertoire. Hearing new repertoire at the Festival was (and still is) a significant base for singers and conductors to experience unknown and new repertoire in a manner similar to the pre-internet times.⁴ The opportunity to attend the performances of world-class artists such as The King’s Singers and Voces8, invited as guest performers, inspires choirs

¹ Survey Participant 35, 15 January 2021.

² Survey Participant 5, 15 January 2021.

³ Survey Participant 24, 15 January 2021.

⁴ Survey Participant 3, 15 January 2021.

and all involved in choral settings to further their training and to hone their abilities.⁵ In any given year, the Festival attracts some of the world's best choral groups. These interactions can enthral a chorister or conductor lucky enough to have heard one of these high standard choirs.⁶ Participant 21 states that, 'in the world of choral music-making, encountering the "best" choirs could be an experience for life, a positive motivator to do better, or simply an enrichment that makes life better'.

The Festival indirectly influences and enhances the training of singers and conductors in several ways. The Festival's prestige encourages conductors and choirs to prepare accordingly, demanding the highest standard musically and motivating singers to master a more challenging repertoire.⁷ Year after year, both conductors and singers aim to build upon their previous experiences, helping them to develop as musicians. Participant 4 writes that choirs sometimes work with experts in the choral conducting profession in preparation for competition; workshops are held to aid the development of singers' vocal technique and choral sound. Participant 7 notes that once choristers have heard a particular piece performed at the Festival, the choir members are keen to experiment with new vocal possibilities once rehearsals recommence. Experiencing and being exposed to these various genres and new sounds at the Festival helps choir members to broaden their musical tastes and understanding of different types of choral music.

⁵ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

⁶ Survey Participant 21, 15 January 2021.

⁷ Survey Participant 37, 15 January 2021.

The Cork International Choral Festival also offers an opportunity for conductors to progress from one level to the next. It offers conductors the opportunity to present challenging choral repertoire to an appreciative and knowledgeable audience.⁸ In more recent years, an excellent or winning performance at the national level has usually earned the choir and its conductor a place in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition.⁹ By attending the international competition, conductors are exposed to choirs' repertoire choices from various parts of the world, inspiring and nurturing their musical interests and tastes.¹⁰ Conductors can also learn from observations of choirs performing at the Festival. Opinions on conductors' style, repertoire, choral blend and balance, once heard, are then taken into consideration by attendees and competing conductors.¹¹

Indirectly, the Cork International Choral Festival has enhanced conductors' training and helped musicians to seek musical opportunities as part of their education.¹²

Participant 25 states that, 'without the Cork International Choral Festival and exposure to different choirs, my choral tastes and repertoire would not be as diverse'. Participant 25 is now the manager of the renowned The King's Singers. Having met and worked with the group at the 2012 Cork International Choral Festival, participant 25 states that, 'my experiences learning choral practice and being exposed to many different choirs at the Cork International Choral Festival along the way has influenced my work with them (The King's Singers)'.

⁸ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

⁹ Survey Participant 3, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰ Survey Participant 7, 15 January 2021.

¹¹ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

¹² Survey Participant 24, 15 January 2021.

The Cork International Choral Festival has inspired other organisations in Ireland to establish choral festivals in recent years. The City of Derry International Choir Festival was established in 2013 and, with absolute certainty, the Festival director states that, ‘this Festival (the City of Derry International Choir Festival) would not have come into existence had it not been for my visits to the Cork International Choral Festival starting more than forty years ago. I am sure that this is one of many examples of pebbles that have been dropped in Cork that continue to ripple well beyond the confines of the Cork City Hall’.¹³ The establishment of the City of Derry International Choir Festival is one example of how the Cork International Choral Festival has helped to influence and enhance the training of choral singers, conductors, and composers of choral music in Ireland; the Festivals in Cork and Derry are run in similar ways, offering competitive and non-competitive opportunities for singers and conductors. Participant 12 also describes how the exceptional organisation and running of the Cork International Choral Festival guided other directors in how to organise and manage the Irish International A Capella Festival in 2017.

The schools’ events offer younger singers the opportunity to take part, thus helping to nurture and develop a new generation of choral singers. Participant 12 lists the Festival in Cork as the main reason for pursuing a career in choral singing and conducting. Commenting on attending the Festival since the mid-2000s, participant 5 states that, ‘the exposure to competitions and international choral music from visiting choirs inspired me to pursue my interest and subsequent passion (for music) later in life through third-level education’. The Festival demonstrates the national interest in choral

¹³ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

music and the strength of the choral community in Ireland, while also enhancing musicians' employability in Cork within a choral setting.¹⁴ Participant 14 comments on how it was a pleasure to witness choir members who had competed at the Festival as young boys in 1988 return to the stage in 2017 in the international competition.¹⁵ Returning singers, year after year, show that the Cork International Choral Festival has had an extraordinary influence and impact on choral singing in Ireland over the past number of decades.

The Cork International Choral Festival, its directors, and its administrators are responsible for the formation of many vital organisations for choral music in Ireland. As mentioned previously in this study, Aloys Fleischmann was responsible for a number of organisations that are still in existence today.¹⁶ Geoffrey Spratt and Aiveen Kearney are among those responsible for two of the most influential choral organisations that promote choral singing and conducting in Ireland: *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* and the Irish Youth Choir.

4.2 *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* (National Association of Choirs)

In 1980, Taoiseach Jack Lynch, in his opening speech at the Cork International Choral Festival, stated, 'it was timely for a National Association of Choirs to be set up which would be based in Cork as it was such a centre for choral music'.¹⁷ At this time, the Cork International Choral Festival had become a leading figure in European choral

¹⁴ Survey Participant 5, 15 January 2021.

¹⁵ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

¹⁶ These institutions are the Cork Orchestral Society, Cork Ballet Group and the Cork International Choral Festival.

¹⁷ Aiveen Kearney, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in R. Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004: A Celebration*, (Herford, Germany: Glen House Press, 2004), 426.

competitions and was the only international choral competition in Ireland. From this, *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was established by Geoffrey Spratt and Aiveen Kearney, with the support of the Arts Council of Ireland.¹⁸ The foundation of *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was a direct consequence of the Cork International Choral Festival.¹⁹ Aloys Fleischmann, Geoffrey Spratt, John Fitzpatrick, Aiveen Kearney, and others formed the *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* committee, with the purpose of establishing a body to provide services to conductors and singers in Ireland. The office of the administrator and director of *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was located at the Cork International Choral and Film Festivals' premises free of charge, and the Arts Council of Ireland offered £5,000 per annum, from which salaries and operating costs were to be paid.²⁰

The publication of Irish choral composers' works was also taken on by *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*. The first piece published was *An Tonn* (The Wave) by Séamus de Barra, commissioned by *Cantairí Mhuscraí* and John Fitzpatrick. *An Tonn* was the winner of the Ó Riada competition in 1981 and de Barra was then commissioned twice for the Seminar on New Choral Music, in 1983 with *Magnificat*, and in 1989 with *Song of Pan*.²¹ The publication of de Barra's work by *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was a pilot project to work out the feasibility of choral music publication for Irish choirs.²²

¹⁸ From 2008, *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* has been known as the *Association of Irish Choirs* and from 2019 as *Sing Ireland*.

¹⁹ Kearney, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', 426.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 1962-2019. Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival', <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021]. Anon, 'Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

²² Margaret O'Sullivan, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 432.

Building on the publication of Irish choral music, *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* included services for singers and conductors through the provision of library services, and information on local and regional choral courses, seminars and choral matters, to ensure all interested parties would have the opportunity to partake in training and development opportunities.²³ Commenting on the lack of male singers in Ireland, Gay Elmes asks, ‘the number of choirs per head of population is the highest in Scandinavia. So, why is it fine for male descendants of the Vikings to sing in choirs but in the land of Celtic bards and the Irish monastic tradition it is not?’²⁴

Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór planned to develop the interest, uptake and development of choral music and singers through providing workshops for primary school teachers and supporting music in schools, choral days, the Annual Conducting Course, The National Conductors Forum and the Irish Youth Choir. All activities and programmes were offered to young and old alike to foster their love of choral singing.²⁵ In 1987, on Geoffrey Spratt’s appointment as Festival director, *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was asked to take over the administration of the Cork International Choral Festival and accepted the invitation.

4.3 International Choral Conducting Summer School

Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór sought to offer a range of services, one of which was a conducting course with Geoffrey Spratt. The first Annual Summer School for Choral

²³ Ibid., 433.

²⁴ Gay Elmes, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 435.

²⁵ Ibid., 436.

conductors and teachers was established in 1981.²⁶ This course proved extremely popular and was needed as there was few educational opportunities for choral conducting training in Ireland at the time. Indeed, ‘people were crying out for training’.²⁷ To attract new members and participants, Aiveen Kearney used the Arts Council’s published book, *Find your Music in Ireland*, by Dinah Molloy,²⁸ which listed all the music organisations in Ireland, as a means to contact and attract conductors and choral singers to join *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*.²⁹ *Sing Ireland* hopes to hold the 41st International Choral Conducting Summer School in August 2021.³⁰ This course is, and has been since its establishment, the only non-accredited choral conducting course in Ireland. The summer course offers participants of a variety of levels (Beginner, Foundation, Transition, Intermediate B, Intermediate A and Advanced) the expertise of tutors of international standing in the field of choral conducting.³¹ The courses are designed to develop conducting skills, but also focus on rehearsal technique, interpretation, vocal technique, style, and language. The Cork International Choral Festival offers the Chris Mahon Bursary for Conductors, donated by the Mahon Family (in memory of Chris Mahon’s association with the Festival) to a conductor in the schools’ competitions to attend the annual summer school. This collaboration helps a conductor each year to improve abilities, which in turn allows for an enhanced choral setting in schools and the community.

²⁶ O’Sullivan, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 432.

²⁷ Kearney, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, 427.

²⁸ Dinah Molloy, *Find your Music in Ireland* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 2nd edn 1979).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ The running of this Summer School will be dependent on whether lockdown restrictions are in force due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

³¹ Anon, ‘Choral Conducting Summer School – Level Description’, <<https://www.singireland.ie/content/files/Choral-Conducting-Summer-School-Levels.pdf>> [accessed 11 February 2021].

Through its lifetime, the International Choral Conducting Summer School has had three directors: Geoffrey Spratt, Bernie Sherlock, and Orla Flanagan.³² All three of these directors are prominent and recognised choral conductors in Ireland. Another common factor is that all have been heavily involved with the Cork International Choral Festival, Spratt as Festival director and both Sherlock and Flanagan as competitors and adjudicators.

4.4 Irish Youth Choir

The Irish Youth Choir, co-founded and conducted by Geoffrey Spratt from 1982 to 2007, has allowed young singers to sing and train with some of Ireland's leading choral practitioners.³³ The number of choirs under the Irish Youth Choir name has grown to three separate choirs: the Irish Youth Choir, the Irish Youth Chamber Choir and the Irish Youth Training Choir. The Irish Youth Chamber Choir was formed in 2011. It aims to deliver performances throughout the year, unlike the Irish Youth Choir, which operates a one-week residency at the University of Limerick each June.³⁴ Following this, an opportunity for younger singers aged 14-17 years of age was announced, with the formation of the Irish Youth Training Choir. The Irish Youth Training Choir initially came together during a two-day event but due to its success, this was lengthened to a week-long course. In 2016, Eunan McDonald was appointed as the

³² Geoffrey Spratt was director from 1981 to 2009, Bernie Sherlock from 2009 to 2020, and Orla Flanagan from 2020.

³³ Anon, 'Geoffrey Spratt', <<https://www.singireland.ie/training-membership/training/irish-choral-conducting-summer-school/geoffray-spratt>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

³⁴ Michael Dungan, 'Irish Youth Chamber Choir/Beardsell', <<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/music/2.749/irish-youth-chamber-choir-beardsell-1.454126>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

conductor of the Irish Youth Training Choir.³⁵ In 2020, Patrick Rafter was announced as the conductor of the Irish Youth Training Choir and Bernie Sherlock as the conductor of the Irish Youth Choir.³⁶

Alumni of the Irish Youth Choir initiative include internationally renowned singers Julie Feeney, Mairéad Buicke, Bridget Knowles, Robin Tritschler, and conductors Bernie Sherlock, Niall Crowley and Lynsey Callaghan.³⁷ The tutors that lead sectional rehearsals are some of Ireland's leading choral experts. Previous tutors have included Anne Barry, Alan Leech, Helen Hassett and Eunan McDonald.³⁸ Previous participants have stated that these tutors have instilled a love of singing and imparted knowledge that they will refer to in their current and future choral situations.

It was literally one of the best music experiences of my life. I attended the first-ever year it (Irish Youth Training Choir) ran, and it was one day, and everyone wished it went on longer. The next year, it ran for three days, so we got a mini theory and sight-reading classes and got so many singing tips and tricks to maintain healthy voices and take care of them for the long run. Last year (2018), each student got one individual singing lesson with a top singing teacher, and I was very jealous of that, and the biggest thing I got out of it was my sight-reading improved so drastically because of the intense nature of the course, and it is a skill I still have.³⁹

Attendance at the Irish Youth Choir aided the vocal development of singers in ways that sometimes may not be covered in a rehearsal setting. One participant comments on

³⁵ Richard Lynch, 'Irish Youth Training Choir Presents its Supper Performance "Maria"', <<https://www.ilovelimerick.ie/irish-youth-training-choir-presents-maria/>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

³⁶ Anon, 'IYCs team', <<https://www.singireland.ie/youth/irish-youth-choir/iyc-team>> [accessed 22 June 2021].

³⁷ Anon, 'About IYC/IYTC', <<https://www.singireland.ie/youth/irish-youth-choir/about-iyc-iytc>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

³⁸ Anon, 'IYC Team', <<https://www.singireland.ie/youth/irish-youth-choir/iyc-team>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

³⁹ Doireann O'Carroll, email correspondence with Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. 2 November 2019.

the importance of allowing the time to work on the intricacies of pieces, and in turn, the intricacies of the voice – the participant mentions discussing diphthongs and harmonics – as this may be the first time that a singer may have heard of these terms with regard to singing.⁴⁰

While the singers involved in the Irish Youth Choir programmes come from all over Ireland, competing in and attending the Cork international Choral Festival is a common factor shared between most of the singers. This is testament to the Festival as a locus of learning on the Irish and international choral music scene.

4.4.1 Irish Youth Choir and RTÉ Conductor in Training

The Irish Youth Choir and the Association of Irish Choirs began a training programme for one conductor to work with the Irish Youth Choirs and its artistic director, Greg Beardsell, in 2010. From 2012, this partnership merged with RTÉ performing groups to offer a Conductor in Training Scheme. In addition to working with Beardsell, the conductor selected was offered access to the RTÉ orchestras, quartets and choirs, in particular the Philharmonic Choir, and chorus masters Mark Hindley and Mary Amond O'Brien of RTÉ *Cór na nÓg*. The participant shadowed Hindley in preparation for performances and played an important role in the Irish Youth Choir, as an active member and understudy to Beardsell. Opportunities to conduct a piece in concert were also offered to the participant.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Christopher Glynn, email correspondence with Fearghal Ó Conchubhair. 2 November 2019.

⁴¹ Anon, 'IYC and RTÉ Conductor in Training', <<https://journalofmusic.com/listing/06-03-18/iyc-rte-conductor-training>> [accessed 6 April 2021].

In 2014, the Irish Youth Choir gave a performance as part of the Cork International Choral Festival entitled ‘Heavenly Bodies’, thus bringing the choir to the place of its inception – Cork – during the Festival.⁴²

4.5 The Festival as a training ground

From 1989 to 1990, two conductors of the BBC Singers offered masterclasses and workshops at the Festival. In 1989, John Poole offered a choral conducting masterclass, and the following year, Simon Joly offered a workshop with three aspiring Irish conductors: Carmel Griffin, Geraldine McDonnell, and John O’Connor, all of whom have since had very successful conducting careers.⁴³ John O’Connor subsequently worked with *Cantairí Mhuscraí*, the University College Cork Choral Society, *Cór Coláiste Choilm* and Capella Lyrica, all Cork based choirs. John also taught at the Association of Irish Choirs Summer School for many years.⁴⁴ Apart from the conducting workshops that were offered, conductors have stated that being in attendance at the various competitions and events and being able to watch the other conductors and hear the quality of sound produced by choirs, has inspired their own growth.⁴⁵

⁴² Cork International Choral Festival Programme, 2014. Anon, ‘Cork International Choral Festival’, <<http://www.corkpastandpresent.ie/cultureincork/music/corkinternationalchoralfestival/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁴³ Geoffrey Spratt, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 421.

⁴⁴ Anon, ‘John O’Connor’, <[https://csm.cit.ie/contacts/staff/johnoconnor/#:~:text=John%20introduced%20jazz%20to%20the,\(New%20York%20and%20Chicago\).](https://csm.cit.ie/contacts/staff/johnoconnor/#:~:text=John%20introduced%20jazz%20to%20the,(New%20York%20and%20Chicago).>)> [accessed 9 February 2021].

⁴⁵ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

For the majority of singers, the only vocal training they receive is participation in a choir.⁴⁶ Choral rehearsals largely focus on rehearsing the chosen repertoire and do not provide an in-depth session on vocal technique and musicianship. Several third-level institutions, music schools and private teaching institutions offer tuition in voice; however, they focus on solo singing, rather than choral singing.⁴⁷

Many students who attend and participate in the post-primary schools' competitions express joy, excitement and pride as a result of participating in the Festival. The experience as a whole is one of happiness and enjoyment.⁴⁸ Participant 4 especially remembers the excitement of singing in a venue such as Cork City Hall, stating that singers would recall many years later their exposure to the international choirs at the competitions: 'the ones that were brilliant stunned them. But they also loved the quirky ones who did some crazy things – unusual sounds and movement; these moments were highlights'.

In the past, the training of voices at the amateur and professional level in a choral setting was largely bypassed.⁴⁹ The Cork International Choral Festival has begun to address this by holding masterclasses to further develop singers and conductors. Since 2015, the number of masterclasses and workshops has grown significantly. The Big Sing, Choir Voicing and Alexander technique classes have been offered free of charge

⁴⁶ Fergus Sheil, 'Raising Your Voice – Towards a Policy for the Development of Choral Music in Ireland', Report to the Arts Council of Ireland (unpublished, 2008), 21.

⁴⁷ Several third level institutions have choirs and choral training that, in many cases, participation is a mandatory part of some degree programmes. Examples of this is at Maynooth University (Choral Society, the chamber Choir, Altus and the Early Music Choir) and at the Munster Technological University, Cork School of Music (Capella Lyrica and the Fleischmann Choir).

⁴⁸ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

⁴⁹ Sheil, 'Raising Your Voice', 21.

to Festival participants for many years. Since 2016, Voice production workshops, in collaboration with *Sing Ireland*, have offered masterclasses with renowned singers such as Owen Gilhooly, Majella Cullagh and Alan Leech.⁵⁰ These masterclasses have offered singers from many choirs the opportunity to work with experts in vocal development, to enhance their vocal abilities. From 2017, the Art of A Capella and Core Singing workshops were introduced. The Art of A Capella focuses on a capella singing and performance. Two selected choral groups work with the ensemble-in-residence each year, in the areas of repertoire selection, improvisation, and the voice as a percussive instrument. Core Singing is a new innovative pedagogy, combining many different concepts and areas associated with vocal production. These workshops include all types group singing, not only the classical style of choral singing.⁵¹ These workshops and masterclasses offered by the Festival help to enhance singers' abilities and can influence singers and conductors to research new genres of music for performance purposes.

Many singers and conductors state that their attendance of the Festival has acted as a training ground for them. Participant 38 explains that entering into a competition meant aspiring to a certain standard. The Festival allowed for experimentation, challenging the conductors and singers with various works, and encouraging them to learn through trial and error. Participation in the Festival also enabled participant 38 to develop the confidence to commission and give premier performances of new works by Irish composers.

⁵⁰ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2015-2019. Anon, Festival Archive', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/festival-archive/>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁵¹ Ibid.

The Cork International Choral Festival is attractive to choral groups and singers for several reasons. The Festival gathers some of the most outstanding choirs and performing groups worldwide in Cork, and ensures that a professional standard aligns with its organisation and adjudication.⁵² The sense of competition encourages conductors and singers to prepare well.⁵³ The atmosphere surrounding the Festival is one of respect, and there is always a warm welcome offered to each participant and audience member.⁵⁴ The spirit of the Festival, with its focus on the celebration of choral singing, is also a factor in its attractiveness.⁵⁵ A Festival such as this offers a great variety of competition categories for a choir, where competing is of great importance. Therefore, the Festival provides opportunities to perform repertoire appropriate to a choir's level and in a preferred genre, thus offering a positive experience to all involved.⁵⁶ The Festival has also developed a programme of performance opportunities outside of the competitive format.⁵⁷

Acceptance into the international competition can carry significant weight and a sense of pride for choirs.⁵⁸ Festival participants enjoy the opportunity to sing at some of the venues offered in Cork, most notably, Cork City Hall and St Fin Barre's Cathedral.⁵⁹ With world-class facilities, the Cork School of Music also aids in the experience of an attendee, by offering a performance and workshop space for the Festival. The Stack Theatre, the Curtis Auditorium, and the Doolan Recital Room, which house choral and

⁵² Survey Participant 7, 15 January 2021.

⁵³ Survey Participant 4, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁴ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁵ Survey Participant 19, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁶ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁷ See sections 4.7 and 4.8, pages 140-146.

⁵⁸ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

⁵⁹ Survey Participant 5, 15 January 2021.

vocal workshops, and the Seminar on New Choral Music, enhance the participants' experience of any festival element in a state-of-the-art building.

For amateur Irish choirs, the Festival is influential, offering choristers opportunities to hear and strive towards a high standard of singing while also experiencing repertoire and a seriousness of intent from groups possibly previously unknown to them.⁶⁰ The experience of seeing and hearing other choirs perform is hugely beneficial; many choirs enjoy hearing their peers singing and being exposed to new repertoire.⁶¹ The Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition prepares Irish choirs for international stages and offers opportunities to be adjudicated at the same standard as in the international competition, while remaining in a national competition. The experience affords choirs a national platform of an international standard before deciding to compete at various international festivals outside of Cork.⁶² Performing or competing offers affirmation to groups.

With such a large number of choirs and different groups participating each year, a great variety of repertoire is performed, thus enhancing, exposing and possibly influencing choristers' and conductors' choice of genres.⁶³ Participants can receive an enriching experience at each visit to the Cork International Choral Festival, whatever their role – singer, conductor or adjudicator.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

⁶¹ Survey Participant 37, 15 January 2021.

⁶² Survey Participant 5, 15 January 2021.

⁶³ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁴ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

4.5.1 Developing skills

For participant 38, the desire to learn and develop as a conductor was influenced by the Cork International Choral Festival. The longing to improve and develop young voices, particularly from his/her work and involvement at the Festival, motivated him/her to undertake a Masters in Music (conducting) at the Munster Technological University, Cork School of Music.⁶⁵ Participant 4 helped singers to develop their competition skills by way of workshops with leading choral conductors in Ireland. Exposure to the repertoire and choirs of such high standards encourages choir members to work harder on their repertoire and abilities as choral singers.⁶⁶ On his/her return from the Cork International Choral Festival, participant 11 and his/her choir discuss the Festival and the inspiring choirs and sounds they have witnessed. Hearing and being exposed to a high level of singing often leads to a choir aspiring to something greater.⁶⁷ Youth choirs that partake in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition often stem from specialised music schools. Experiencing these choirs can inspire young singers and expose them to choral excellence, while also enabling them to set goals for achieving the highest possible standard of choral music-making.⁶⁸

4.5.2 Adjudication Remarks

Adjudicators are critical to the Festival success on the global stage, as they ensure that all participants gain constructive critique of their work. The adjudicators' task – aided by the supportive and clear guidelines set out by the Festival administration – is to agree on inherently personal subjects – the quality of a choir's performance, for

⁶⁵ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁶ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁷ Survey Participant 11, 15 January 2021.

⁶⁸ Survey Participant 24, 15 January 2021.

example.⁶⁹ The written remarks are sources to reflect upon as conductors can refer to if a piece is performed again.⁷⁰

Having peers comment and voice opinions on a conductor's interpretation of a piece can help to develop the conductor's understanding of the work and gain insights from the advice offered on vocal development, choral technique, or any other aspect that might be discussed on the comment sheet.⁷¹ Participants of this survey feel that the various adjudicators chosen for each level of competition are chosen exceptionally well. Hence, all competitions are reasonably and appropriately marked and adjudicated, which inevitably protects and ensures the competitions' integrity. The choosing of these adjudicators alone gives choirs and their conductors the assurance that an adequate reward will be received after much hard work and further training.⁷²

The Cork International Choral Festival adjudication and the assessment method used is not common to other festivals in Ireland or at other leading international festivals. At many international festivals and competitions, no written remarks are offered to conductors, and one single mark for overall performance is received. The development of the adjudication system in Cork arose from examining and attending many national and international choral festivals and competitions, offering singers and conductors feedback about their performances.⁷³ All competing choirs at the Cork International Choral Festival receive a general overview of their competition before the results are

⁶⁹ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

⁷⁰ Survey Participant 36, 15 January 2021.

⁷¹ Survey Participant 3, 15 January 2021.

⁷² Survey Participant 19, 15 January 2021.

⁷³ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

announced, while marks and ranked results sheets are posted in the City Hall Foyer. A detailed comment sheet is posted to all participating choirs, offering comments from each adjudicator and a breakdown of marks awarded per piece. In the past, if a choir was not placed first or second in a competition, no comment sheet or placement was offered. Spoken adjudication before the announcement of results is generally invaluable to many conductors and singers. Overall insights into vocal technique and choice of repertoire are valuable, as conductors can apply these recommendations to their own choral context.⁷⁴

Participant 4 states that the remarks offered by the adjudicators are usually constructive. Directed comments to specific choirs with a mixture of constructive criticism and encouraging remarks are always welcomed, especially at the schools' competitions, where there is always something to be praised.⁷⁵ From the examination of adjudicators' comments, choirs and conductors can gain further direction on the management and progression of a particular group of singers.⁷⁶ From the adjudicators remarks, choirs will learn and improve their abilities, showing that the Cork International Choral Festival is continuously aiming to enhance and develop choral singing and conducting in Ireland.

The fact that the Cork International Choral Festival offers each choir written responses regarding their performance in competitions is invaluable. Many choirs use their time in Cork as a way of not only competing but also of preparing for concerts and other

⁷⁴ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

⁷⁵ Survey Participant 4, 15 January 2021.

⁷⁶ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

performing opportunities. As participant 24 states, ‘The feedback does help me, particularly as we usually continue performing the repertoire. Often choirs use competitions as a final destination, but we use them as formative feedback and a chance to get our hearts pounding!’.

4.6 Choral Singing and Conducting Training at Third level

It was not until 2019 that a specific course was established for choral singers and conductors. The MA in Choral Studies, offered at Dublin City University, was developed by Róisín Blunnie⁷⁷ and Seán Doherty.⁷⁸ Blunnie states that, ‘Ireland is absolutely buzzing with choirs at the moment, and we hope to provide a great course for conductors and composers to upskill and get all the expertise and background knowledge to give them confidence in their art’.⁷⁹ Blunnie adds that, ‘Choir singing is thoroughly alive and kicking at the moment, and all those choirs need well-trained conductors and new music by great composers’.⁸⁰ With a large number of choirs in the Republic of Ireland, the MA in Choral Studies is long overdue, as there is a great need to provide the necessary training to create knowledgeable and skilled choral conductors in Ireland. Participant 35 states that, ‘the level of interest in choral music at a national level, as demonstrated by Festivals such as the Cork International Choral Festival,

⁷⁷ Róisín Blunnie is the conductor of DCU Lumen Chorale, Lactare Vocal Ensemble, programme chair of DCU’s MA in Choral Studies and subject leader for music on the Bachelor of Religious Education and Music initial teacher trainer programme. Anon, ‘Dr Róisín Blunnie’, <<https://www.dcu.ie/theologyphilosophymusic/people/roisin-blunnie>> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁷⁸ Seán Doherty is a choral singer, composer, and lecturer in Music at DCU. Anon, ‘Dr Seán Doherty’, <https://www.dcu.ie/theologyphilosophymusic/people/sean-doherty> [accessed 27 June 2021].

⁷⁹ Róisín Blunnie, in Rachel Halpin, ‘DCU to Introduce MA in Choral Studies’ <<https://www.thecollegeview.com/2018/11/14/dcu-to-introduce-ma-in-choral-studies/>> [accessed 2 April 2020]

⁸⁰ Rachel Halpin, ‘DCU to Introduce MA in Choral Studies’ <<https://www.thecollegeview.com/2018/11/14/dcu-to-introduce-ma-in-choral-studies/>> [accessed 2 April 2020].

contributed to the establishment of the MA in Choral Studies at Dublin City University'. This degree is the only course in choral studies offered in Ireland, but is not the only course for choral conducting. There are three choral conducting courses at the Technological University Dublin: an MA, MMus and DMus in Conducting. The Royal Irish Academy of Music offers an MMusPerf and a DMusPerf in Choral Conducting, and the Munster Technological University, Cork School of Music offers an MA in Conducting.

In the past, with the absence of sufficient choral conducting programmes at degree level, the Cork International Choral Festival has played an important role in developing the skill of conductors in Ireland. These courses enhance the expertise of the participants by educating future conductors in choral singing and vocal technique.⁸¹

The Cork International Choral Festival also contributes to the development of choral music and singing in Ireland by offering workshops on the above elements. While there are workshops on contemporary group singing at the Festival, a choral masterclass with the choirs involved in the national competitions would be extremely beneficial to singers and conductors. The many competitions that comprise the Festival must not be outweighed by the potential for educational opportunities that the Festival could offer to help develop the level of choral singing and conducting in Ireland.

The Cork International Choral Festival also indirectly trains and prepares choral singers and conductors for participation in international festivals. A number of choirs in

⁸¹ This enhancement is evident from an examination of institutes' prospectuses and learning outcomes for each course.

Ireland, such as New Dublin Voices, the Mornington Singers and Laetare Vocal Ensemble, are experienced on the international stage. One conductor mentions how he/she, ‘never realised how high the standard of Cork was until they travelled abroad and discovered just how equivalently good, they were in comparison, how capable they were of competing at international level, and how well the Cork International Choral Festival had prepared them’.⁸²

Section 2

4.7 The Festival’s Creation of Opportunities

There are many strands still in existence that formed from the Cork International Choral Festival, which led to the creation of choirs, and non-competitive experiences, one of the most popular agendas – the social aspect – has helped the Cork International Choral Festival to become the most influential and popular choral event in Ireland. In this section, the Festival will be examined with regard to its creation of opportunities, highlighting how attendance can help to broaden musical tastes and can benefit singers and conductors.

The Cork International Choral Festival has gained an international reputation as a leading choral event.⁸³ Since 1954, visiting choirs from Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Asia, have provided inspiration and have encouraged the improvement in standard of Irish choirs. Many Irish choirs partaking in the Festival are competing on Irish and worldwide platforms.⁸⁴ The Festival’s sold-out concerts at Cork

⁸² Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

⁸³ Kearney, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, 410.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 410.

City Hall as part of the opening night and gala programmes, immerse choral singers and spectators in high-level and varied performances.⁸⁵ Aloys Fleischmann, at the 1954 Festival, spoke of the development opportunities and encouragement Irish choirs would gain from competitions. As Fleischmann states, ‘Let us hope that our festival will give encouragement to Irish choirs and create bonds of friendship between our singers and those from abroad whom we hope to welcome to Cork during the festival period’.⁸⁶ Fleischmann’s aim for the Festival has truly been achieved. By his retirement in 1987, thousands of choirs from Ireland and abroad had gathered in Cork to compete. The Festival currently attracts an estimated five thousand singers, ranging from international, to non-competitive, national and schools’ competitions.⁸⁷ Geoffrey Spratt, speaking about the increase in funding available in 1988, says that it has, ‘Critically underpinned everything artistic so that the word went abroad quickly and meaningfully that Cork really was the festival to strive for acceptance at if you were a first-rate choir or dance group’.⁸⁸

The following sections will explore in detail the various opportunities the Festival offered, which can be seen as part of its lasting legacy. These include the development of the Fleischmann Choir, opportunities for choirs in the competitive and non-competitive arenas, and the important social function of the Festival. This will lead to a concluding commentary on the Festival’s overall legacy and impact, on a national and international level.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 410.

⁸⁶ Jim Corr, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 30.

⁸⁷ Anon, ‘History and Future Dates’, < <https://www.corkchoral.ie/history-of-the-festival-future-dates/> > [accessed 9 June 2020].

⁸⁸ Spratt, ‘Festival Administrators and Directors’, 408.

4.7.1 Fleischmann Choir

On the announcement of Aloys Fleischmann's death on 21 July 1992, Geoffrey Spratt, who had been appointed as Director of the Cork School of Music, proposed that the opening concert of the Festival be dedicated to performing the works of Fleischmann. Because of this performance, the Cork School of Music Orchestra Chorus (later renamed the Fleischmann Choir) came into existence.⁸⁹ The Fleischmann Choir regularly performs at the opening ceremony of the Festival, continuing to bring largescale choral and orchestral works to the audience in attendance.

4.7.2 Opportunities for choirs

The Cork International Choral Festival also acts as a performance platform for young choirs to emerge without preparing a complete concert programme or entailing the cost of hosting a concert.⁹⁰ An example of this was the Cork Institute of Technology Chamber Choir.⁹¹ From 2012 to 2015, this choir worked towards attending and competing at the Cork International Choral Festival, entering the church music and chamber choir competitions. The Festival supplied the performance outlet in a competitive role and brought high-standard choirs to Cork. This helped the Chamber Choir and other choirs to strive to develop their choral practice.

4.8 Non-competitive Choral Singing

While many choirs are competitively driven, just as many are performance-driven. The Festival welcomes choirs and singing groups from all backgrounds – church choirs,

⁸⁹ Ibid., 424.

⁹⁰ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

⁹¹ Survey Participant 19, 15 January 2021.

workplace choirs, choirs for people with physical or mental disabilities, choirs from direct provision centres – each of which is viewed as important and integral to the Choral Festival as the choirs that focus on competition.⁹²

The non-competitive aspects of the Festival positively influence participants as they relieve choral singing of the burden of competition. Mixed ability and different genres of singing groups and choirs (pop/rock choirs, Barbershop choruses, gospel choirs) are offered the chance to present an array of programmes outside of the competitive platform, allowing for a variety of repertoire and enhancing the Festival's overall experience.⁹³ The non-competitive aspects of the Festival give the performance opportunity to those choirs that may be unsure about competing before engaging in competition the following year.⁹⁴

Many singers appreciate the benefits of the Festival's non-competitive aspects. Choirs', conductors' and audience members' reactions at venues such as the Clayton Hotel, where Afternoon in the Atrium is held, deserve mentioning. While audience members are metres away from the singers it becomes a Festival and a celebration of choral singing, rather than a competition.⁹⁵ Partaking in the non-competitive performance opportunities allows participants to practise performing repertoire for a competition that might never have had an audience.⁹⁶ The non-competitive aspect also encourages involvement from less 'serious' or less 'skilled' groups participating, purely for the

⁹² Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

⁹³ Survey Participant 7, 15 January 2021.

⁹⁴ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

⁹⁵ Survey Participant 5, 15 January 2021.

⁹⁶ Survey Participant 19, 15 January 2021.

love of singing and performing. The inclusion of diverse groups is equally supported and nurtured by the Festival. Attending non-competitive events is always worthwhile and constantly varied according to each group's performing abilities.⁹⁷ Groups are required to apply for such non-competitive opportunities like Afternoon in the Atrium. These choirs may sing what they choose without focusing on two or three pieces for competition.

Many singers and directors do not desire to focus on two pieces for assessment. Competitive festivals tend to focus on specific aspects of choral music. However, a good festival, such as the Cork International Choral Festival, seeks to include largescale choral and orchestral repertoire, contemporary choral music and groups, and performances by specialist choral groups.⁹⁸ Having participated in the Festival's competitive and non-competitive aspects over the last four decades, participant 21 can say with certainty that the Cork International Choral Festival has accounted for several musical performance highlights of an amateur singer's life.⁹⁹ Many of the visiting adjudicators, Festival directors, music journalists and Festival guests have commented on the impact of such inclusion, with many of the initiatives being implemented in other international festivals.¹⁰⁰ Features of the Cork International Choral Festival, such as the choral trail and the Big Sing, have, for instance, been incorporated into the City of Derry International Choir Festival.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Survey Participant 35, 15 January 2021.

⁹⁸ Survey Participant 1, 15 January 2021.

⁹⁹ Survey Participant 21, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰¹ Anon, 'National Big Sing Workshop with SLIXS', <<https://derrychoirfest.com/gallery/album.php?s=national-big-sing-workshop-with-slixs>> [accessed 15 March 2021].

Participant 8, speaking of the Festival's non-competitive aspects, states, 'even though choirs I have been involved with have had great success in the Festival's competitive aspects, it is the non-competitive events that have, without a doubt, had the most positive impact on me'. The positive impact gained from non-competitive performances at the Festival in Cork allows for greater variety in the repertoire without prescribing pieces for the competition.¹⁰²

Participant 38 considers exposure to performances from participants of the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition as vital to the developing singer in the schools section competitions. Exposing a young singer to the standards of choral singing in an international competition can never be underestimated. Singers involved in the schools sections (particularly the secondary post-primary level) cannot be underestimated in their abilities to criticise a performance, and to know and appreciate brilliance once heard. The opportunity to hear these high standard choirs is, in most cases, inspirational, while also fostering aspiration among young choristers for the future.¹⁰³

The choral trail gives choirs the opportunity to perform at venues across Cork City. The general public has the opportunity to hear or attend the venues, which include Crawford Art Gallery, Cork International Airport, Cork City Hall and a number of bars and restaurants. The choral trail allows choirs to perform outside of the usual formal setting of choral music. This enhances the experiences of competitive and non-competitive

¹⁰² Survey Participant 21, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰³ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

choirs, while also promoting choral singing and music to audiences that might not have ever attended a choral concert.

Afternoons in the Atrium provides an informal concert setting with national and international choirs performing in the Atrium of the Clayton Hotel in Cork City. This is a family friendly setting that showcases choral singers' passion for choral music outside of the competitive roles of the Festival.

The Big Sing was initiated in 2011 to ensure every singer gets the opportunity to sing in the Festival. On average, three hundred singers gather to perform a piece with a short rehearsal beforehand.¹⁰⁴ The Big Sing offers an opportunity to partake in the Festival, no matter the level of singer or musician. The relaxed and informal atmosphere adds to the enjoyment and fun of choral singing at the Festival, thus leading to an enjoyable experience for all involved.

All of these non-competitive platforms allow for any level of singer or conductor to partake in the Festival, providing opportunities for collaboration and a feeling of community, thus further enabling and positively influencing choral music in Ireland.

4.9 The Social Scene of the Festival

The Cork International Choral Festival is praised for providing attendees with the opportunity to socialise and network.¹⁰⁵ This balances the Festival's competitive nature,

¹⁰⁴ Anon, 'The Big Sing', < <https://www.corkchoral.ie/511-2/the-big-sing/> > [accessed 19 April 2021]. Verdi's *Va, pensiero*, in 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Survey Participant 8, 15 January 2021.

while allowing for friendly rivalries to reignite each year.¹⁰⁶ The Festival also offers an uplifting and social experience for choral singers outside of their weekly rehearsals and self-learning of music.¹⁰⁷ Many festivals and competitions focus on the competitive aspects of music; however, in Cork, camaraderie and the enjoyment of meeting fellow choristers at various engagements instil a sense of enjoyment.¹⁰⁸ The Cork International Choral Festival has helped provide opportunities for choral singers, conductors and composers to come together outside of a competitive platform or situations with the establishment of the Irish Youth Choir, the Annual Conducting Course, events organised by *Sing Ireland* and the Festival itself. The social occasions at the Cork International Choral Festival allow the opportunity for friends, colleagues and professionals in choral music to gather at the weekend of the Festival, thus providing an invaluable experience every year.¹⁰⁹ The warmth and welcome of Cork city during the Festival is a critical feature that reinforces the Festival's longevity and spirit; many friendships have resulted from the various participatory roles of the Festival and have led to strengthened and renewed acquaintances on successive visits.¹¹⁰ Most importantly, the Festival promotes high-quality music-making at all levels.

The social aspect experienced by participant 10's choir was desirable to the group. Time allocated to networking with singers from around the world who share a love of singing is a gratifying experience for amateur and professional singers.¹¹¹ The Cork International Choral Festival's social aspects clearly show that the Festival is focused

¹⁰⁶ Survey Participant 12, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Survey Participant 37, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Survey Participant 3, 15 January 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Survey Participant 19, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁰ Survey Participant 14, 15 January 2021.

¹¹¹ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

on both the celebration of choral singing and the competitiveness and ranking of choral singing and choirs, equally. In general, singers have a very positive and appreciative attitude towards the Festival in Cork. The availability of a 'Festival Club' at which one can relax, is a decided plus'.¹¹² Often remarked upon as the highlight of the Festival, the Festival Club brings singers of all ages together in their droves each evening for socialising and impromptu sing-songs, allowing for new friendships and collaborations to form. An example of networking and friendship collaborations would be the Cork choir *Voci Nuove*, who met with Amerlingchor from Austria at the Festival, which led to a friendship between the choirs and a co-performance in Vienna.¹¹³

4.10 The Festival's Influence on Repertoire and selecting Irish Choral Music

On speaking about how the Cork International Choral Festival has influenced musical tastes and the choice of repertoire, Participant 23 credits the Festival with enabling him/her to become more aware of the different choral traditions brought to Ireland by the visiting choirs from around the world. A broader, more prosperous and impressive choral repertoire from choirs of various ethnic and national backgrounds was portrayed by the attendees. With many different competitions at the Festival and the number of visiting artists to Cork from different parts of the world increasing every year, conductors and singers are encouraged to explore the many different and new pieces that are being performed. Often, singers hear a piece they like and present it to a conductor for performance. By choosing music heard at the Festival, the range of repertoire that a choir and its members can sing is enhanced. This is a direct result of

¹¹² Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021. The 'Festival Club' is held in the Clayton Hotel after the competitions and concerts at the various venues throughout the Festival.

¹¹³ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

the members' exposure to new music while attending the Cork International Choral Festival.¹¹⁴ The Festival has always provided new material to discover and explore. The Festival programme alone is a catalogue of new materials.¹¹⁵ The annual CD released by the Festival is also a fantastic source of repertoire for conductors.¹¹⁶ An exciting aspect of any competition or festival is the chance to research new repertoire.¹¹⁷ From the evidence above, it is clear that the Festival has enhanced the understanding of conductors of contemporary choral music, through exposure to new music.

The Festival and its competitions also encourage conductors and singers to find and explore repertoire that they might not otherwise seek out or be exposed to – especially the works of Irish composers of choral music.¹¹⁸ Hearing and performing Irish choral music has been a pleasing and eye-opening experience for some groups.¹¹⁹ Participant 4 arranged and composed pieces for his/her choirs. These compositions and arrangements came from the necessity. As participant 4 states, 'I put much effort into crafting pieces which I hoped the singers would enjoy and which they would perform well and effectively. I constantly spent time looking for the right pieces with which I could pair the Irish piece. Significant consideration has always been to choose pieces that young people would like to sing and sing well. I did not always succeed. However, often I did'.

¹¹⁴ Survey Participant 24, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁵ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁶ Survey Participant 36, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁷ Survey Participant 37, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁸ Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

¹¹⁹ Survey Participant 23, 15 January 2021.

A common factor shared between all good festivals is that they prescribe the performance of repertoire from a choir's home country. This requirement helps to ensure that new Irish choral music is being composed, commissioned, and performed regularly in Ireland. With the competitive element added to the equation, new Irish choral music boundaries and standards are explored.¹²⁰ However, it can still be sometimes restrictive to find repertoire for amateur groups. While there are many composers of choral music in Ireland producing excellent works, a recommendation would be to write music accessible to community groups.¹²¹ Vocal abilities and resources available to choirs sometimes make it challenging to access attainable repertoire.¹²² Perhaps an educational opportunity could arise where the Festival holds compositional workshops for aspiring composers that delves into the science behind the voice and its limitations. With the many amateur choirs, internationally acclaimed adjudicators, the commissioned composers, the Séan Ó Riada winning composers, training in composition for choirs could be developed to help new and accessible music to be created for the community and amateur choirs in Ireland.

The level of new Irish choral music being written is sometimes unattainable for some amateur groups. Many amateur choirs which have a large number of non-musically literate members find it challenging to learn new music and class this as counterproductive. The Cork International Choral Festival is continuously striving to create Irish choral music that is attainable and attractive to both amateur and semi-professional ensembles in Ireland.¹²³ Participant 11 mentions *Cailíno* Music Publishers

¹²⁰ Survey Participant 7, 15 January 2021.

¹²¹ Survey Participant 37, 15 January 2021.

¹²² Survey Participant 10, 15 January 2021.

¹²³ Survey Participant 36, 15 January 2021.

as a resource for compositions by Irish composers of choral music. Sometimes, the lack of recordings and the ability to view a scores deters the conductors of amateur groups from selecting new music; however, *Cailino* Music Publishing offers both recordings and perusal scores for potential choirs, which aids the decision of whether or not to perform a piece.¹²⁴

Participant 38 states that ‘as a conductor, I often found it difficult to source new Irish material that I liked, or material that would be contrasting to the other piece I wanted to perform’. However, this encouraged him/her to commission new works, which was, ‘always a rewarding experience’. Participant 38’s commissioning of new music to perform at the Festival shows that, because of the Festival, new Irish choral music is being composed, commissioned and performed.

4.11 How the Cork International Choral Festival Benefits Choral Singing, Conducting and Composition of Irish choral music

Singers and conductors associate the Cork International Choral Festival with being an important platform for performance and competition. For some, it is the favourite choral weekend of the year.¹²⁵ Participant 23 states three reasons for this: the achievement of high-performance standards in preparing for competition; the opportunity to experience and perform on the City Hall stage with its special acoustic; and receiving an independent assessment of the work presented by a choir from internationally renowned adjudicators. Many students of second-level education express joy, excitement and pride from participation in the Festival. The experience as

¹²⁴ *Cailino* Music Publishers, <<https://cailino.com/>> [accessed 2 March 2021].

¹²⁵ Survey Participant 36, 15 January 2021.

a whole is one of happiness and enjoyment. The Festival perpetuates itself as an uplifting experience.¹²⁶

Choral singing in schools is often influenced by performances at *Feiseanna*, festivals or competitions in Ireland. Thus, competing at Ireland's leading choral festival is a natural step. Competing at and partaking in the Cork International Choral Festival offers exposure to new choirs, repertoire, new friends, and colleagues in a relaxed environment that helps choirs to develop and enjoy their love for choral singing.¹²⁷

Competing in competitions encourages choirs who enter to achieve a particular standard and to be adjudicated professionally. It introduces choirs and conductors to new works and new possibilities of sound, as well as challenging repertoire.¹²⁸ It promotes the composition and performance of new works and allows choirs a platform to showcase their work. The competitions in Cork can influence young singers to continue singing by offering them a rewarding experience and the opportunity to hear superb choral singing. The Festival allows choirs and conductors to make valuable musical and social connections with other choirs, perhaps getting to perform with them.¹²⁹ At the 2013 Festival, members of the University of Oregon Chamber Choir (winners of the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition) performed Sydney Guillaume's *Kalinda* with members of other choirs who had performed the piece at the Festival in that year while attending the Festival Club. This opportunity allowed amateur singers the chance to perform with internationally award-winning choirs, a

¹²⁶ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

¹²⁷ Survey Participant 25, 15 January 2021.

¹²⁸ Survey Participant 7, 15 January 2021.

¹²⁹ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

memory that many will have of the Cork International Choral Festival. The enjoyment of performing music to a high standard is suitable for singers and encourages them to tackle more demanding pieces.¹³⁰ It allows for joy, fun and friendships to flourish, which promotes choral singing. Partaking in the Festival provides a gratifying experience that promotes physical and mental well-being, and for young singers, this is an invaluable resource.¹³¹ Comradery and bonding can sometimes be more robust under pressure.¹³²

By attending concerts and competitions, choirs and conductors are exposed to new repertoire from different countries, the ability to watch and possibly learn from leading choral conductors and hear high-class choral singing in national and international competitions. As this thesis has highlighted, these experiences are also an important aspect of singers', conductors' and composers' development.¹³³ Through its legacy of developing choristers' talents and abilities and enabling young people to have access to music in an important musical and social venue, the Cork International Choral Festival is continuing to enhance the training of singers, conductors, and composers of choral music in Ireland.

4.12 Conclusion

From simply attending the Festival over a number of years, singers and conductors have gained insightful knowledge to help them progress. Witnessing choirs of

¹³⁰ Survey Participant 4, 15 January 2021.

¹³¹ Survey Participant 38, 15 January 2021.

¹³² Survey Participant 4, 15 January 2021.

¹³³ John Fitzpatrick, 'Festival Administrators and Directors', in Fleischmann (ed.), *Cork International Choral Festival 1954-2004*, 443.

international standing in the Fleischmann International Trophy and attending the choirs invited as guest performers for the gala concert by the Festival show choral excellence and supply a standard to strive for. The Festival offers choirs and conductors the opportunity to grow in their abilities from one Festival to the next to produce a more demanding repertoire year after year for examination in the competition. The Festival also offers the opportunity for those groups that only want to perform without competition.

This chapter has discussed the establishment of *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* in 1980, which was partially spurred on by Taoiseach Jack Lynch's comment that Cork was the centre of choral music in Ireland, and also by the passion and talent of the various choral professionals in the city. From then, *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* has partnered with the Festival to promote choral singing and conducting in Ireland. *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*, now known as Sing Ireland, helps to organise and promote choral singing activities such as vocal masterclasses at the Festival each year to help educate the singers in attendance. *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór* was instrumental in publishing Irish choral music and providing opportunities for singers and conductors.

From *Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór*, the Annual international Choral Conducting course and the Irish Youth Choir were formed. These two organisations, stemming directly from the Cork International Choral Festival, have helped to enhance and influence many choral singers and conductors in Ireland since their foundation. From the Irish Youth Choir, an opportunity for a conductor in the beginning stages of their career came about, the Conductor in Training Programme. This programme has offered the opportunity for many young choral conductors to gain considerable experience.

By examining the organisations, opportunities, choirs, and access to music offered by the Festival, this thesis has proven that Fleischmann's hope has been achieved.

Furthermore, through creating Irish choral music, exposing singers, conductors and composers to new and innovative choral music, and by forging a strong social aspect, the Cork International Choral Festival has influenced choral singing, conducting and the composition of Irish choral music since 1954.

CONCLUSION

With a lack of musical infrastructure in Ireland at the time of the founding of the new state, Ireland lacked the support and opportunity to employ or hire professional musicians and teachers to educate the nation musically. For this reason, choral and group singing may have sparked an interest as there were few costs involved, and performances could be managed within a short timeframe. Observing the growth of singing groups in Ireland, the Cork International Choral Festival felt it essential to offer performance opportunities to choristers of all levels and abilities. As *Feis Ceoil* never made its way to Cork as initially intended, the Festival in Cork helped to encourage and influence choral singing and the performance of pieces by Irish composers and in the Irish language.

Originally a festival for choral singing and folk-dancing, the Cork International Choral Festival has grown to become a prominent choral festival worldwide. Since its establishment, the Festival has offered new competitions, non-competitive platforms, and many educational opportunities to singers, conductors, and composers of Irish choral music. At the 2019 Festival, 5064 performers gathered in Cork for competitive and non-competitive reasons, with 4384 hailing from Ireland. The founder, Aloys Fleischmann, aimed for the Festival to enhance the training of musicians associated with choral music. From the evidence of this research, his aim has been achieved. The thesis has addressed the paucity of research on the Festival's role in promoting choral singing, conducting and composition in Ireland, by highlighting its many educational opportunities, and drawing on the insights of Festival participants, past and present.

With each Festival director committed to the development and training of choral singers, conductors and composers, the Festival has grown as an essential platform for participating choirs. The many competitions initiated by each director have provided opportunities for all singing groups and choirs to flourish and improve their abilities. On examination of the Festival programmes, it is clear that choirs keep returning to the Festival. The quotes of the survey respondents added depth to these explorations, highlighting how the Festival offers the opportunity to develop skills and a sense of community in a choral setting.

2019 saw the most significant number of entries to the Ireland's Choir of the Year competition (eight choirs in total), many of which are Ireland's finest amateur choirs. This competition and the Festival encourage choirs to enter because of their prestige, and participants' knowledge that adjudication will be conducted fairly and on the same level as the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition. Since 2011, the Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition has provided the training and experience for Irish choirs to commit to partaking in various international competitions.

The Seminar on New Choral Music, the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, and the Composer in the Classroom Scheme have helped to increase the amount of Irish choral music composition as part of the Festival. The Seminar on New Choral Music examines the Festival's commissions, ensuring that new choral music is being composed each year. The Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition has greatly helped with adding to the repertoire of Irish choral music. Some works from this competition are rarely performed. However, many pieces are performed at the Fleischmann

International Trophy Competition and the Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition. Michael Holohan's *Bagairt na Marbh*, a winning piece of the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition, has featured in both competitions, performed by various choirs. This piece may not have been composed if it were not for the opportunity presented by the Cork International Choral Festival.

The post-primary school competitions are also responsible for the composition of Irish choral music. The case study of Ben Hanlon in chapter three is a testament to the influence of the Festival. Without the requirements of and the issues associated with the Irish language piece, Hanlon, among others, may not have begun composing or may not have received commissions from choirs. *Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost* can be used to illustrate how the Festival has influenced composers to write new choral music for performance. Initially written for male voices, this piece has appeared in many competitions in SATB voicing. Hanlon is one of many composers composing specifically for the Festival; however, it is evident from this case study that the Festival has influenced the creation of many new works of Irish choral music.

With a wealth of pieces commissioned and composed for performance at the post-primary school competitions, examining the pieces in detail concerning vocal production will help singers and conductors improve their abilities. Using the score as a pedagogical manipulative can help singers understand musical elements and meaning of the piece and help gain a greater understanding and enjoyment while singing in a choir.

Organisations such as Music Generation offer performance opportunities for school aged children; however none are linked to the teaching of music fundamentals, an essential skill to possess when developing a nation of choral singers. The City of Derry International Choir Festival has recruited Kodály Inspired Music Education Specialist and Creative Learning Director of the National Youth Choirs of Scotland, Lucinda Geoghegan.¹ The Festival in Derry offers musicians and primary teachers free workshops in developing music literacy skills in students in hope of being involved with the Festival.

The Festival is credited with influencing many singers and conductors to enhance their skills. Many participants have commented that simply attending the competitions and concerts has influenced them in different choral singing and conducting contexts. Through exposure to the national and international choirs performing at the Festival, participants can note choral sound, choreography, conducting gesture and repertoire that they can strive towards in their practice. Participants in the survey have offered their experiences of how the Festival has helped them to develop as choral singers, conductors and composers. The information received offers personal accounts from those with many years of experience performing at and attending the Festival. While many of the participants began competing at the Festival in the schools' competitions, they still partake as either singers or conductors, or in the process of having their works performed by choirs. Many singers, conductors and administrators have a long-standing

¹ Anon, 'Sounds of Singing Workshops', <<https://derrychoirfest.com/2021-festival/lucinda-geoghegan-workshops.php>> [accessed 22 June 2021].

relationship with the Festival and credit it with being an essential factor in their continuous development as choral enthusiasts.

Masterclasses and workshops held by professionals also aid the development of each participant as a singer and/or conductor. These educational opportunities would not be possible if it were not for the Festival's association with Sing Ireland. Sing Ireland organises many events, webinars, and workshops to develop choral singers and conductors in Ireland. As a result of the Festival, Sing Ireland also administers the Annual International Conducting School and the Irish Youth and Training Choirs. Had it not been for the dedication of the Festival and commitment of Geoffrey Spratt and Aiveen Kearney in forming these organisations, choral singing and conducting may not have developed as it has in Ireland.²

With the COVID-19 Pandemic bringing choral singing to a halt in 2020, the knock-on effects led to the cancellation of the in-person version of the Festival in 2020 and 2021. However, being committed to offering the opportunity to perform and to enhance choral music, the Festival offered competitions in different formats. Online entries and virtual performances replaced live performances around Cork City. While live performances are incomparable to online performances or virtual choirs, the Cork International Choral Festival and its administration team are ensuring that the Festival continues to offer competitive and non-competitive opportunities to choirs in Ireland and internationally, no matter their size, abilities or denomination.

² It must be noted that the commitment of all directors and administrators has helped the Festival grow.

The arts have suffered dramatically due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Choral singing, worldwide has been decimated. Choirs switched to online platforms such as Zoom for rehearsals when restrictions were imposed. Online platforms did not suit many singers who enjoyed singing for social reasons. The strong sense of community the Festival has forged was very much alive in Cork, and therefore, it is vital for choral singing that this can take place in person, rather than in online spaces, for the future.

The Festival has changed over time, allowing new opportunities for broader participation. It has also helped to build a lasting legacy as a promoter of choral music. From its inception in 1954, the Cork International Choral Festival has aimed to promote, develop and influence choral music in Ireland. It can be presumed that the Festival will continue to offer every opportunity possible to choirs in Ireland and beyond in the years to come.

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Appendix A

The Influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singing and Composition in Ireland

Participant Information Sheet

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

I am a student on the Doctor in Music Performance (DMusPerf) programme at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin, and I will be writing a thesis titled, 'The Influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singing and Composition in Ireland'. I am a choral conductor and Kodály inspired music educator. The aim of this study is to identify the influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on choral singing, training of conductors and choral compositions in Ireland. This study is being undertaken as part of my DMusPerf and is one of the requirements I must complete to be awarded this degree.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Taking part will involve answering questions in relation to the Cork International Choral Festival. Questions will focus on the role of the Cork International Choral

Festival in influencing choral singing and composition in Ireland. I am asking conductors, adjudicators, choral singers and administrators that have been engaged with the Festival to take part.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are being invited as I feel your experiences with, knowledge of and participation at the Cork International Choral Festival will greatly enhance the research.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation in this research is voluntary and you may refuse participation. If you decide to take part, you may refuse to answer any question and withdraw at any time without consequence.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The knowledge and opinions shared will add to the realisation of how choral music and composition in Ireland have been influenced by the Cork International Choral Festival. Risks may arise in opinions about certain aspects of the Festival. I will, however, check all information with you.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Information collected may be used as part of the thesis. With permission, information may be included and referenced in the thesis. Non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms are collected and retained as part of the research process. The

information will be presented anomalously with reference to the role of the participant
(Conductor A, Administer B etc.)

**HOW WILL THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED
AND PROTECTED?**

The information received from this research will be stored on a personal hard drive.

The only persons to view this information in its entirety will be myself and my
supervisor Professor Denise Neary.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The information gathered is for the sole purpose of the dissertation, ‘The Influence of
the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singing and Composition in Ireland’,
for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Music
Performance, Royal Irish Academy of Music.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Fearghal Ó’Conchubhair

Royal Irish Academy of Music

fearghaloconchubhair@riam.ie

Professor Denise Neary

Royal Irish Academy of Music

deniseneary@riam.ie

**The Influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singing and
Composition in Ireland**

Consent to take part in research

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data within two weeks after my submission of answers, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering a number of questions with regard to the influence of the Cork International Choral Festival on Choral Singing and Composition in Ireland.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I understand that my information may be used in this study and if so, will be referenced.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms will be retained on a personal hard drive and will only be accessed by the researcher and his academic supervisor until the exam board confirms the results of this thesis.
- I understand that the information I send to the researcher will be retained for a maximum of two years from the date of examination.
- I understand that under the freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Fearghal Ó Conchubhair
 BMus
 Kodály Certification (OAKE)
 M.Ed
 Royal Irish Academy of Music
fearghaloconchubhair@riam.ie
 0851490358
 Professor Denise Neary
deniseneary@riam.ie

Signature of research participant

 Signature of participant

 Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in the study

 Signature of researcher

 Date

Appendix B

As a Choral Composer

1. Do you feel that the Cork International Choral Festival has enhanced and influenced the composition of Irish choral music? If so, how?
2. Has the exposure of national and international choirs performing repertoire from various parts of the world at the Cork International Choral Festival influenced your own choral compositions?
3. What attracted you to applying for the Seán Ó Riada Composition Competition?
4. Have you attended any of the Seminars on New Choral Music at the Cork International Choral Festival, and if so, how has it impacted you as a composer?

As a Choral Conductor

1. Do you feel that the Cork international Choral Festival has enhanced and influenced the training of choral singers, choral conductors, and composers of choral music in Ireland? If so, how?
2. Do you think that the Cork International Choral Festival is attractive to choral groups? If so, how?
3. Have you found that the non-competitive aspects of the Festival have had a positive impact for choirs outside of the competitive platform? If so, how?
4. What feedback and reactions have you, as a conductor, received from choir members after attending the Festival?
5. Have you found the adjudication remarks have been useful and constructive in your continued choral work?

6. Has attending the Festival as a conductor influenced your own musical taste and the choosing of repertoire for your choir? If so, how?
7. Has the exposure to national and international choirs at the Festival inspired you and your choir members to further develop choral skills? If so, how?
8. Do you think the administration, volunteers, and general organisation of the Festival aids the development, progression and on-going success of the Festival? If so, how?
9. Which competitions at the Cork International Choral Festival do you choose to enter and why?
10. Has your choir ever felt restricted in the choosing of Contemporary Irish choral music for competition at the Festival? If so, why?
11. Do you think there are benefits of a competitive platform such as the Cork International Choral Festival? If so, what are they?
12. Do you think there are downfalls of a competitive platform such as the Cork International Choral Festival? If so, what are they?

As a Choral Singer

1. Do you feel that the Cork international Choral Festival has enhanced and influenced the training of choral singers, choral conductors, and composers of choral music in Ireland? If so, how?
2. Why do you think that the Cork International Choral Festival is attractive to choral singers?
3. Have you performed at the non-competitive events of the Cork International Choral Festival? If so, has that had a positive impact on your experience as a

choral singer attending the Festival, and if not, do you think this aspect is worthwhile?

4. Has the exposure to national and international choirs at the Festival inspired you to further develop your choral training? If so, how?
5. Has the exposure to national and international choirs at the Festival diversified your taste in choral music? If so, how?
6. What do you think are benefits of competing at a leading choral festival such as the Cork International Choral Festival?
7. What do you think are downfalls of competing at a leading choral festival such as the Cork International Choral Festival?

As a Festival Administrator

1. Do you feel that the Cork international Choral Festival has enhanced and influenced the training of choral singers, choral conductors, and composers of choral music in Ireland? If so, how?
2. What do you feel are the skills necessary for running a festival such as the Cork International Choral Festival?
3. Why do you think that the Cork International Choral Festival is attractive to choral singers?
4. Have you found that the non-competitive aspects of the Festival have had a positive impact for choirs outside of the competitive platform? If so, how?
5. Do you think there are benefits of a competitive platform such as the Cork International Choral Festival? If so, what are they?

6. Do you think there are downfalls of a competitive platform such as the Cork International Choral Festival? If so, what are they?

Appendix C

Works using Irish text performed at the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition and Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition 2014-2019

Fleischmann International Trophy Competition

- 2019 – *Bagairt na Marbh* – Michael Holohan
- 2018 – *Bagairt na Marbh* – Michael Holohan
- 2018 – *Suantraí* – Rhona Clarke
- 2017 – No Irish language pieces performed
- 2016 – No Irish language pieces performed
- 2015 – *Molaimis go léir an tAon Mhac Críost* – Ben Hanlon
- 2014 – *Alleluia: Incantations* – Michael mcGlynn

Ireland's Choir of the Year Competition

- 2019 – *Fornocht do Chonac Thú* – Cristóir Ó Loinsigh
- 2018 – *Molaimis go Léir an tAon Mhac Críost* – Ben Hanlon
- 2018 – *Scél Lemm Dúib* – Cristóir Ó Loinsigh
- 2017 – *Bagairt na Marbh* – Michael Holohan
- 2017 – *Dúlaman* – Michael McGlynn
- 2017 – *Geannttraí* – Michael McGlynn
- 2016 – *Fáilte Don Éan* – Kevin O' Connell
- 2015 – *Géibheann* – Rhona Clarke
- 2015 – *Bagairt na Marbh* – Michael Holohan
- 2014 – *Molaimis go Léir an tAon Mhac Críost* – Ben Hanlon
- 2014 – *Cnámh* – Rhona Clarke

Appendix D

Choirs in Ireland – 1680 to 1951³

- The Hibernian Catch Club (1680) – A.T.B.B. 20. *Conductor*: G. H. P. Hewson, MA., D.Mus., F.R.C.O.
- University of Dublin Choral Society (1837) – S.A.T.B. 120. *Conductor*: Joseph Grocock, B.A., B.Mus. (Oxon.)
- The Strollers' Club (1865) – T.T.B.B. 24. Dublin *Conductor*: T. H. Weaving, F.R.I.A.M.
- Cork Municipal School of Music Choir (1878) – S.S.T.B. 85. *Conductor*: J. T. Horne, B.Mus., A.R.C.O.
- Culwick Choral Society, Dublin (previously the Orpheus Choral Society)⁴ (1898) – S.T.A.B. 82. *Conductor*: Mrs. Alice Yoakley, L.R.A.M.
- The Clef Club, Dublin (1905) – A.T.B.B. 30. *Conductor*: William J. Watson, M.A., B.Mus., F.R.C.O.
- The Choir of the Music Society, University College, Dublin (1917) – S.A.T.B. 80. *Conductor*: J. F. Larchet, D.Mus, F.R.I.A.M.
- St Fin Barre's Cathedral Oratorio Society, Cork (1923) – S.A.T.B. 60. *Conductor*: J. T. Horne, B.Mus., A.R.C.O.
- Cór Chraobh an Chéitinnigh (Choir of the Keating Beanch, Gaelic League), Dublin (1932) – S.A.T.B. 55. *Conductor*: Sean Cremer
- Cór Club na Múinteoirí (Teachers' Club Male Choir), Dublin (1936) – T. T. B. B. *Conductor*: Mrs. Agnes Boylan
- Clontarf Choral Society, Dublin (1940) – S.A.T.B. 65. *Conductor*: Sidney Bryans
- Wexford Male Voice Choir, Wexford (1941) – T.T.B.B. 40. *Conductor*: John Clancy
- Cór Radio Éireann, Dublin (1943) – S.A.T.B. 24. *Conductor*: Various including Sir Hugh Robertson, Capt. Michael Bowles, Dr Arthur Duff, Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, Mrs. Agnes Boylan, Mrs. Alice Yoakley, Robert Howie, Dr H Waldemar Rosen.⁵
- The Tramore Singers, Waterford (1943) – S.A.T.B. 30. *Conductor*: Mrs. Stella Jacob
- Our Lady's Choral Society, Dublin (1945) – S.A.T.B., 305. *Choirmaster*: Oliver O'Brien, B.Mus.
- University Choral Society, Cork, and Aeolian Choir, Cork (1945) – S.A.T.B. 120. *Conductor*: Aloys Fleischmann, M.A., B.Mus.
- St. Fiacc's Male Voice Choir, Carlow (1946) – T.T.B.B. 30. *Conductor*: Aidan Murray
- Cór Chois Laoi, Cork (1947) – S.A.T.B. 40. *Conductor*: Pilib Ó Laoghaire
- The Cecilian Singers, Sligo (1949) – S.A.T.B. 95 *Conductor*: Proinsias Ó Súilleabháin
- Radio Éireann Men's Octet, Dublin (1949) – T.T.B.B. *Conductor*: Dr. H. Waldemar Rosen
- An Cór Laoidheogach, Dublin (1950) – S.S.A.T.B. *Conductor*: Dr. H. Waldemar Rosen

³ Fachtna Ó hAnnracháin, 'Choral Singing in Ireland', in A. Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 240-241.

⁴ Bernie Sherlock, 'Contemporary Irish Choral Music and an Outline of its Historical Origins' (DMusPerf dissertation, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Trinity College Dublin, 2018), 95.

⁵ Séumas Ó Braonáin, 'Music in the Broadcasting Service', in Aloys Fleischmann (ed.), *Music in Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 205.

The Thirteens Musical Society, Dublin (1951) – S.A.T.B. *Conductor*: Michael O’Higgins.

Appendix E

Winning pieces from the Seán Ó Riada Competitions

Year	Winner	Composer	Comments
1972	Caintairí Choláiste na hOllscoile, Gallamh	Réamonn Ó Frighíl	Non composition competition, Choir award (performance)
1973	Caintairí Choláiste na hOllscoile, Gallamh	Pilib Ó Laoghaire	Non composition competition, Choir award (performance)
1974	St. Stephen's Singers, UCD	Derek Bell	Non composition competition, Choir award (performance)
1975	Caintairí Choláiste na hOllscoile, Gallamh	Seán Ó Riada	Non composition competition, Choir award (performance)
Year	Composer	Title of piece	Comments
1976	Joint Winners: O'Leary, Jane and Dawney, Michael	no mention	Composition Competition, no performance
1977	de Bromhead, Jerome	no mention	Composition Competition, no performance
1978	de Bromhead, Jerome	no mention	Composition Competition, no performance
1979	de Barra, Séamas	Achinn Aluinn	Performance award, composer commissioned
1980	Cutts, Alan	An tEarrach Thiar	Performance award, composer commissioned
1981	de Barra, Séamas	An Tonn	Performance award, composer commissioned
1982	Holohan, Michael	Bagairt na Marbh	Performance award, composer commissioned
1983	No Award		Performance award, composer commissioned
1984	Clarke, Rhona	Suantraí Ghráinne	Performance award, composer commissioned
1985	Kelly, Hugh	Treall	Performance award, composer commissioned
1986	McGlynn, Michael	Triar Laoch	Performance award, composer commissioned
1987	No Entries		Performance award, composer commissioned
1988	O'Connell, Kevin	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
1989	No Award		Performance award, composer commissioned
1990	McGlynn, Michael	Díriugh bhar sleagha sealga	Performance award, composer commissioned
1991	Sinnott, Andrew	Na Blátha Craige	Performance award, composer commissioned

1992	No Entries		Performance award, composer commissioned
1993	Ingoldsby, Marian	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
1994	O'Connor, John	Guthanna	Performance award, composer commissioned
1995	Ó'Dubhghaill, Brian	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
1996	Victory, Gerard	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
1997	Judge, Maria	Faoiseamh a Gheobhadsa	Performance award, composer commissioned
1998	Garvey, Frank	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
1999	Hynes, Oliver	no mention	Performance award, composer commissioned
2000	Keane, Mark	Salve 94	Performance award, composer commissioned
2001	No Festival		
2002	No Competition		
2003	No Competition		
2004	No Competition		No Seminar
2005	No Competition		No Seminar
2006	No Competition		No Seminar
2007	No Competition		No Seminar
2007	No Competition		
2008	No Competition		
2009	No Competition		
2010	Mac Hale, Simone	With Heart and Soul and Voice	
2011	Connolly, Patrick	Geimhridh	
2012	Corcoran, Frank	Two Unholy Haikus	
2013	Carlile, Solfa	Upon the Rose	
2014	McErlaine, Donal	Solomon Grundy	
2015	Desmond, Eoghan	Mother Goose's Melodies	
2016	Feery, Amanda	Changed Utterly	
2017	Ó Loingsigh, Cristóir	Scél Lemm Dúib	
2018	Sarsfield, Donal	A Grain in the Balance	
2019	May, James	Steet after Street alike	
2020	Leavy, Peter	It will not depart	

2021	Walsh, Norah	On a Quiet Day in the Future	
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Appendix F

Equal Voice Post Primary School's Competition Pieces

Composer	Work	Years Performed
Buckley, Frank	Seoithin Seó	2005
		2015
Buckley, Irene	An Lon Dubh Báite	2010
		2018
Buckley, John	Si Éire An D'Tír-se	1999
Clarke, Rhona	Géibhinn	1999
		2002
		2005
		2007
		2009
		2012
		2013
		2015
		2017
	Thugamar Féin anSamhradh linn	2002
		2005
		2007
		2010
		2013
	Mo Pháistín Fionn	2003
		2006
	Bean Phaidín	2006
	Síofra Sí	2009
		2013
		2014
		2016
	Sneachta	2012
Colgan, Orla	Slán le Maigh	2009
Creamer, Sean	Beidh Aonach Amárach	2004
Cutts, Alan	Suantraí	2010
De Barra, Seámus	Óigbhean A Chanaim	1997
		2003
	An tAibreáin	2006
		2007
	Íosagán	2014
	Oíche Nollag	2015
	A sailín Pharais	2018

De Bruch, Brenda	Slán le Maigh	2002
De Noraid, Liam	An Dreóilín	2002
De Regge	Samhradh	2004
Early, Desmond	Mo Ghile Mear	2018
Feeley, Ephrem	Táimse im' Chodhladh	2013
Fleischmann, Aloys	Cill Chais	2002
		2003
		2007
		2009
		2010
		2012
Garnett, Liz	Fill, Fill a Rúin	2018
Georg, Bernard	Éist le Fuaim na hAbhann	2003
Gibson, John	Éana	2013
		2014
Goldman, Maurice	Ya Ba Bom	2012
Hanlon, Ben	Treall	2002
	Fite Fuaite	2005
		2012
	Caife Gaelach	2015
		2016
	Ár nAthair	2003
		2016
	Beannacht na hÓiche	2006
	Mo Ghile Mear	2017
	Preab san ól	2018
	Psalm 139	2019
	A Íosa	2007
Hardebec, Carl	An Chúilfhionn	2002
		2006
	Duh, Duh, Eirigh ligeas Ó	2002
	Bán chnoic Eireann Ó	2004
Holohan, Michael	Deus Meus	2004
		2005
		2006
Hayden, Mary	Habháin	2005
		2016
Hynes, Oliver	Fothrach Tí i min na Craoibhe	2002
	Deus Meus Adiuva Me	2004
		2007
Ingoldsby, Marian	Sé do bheatha a Mhuire	2002

		2005
	Fuinneamh	2015
Judge, Maria	Stiúrthóir Cóir	2002
Kehoe, Damien	Amhráin na Gaoithe	2014
Kelly, Mark	Deirín Dé	2002
	Táimse im Chodladh	2003
Larchet, John Francis	Ailliliú Na Gamhan	2003
Magner, Emily	Sí Bláth Geal na Sméar í	2005
		2019
Magner, Gemma	Bí A Íosa	2007
	Rince	2014
McGlynn, Michael	Incantations	2005
		2014
		2016
	Geanntaí	2003
		2004
		2006
		2007
		2014
		2016
		2017
		2018
		2019
	Hinbarra	2015
	Dúlaman	2003
		2004
		2005
		2015
		2017
		2019
	Ceann Dubh Dílis	2004
		2005
		2016
		2017
		2018
	Fionnghuala	2017
	Cúnnia	2019
	Sí Do Mhaimeo í	2002
		2007
		2019

Mooney, David	Téir Abhaile Riú	2003
		2006
		2015
	Beidh Aonach Amárach	2003
		2006
	Ardaigh Cuain	2015
Moynihan, Deirdre	An Raibh tú ag an gCarraig	2017
Murphy, John Francis	Bean Pháidín	2014
	Na Blátha Craige	2005
		2006
Ní Laoi, Áine	Caoineadh na dTrí Muire	2006
O' Brian, Oliver	Slán le Maigh	2005
O'Carroll, Fintan	Suantraí ár Slánitheoir	2007
		2014
		2017
Ó Ceallaigh, Noel	An Spéic Saoigheach	2003
Ó Ceallaigh, Prionsios	Maidean I mBéarra	2002
		2005
	Suantraí	2004
	An Fhuiseog sa Spéir	2005
		2006
	Ding Dong Dedéro	2006
Ó Frighal, Réamonn	Cuach Mo Iondubh Buí	2003
Ó Gallchobhair, Éamonn	Nuair a Nocht an Chéad Reált	2002
	Don Óiche Úd I mBeithil	2002
	A Bhean Úd Thíos	2003
	Fill, Fill, A Rúin Ó	2003
		2004
		2005
	Suantraí na Maighdine	2004
	Tá an Coileach ag Fógairt and Lae	2014
	Dún Do Shúil a Rún mo Chroí	2007
Ó Hanracháin, Fachtna	Bean Pháidín	2005
	Dún do Shúile	2006
O'Neill,R	Dulúmán	2007
O'Sullivan, Veronica	Frinseach Thí Róin	2014
	Dilín Ó Deamhas	2016

Quigley, Thomas	Éiníní	2018
Sexton, Ian	Bí A Íosa	2004
Spevacek, Linda	Maidin I mBearra	2014
Victory, Gerald	Dilín Ó Deamhas	2004
		2005

Appendix G

Mixed Voice Post Primary Schools' Repertoire in the Irish Language

Composer	Work	Years Performed
Anon	Huis a bálú	2003
Ahern, Fr. P	Fáilte an Linbh	2012
Barry, Anne	Suantraí Gráinne	1997
Bodley, Seoirse	Cúll an Tí	2002
	Laoi chánte and Tombac	2003
	Laoidhe Cháinte an Tombac	2004
Casey, John	Tá Na Báid	1997
		2007
Davey, Shaun	Bealtine na Maighdine	2009
De Barra, Seamus	An Chraobh Chrom	2005
		2010
	An Tonn	2006
		2007
Flannagan O.P., Fr. Henry	Amhrán na Cuiginne	1999
Fleischmann, Aloys	Cill Chais	1997
Frost, Catherine	Sí do Mhaimeó í	2012
Frost, Paul	Seachtain	1999
	Fiche Bliain ag Fás	2007
Hanlon, Ben	Molly na gCuach Ní Chuilleannáin	2000
		2005
		2009
		2014
	Do Bhíosa Lá I bPortláirge	2002
		2007
		2011
	An Speic Seoigheach	2003
		2004
	Beidh Aonach Amárach	2010
		2014
		2017
	Duilleoga	2011
	Fite Fuaite	2018
Hayden, Mary	Deus Meus Aduva Me	2002
		2004
		2008
		2010
Hardebec, Carl G.	Gáire Na mBan	1997
	Preab San Ól	1997
		2005

	Frínseach Tighe Róin	2002
		2004
Ingoldsby, Marian	Na Coisithe	2002
		2012
Kelly, T. C.	An RaibhTú ar an gCarraig	1999
		2004
		2016
Larchet, J.F.	Ceol Bhailean Dóire	1997
		2000
		2009
McGynn, Michael	Geantraí	2013
		2014
		2016
		2018
		2019
	Suantraí	2004
		2019
	Dúlaman	2012
		2018
		2019
	Fionnghuala	2016
	Sí Do Mhaimeo í	2016
		2017
Moynihan, Deirdre	Tá na Báid	2014
	Cuirfimid Dandy Dandy	2015
Murphy, John C.	A Mhuire na nGrás	2006
		2007
Ní Chonáin, T Sr M.C.	Fornocht a Chonaic Thú	2002
O'Brien, Mary G	Canaimís Amhrán	2019
O' Carroll, Fintan	Suantraí	2017
		2019
Ó' Ceallaigh, Proinsias	Greadaig Troithe	2002
	Ding Dong Dederó	2004
O' Connor, John	Maidrín I mbéarra	2013
Ó' Gallchobhair, Éamonn	Duan Nollag	1997
	Bí A Íosa Im Croise	2002
		2005
		2006
	Cór Na Síog	2007
		2010
	Fáinne Geal an Lae	1999
		2005
	Nead na Lachan	2004

		2009
Ó' Laoghaire, Pilib	Éirigi Suas a Thoagha na bhFear	1999
		2010
Ó' Suilleabháin, Michael	Planxty Irwin	2009
Scanlon, Greg	Beannachtaí an Mháithair	2006
	Óiche	2007
		2011
Weedle, M	Túirne Mháire	2007
		2011
Victory, Gerard	Sliabh Geal gCua	1997
		2000
		2002
		2006
		2011
		2017

Appendix H

Works by Irish Composers performed in the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition

Composer	Work	Year
Ahern, Pat	A' Josu Mhilis	1999
Armstrong, Mark	Thread Softly	2018
Bates, Liam	Angel	2012
Bodlaí, Seoirse	Go Scaraig An Lacha	
	Nocturne of the Self-Evident Presence	2011
Buckley, John	Jabberwocky	2015
Clarke, Rhona	The Old Woman	2017
	Suantraí	2018
Cutts, Alan	Psalm 97	2005
De Barra, Seamus	Magnificat	2003
	Gloria	2009
Doherty, Lorcan	Aigne Trí Chiathar	2012
Doherty, Sean	Et Clamabant	2014
	A Crazy Girl	2016
	Dreams	2016
	A Nywe Werk	2017
Fleischmann, Aloys	Illumina Oculos Meos	2012
Hanlon, Ben	Molaimis go leir an tAon-Mhac Criost	2009
		2015
	O Frondens Virga	2010
Holohan, Michael	Bagairt na Marbh	2005
		2013
		2018
		2019
Ingoldsby, Marian	Lament	2007
	Evening so Still	2006
Judge, Maria	Coinnle Ar Lasadh	2000
McGlynn, Michael	Incantations	2010
		2014
Mawby, Colin	Hodie Christus Natus Est	2004
Moeran, E.J.	To Daffodils	2011
Murray, E.N.	Beannacht	2011
Ní Dhubhghaill, Caitríona	Is naofa thú	2008
O'Connell, Kevin	Fáilte Don Éan	2000
		2004
		2007
Ó Frighil, Réamonn	Casadh Cam na Feardanaí	2004

Stanford, C.V	Bluebird	2005
	Beati Quorum Via	2009
Wilson, Ian	Limbo	2002
	Nine birds here	2008
Wilson, James	Frost at Evening	2006
Victory, Gerard	The Organ	2012

Appendix I

Third Level Institution Choirs.

UCD Choral Scholars

Desmond Earley founded the University College Dublin Choral Scholars in 1999.⁶ The choir has become one of the leading choral groups in the country, performing worldwide and collaborating with orchestras, notably the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, European Union Chamber Orchestra, and working with composers such as Hans Zimmer and Ennio Morricone.⁷ The choir has also been awarded first prize at the Cork International Choral Festival's Church Music competition on their latest visit to Cork in 2013.⁸

BMused

BMused was a short-lived chamber group consisting of students of the Bachelor of Music Education degree of Trinity College Dublin and the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatoire of Music and Drama and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.⁹ This group enjoyed success at the revival of the Choral Intervarsity Competition (a competition held at Trinity College Dublin in 2012 between choirs of third level institutions) and at the Cork International Choral Festival's Chamber Choir Competition in 2013 while also competing at the festival in 2014.¹⁰

⁶ Anon, 'About', <<https://www.ucdchoralscholars.ie/about>> [accessed 17 March 2020].

⁷ Anon, 'About', <<https://www.ucdchoralscholars.ie/about>> [accessed 17 March 2020].

⁸ Cork International Choral Festival Programmes, 2013-2019.

⁹ Known as Technological University Dublin since 2019.

¹⁰ Anon, 'Cork International Choral Festival booklet results page' <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/results-2013/>> [accessed 8 April 2020].

CIT Chamber Choir

The Cork Institute of Technology Chamber Choir was in operation from 2011 until 2015. In its four years as a choir, CIT Chamber Choir were highly successful in both the Chamber Choir and Sacred Music Competitions at the Cork International Choral Festival, while also being awarded other honours at the festival in consecutive years.¹¹ This choir focused their year in performing and competing at the Cork International Choral Festival.

Capella Lyrica

Capella Lyrica is a female voice choir based at the Munster Technological University, Cork School of Music. Formed in 2010, it gave its first public performance in 2011 as part of the school's performance of Benjamin Britten's Saint Nicolas Cantata.¹² Cappella Lyrica prides itself on the performance of commissioned and newly composed repertoire in the Irish Language. This choir has found success on numerous occasions at the Cork International Choral Festival, among others.¹³

DIT Chamber Choir

The Dublin Institute of Technology (now Technological University Dublin) Chamber choir has had many successes under its current conductor, Bernie Sherlock. The choir consists of auditioned full – time and part – time students studying at the conservatory of music. The choir has been awarded many prizes at *Feis Ceoil*, Dublin and the Cork International Choral Festival.

¹¹ In 2014, the CIT Chamber Choir was awarded the John Mannion Trophy for the performance of a piece in the national competitions.

¹² Anon, 'Cappella Lyrica', < <https://csm.cit.ie/cappella> > [accessed 17 March 2020].

¹³ Anon, 'Cappella Lyrica', < <https://csm.cit.ie/cappella> > [accessed 17 March 2020].

Maynooth University Chamber Choir

The Maynooth University Chamber Choir is one of Ireland's leading institutional choirs. The choir tours the world regularly and often partakes in competitions, including the Cork International Choral Festival. The choir's highest accomplishment was winning the Choir of the World at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 2015.

Choirs of University College Cork

The University College Cork Choral Society was formed in 1937. Having adapted the original choir's format, there are now two choirs in existence: the UCC Singers, a choir formed to travel abroad to compete at competitions and festivals in other countries, and the UCC Choral Society. Geoffrey Spratt formed the UCC Choir in 1976. The objectives of these groups are to promote the art of choral singing throughout the university. The UCC Singers and Choral Society offer conductors opportunities at the early stages of their careers to lead the choirs. In recent years, the UCC Singers have gained much success at the Cork International Choral Festival competitions, while most recently gaining first place at the Church Music Competition at the 2019 festival.¹⁴

¹⁴ Anon, '2019 Competition Results and Awards', <<https://www.corkchoral.ie/2019-competition-results-awards/>> [accessed 24 June 2021].

S.1
S.2
A.

crain - te is coil - le tráh le mo gháir
crain - te is coil - le tráh le mo gháir chroídhín

chroídhín crain - te na
crain - te na coil - le tráh chroídhín crain - te na coil - le tráh

Poco più mosso e cresc.

coil - le leim síos ag - us breath - naim trí
ach a - nois leim síos ag - us breath - naim trí

A tempo

leath - sháil ar an gearr an - raic sin thall Tag - ann
leath - sháil ar an gearr an - raic sin thall Tag - ann

Poco Meno Mosso

S.1
 S.2
 A.

na céad - ta daoín - e chuí - le lí *mp*
 na céad - ta daoín - e chuí - le lí a dhéan - fadh rud ar *mp*
 na céad - ta daoín - e chuí - le lí aís mhí mé

mf
 a dhéan - fadh rud ar bith dom
 bith dom a dhéan - fadh rud ar bith dom rud ar bith dom aís mhí mé
 aís mhí mé aís mhí mé aís mhí mé aís mhí mé aís mhí mé

stringendo *mf*
 ach mé a lig - san a - mach mé a ligean amach
 ach mé a lig - san a - mach aís mhí aís mhí mé aís mhí
 ach mé a lig - san a - mach aís mhí aís mhí mé aís mhí

p *molto* *ff*
 mé a ligean mach aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí al - ta
 aís mhí mé aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí al - ta
 aís mhí mé aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí aís mhí al - ta

-3-

Appendix K

Ár nAthair – Ben Hanlon

Ar nAthair
TTBB
Ceol le Ben O hAnluain F.S.C.

♩ = 50

The musical score is for a four-part setting of 'Ar nAthair' (Our Father) in Irish. It is written for Tenor I, Tenor II, Baritone, and Bass (TTBB). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 50. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-5, and the second system covers measures 6-9. Dynamics include *pp*, *ppp*, and *f*. The lyrics are in Irish: 'Ar nAth-air a - tá ar neamh, go nao-far d'ai - nm, go dta - do ríocht, go ndéan - tar do thoil ar an dta - lamh mar a'.

Tenor I
Ar nAth-air a - tá ar neamh, go nao-far d'ai - nm, go

Tenor II
Ar nAth-air a - tá ar neamh, go nao-far d'ai - nm, go

Baritone
Ah *ppp*

Bass
Ah *ppp*

6
T. *f*
dta - do ríocht, go ndéan - tar do thoil ar an dta - lamh mar a

T. *f*
dta - do ríocht, do ndéan-tar do thoil ar an dta - lamh mar a

Bar. *f*
mar a

B. *f*
mar a

Move on a little ♩ = 80

9

T. *mf* *pp* *p*
 ni - thear ar neamh. Mm

T. *mf* *pp* *p*
 ni - thear ar neamh. Mm

Bar. *freelymf*
 Ar n'ar-áin lae thúil tabhair

B. *mf* *pp* *p*
 ni - thear ar neamh. Mm

14

T. *Mm* *Mm*

T. *Mm* *Mm*

Bar. dúinn in - niu... a-gus maith... duinn ár bhfi - a - cha mar amhaith-i -

B. *Mm* *Mm*

Tempo 1 ♩ = 50

19

T. *ppp* A's, a's, a's ná lig sinn i gca-

T. *ppp* A's, a's, a's ná lig sinn i gca-

Bar. mid dár bhfeí. chiú-na féin, —

B. *ppp* A's, a's ná lig sinn i gca, *ppp* A's, a's ná lig sinn i gca,

4

24

f

T. thú, ná lig sinn i gca - thú ach saor

T. thú, ná lig sinn i gca - thú ach saor

Bar. ah

B. ah

29

pp *ppp*

T. sinn ó olc. A - - men.

T. sinn olc. A - - men.

Bar. A - - men.

B. A - - men.

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Appendix L

Molaimis go léir an tAon-Mhac Críost – Ben Hanlon

Molaimís go leir an tAon-Mhac Críost

SSAATTBB a cappella

Ben Hanlon

Tradisiúnta

Presto *ppp*

Soprano *ppp* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

Alto *ppp* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

Tenor

Bass

4 *pp*

S. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. *pp* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

T.

B.

7 *mp*

S. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. *p* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

T. *pp* Mo-lai-mís mo-lai-mís, *p* mo-lai-mís,

B. *pp* Mo-lai-mís mo-lai-mís, *p* mo-lai-mís,

BH 2008

10

S. *mf*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. *mf*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

T. *mp*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

B. *mp*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

13

S. *f* *ff*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. *f* *ff*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

T. *mf* *f*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

B. *mf* *f*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

16

S. *fff*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mol!

A. *fff*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mol!

T. *ff*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

B. *ff*
mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís, mo-lai-mís,

19 *p*

S. *p*
Oo

A. *p*
Oo

T. *p*
Oo

B. *p* *mf*
oo ————— Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

24 *mf*

S.

A.

T. *mf*
Mo lai-mís go léir an tAon Mhac Criost, ——— A cheann - aigh go daor_ ar an

B. *mf*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai - mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

27

S. *pp*
Mo-lai- mís, mo- la, mo-lai- mís, Mo-lai- mís, mo- la, mo-lai- mis.

A. *pp*
Mo-lai- mís, mo- la, mo-lai- mís, Mo-lai- mís, mo- la, mo-lai- mis.

T. *mp*
gcrois chéas-ta sinn. A thioc-faidh gan

B. *ppp*
Mo-lai- mís, mo- la, mo-lai- mis. Oo



31

T. *p*
baol_ dar saol a - rís. A thioc-faidh gan baol_ dar saol a - rís.

B. *p*
Mo - la!



38

S. *f*
Mo - lai - mís, mo - la! Mo - lai - mís, mo - la! Mo - lai - mís, mo - la!

A. *f*
Mo - lai - mís, mo - la! Mo - lai - mís, mo - la! Mo - lai - mís, mo - la!

T.

B. *f*
Mo - lai - mís, mo - la,

41 *cresc.* *ff*

S. Mo - lai - mís mo - la mo - lai - mís, Mo - lai - mís mo - la mo - lai - mís, *cresc.* *ff*

A. Mo - lai - mís, mo - la. mo - lai - mís, Mo - lai - mís, mo - la. mo - lai - mís, *cresc.* *ff*

T. Mo - lai - mís, mo - la. mo - lai - mís, Mo lai - mís, mo - la, mo - lai - mís,

B. *cresc.* *ff*
Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - lai - mís, Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - lai - mís,

43 *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *mf*

S. Oo

A. Oo

T. Oo

B. *subito p* *mf* A - le - lu-

Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mis.mo-la,mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mis.mo-la,Mo-lai-mís,

47

A.

T.

B.

ia. a - le - lu - ia! Mo-lai-mís,mo-la.

Basses divide by 3

p

Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,



53

T.

B.

mp
Slightly detached

legato

Gloi-re do Dhi-a, Gloi-re do Dhia, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna

Oo Oo Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna

Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna

Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna

58 *Slightly detached* *mf* *Legato* 7

T. hAr - da! *mf* Gloi-re do Dhi-a, Gloi-re do Dhi-a, Gloi-re do Dhi-a'sna hAr - da!

hAr - da! *mp* Oo Gloi-re do Dhi-a'sna hAr - da!

B. hAr - da *mp* Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a'sna hAr - da!

hAr - da Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a'sna hAr - da!



65 *Slightly detached* *mp*

S. Gloi-re do Dhi-a,

A. *p* Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,

T. *p* Oo

p Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,

B. *p* Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,

p Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la,

legato *mf*
Slightly detached

70

S. *Gloi-re do Dhi-a, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da! Gloi-re do Dhi-a,*

A. *Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da! Mo-lai-mís, mo-la,*

T. *Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da! Oo*

B. *Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da! Mo-lai-mís, mo-la,*

Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da! Mo-lai-mís, mo-la,



legato *f*
poco rit.

75

S. *Gloi-re do Dhi-a, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna har - da!*

A. *Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna har - da!*

T. *Gloi - re Dhi-a 'sna har - da!*

B. *mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna har - da!*

mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da

Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da

Presto

82 *ppp*

T. Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - la mo - lai - mís, Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - la mo - lai - mís,

B. Mm

84 *ppp*

T. Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - la, mo - lai - mís, Mo - lai - mís, mo - la, mo - la, mo - lai - mís,

B. Mm

86 *pp*

S. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la mo-lai-mís, Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la mo-lai-mís, *mp*

B. Mo - la, Mo - la, Mo - la, Mo la,

89

S. - - -

A. Mm

T. - - -

B. Mo - la, Mo la, Mo - la, Mo la, Mo - la, Mo la, Mo - la, Mo la, Mo - la, Mo la, Mo - la, Mo la,

92 *f*

S. *f*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la, mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la, mo-lai-mís,

A. *f*
Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la mo-lai-mís,

T. - - - - -

B. *f*
Mo - la, Mo la, la, Mo la, la, Mo la,
Mo - la, Mo la, la, Mo la, la, Mo - la,

95 *p*

S. *p*
Oo

A. *p*
Oo

T. *p*
Oo

B. *p*
Oo

f

Mí-le buio-chas leat a Aon-Mhic mín A céa-sadh, a rí is nao-fa

Whispered Loudly

Slowly ♩ = 80

100

S. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da!

A. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da!

T. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da!

B. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da!

dlí A-gus d'éal-aigh saor on éag a - rís! Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr - da!

105 **Presto**

S. *pp* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la-mis!

A. *pp* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la-mis!

T. *f* Mo-lai-mís mo-la, mo-la, *f* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la,

B. *f* Mo-lai-mís mo-la, mo-la, *f* Mo-lai-mís, mo-la, mo-la,

108 *pp* *f*

S. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-lai-mis! Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr_____da!

A. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-lai-mis! Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr_____da!

T. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr_____da!

B. Gloi-re do Dhi-a 'sna hAr_____da!

113 *ff* *poco accel.* *fff* *p*

S. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-lai-mís, mol!

A. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-lai-mís, mol!

T. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-lai-mís, mol!

B. Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-la, mo-la, Mo-lai-mís,mo-lai-mís, mol!